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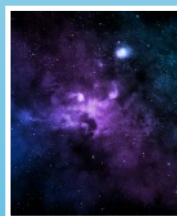
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TACKLING AMR AND MEDICINE SHORTAGES IN THE EU

How can the EU's pharmaceutical legislation help tackle current challenges, including medicine shortages and antimicrobial resistance, across Europe? We put the question to Rainer Becker, Director for Medical Products and Innovation at DG SANTE



Pia Ahrenkilde Hansen, Director General of the Directorate-General for Education, Culture, Youth and Sport at the European Commission, on the role the organisation has in formulating and executing education policies



Lydia Green, Head of Unlocking Space Programme and **Shuxiu Zhang**, Head of Space Application & Data at the UK Space Agency, explain the critical role of the UK space sector in our daily lives



Charlina Vitcheva, Director-General at DG MARE, European Commission, explains why protecting the ocean is a crucial priority for the European Union

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IT SOLUTIONS TO SUPPORT LOCAL COMMUNITIES AND DIGITAL INCLUSION FOR A RANGE OF COHORT

Sian Computers is a local IT company based in Wolverhampton, UK. We hear how the company has been providing valuable IT-based solutions for the local community and has recently been recognised for its achievements in digital inclusion

Sian Computers is a local IT company based in Wolverhampton, UK. It was established over 14 years ago to serve the local communities by selling and repairing IT equipment, including laptops, mobile phones, and gaming consoles. The company also offers a range of accessories, such as phone cases, cables, chargers, plugs, and printing services.

Previously, Sian Computers ran an internet cafe and gaming centre that hosted popular tournaments for young people. We were able to enhance our social and communication skills. Most importantly, we provided a safe and fun environment for young people to thrive in and enjoy and foster a sense of community.

In 2017, Sian Computers registered as a Community Interest Company under the name Sian Computers Community Initiative CIC, which operates independently of Sian Computers and is dedicated to serving the community. This commitment to social responsibility is at the core of our operations.

During the challenging times of the COVID-19 pandemic, Sian Computers stepped up to support the local community. When a student's computer froze during an online lesson, we were there to assist. The student's parent brought the laptop to us, and we repaired it in time for the student's next



online lesson. This is just one example of how we take pride in serving our community when it needs us most.

Pre-Apprenticeship Program (PAP)

At Sian Computers, we've tailored our training programs to meet the needs of our customers through our Pre-Apprenticeship Program (PAP).

The PAP provides key skills training for 18-24-year-olds, leading to work placements with employers in the Black Country.

The program aims to teach young residents the principles and practices of work and service in a modern working

environment. We have successfully run the PAP in the city for almost five years, and a similar program at New Ormiston Academy showed great results, with over 10% of participants returning to formal education in 2021.

A group of 16-17-year-olds said, "Many of us returned to the classroom after thinking about what we learned and what you guys told us about work in general."

The PAP aims to reduce unemployment among young residents, especially in deprived urban areas. The City Ideas Fund supports local organisations in linking youth with employment and service prospects. Sian partnered with

more than a dozen local employers to offer trainees suitable workplace trials and related job opportunities.

The Windrush Compensation Scheme

Sian Computers Community Initiative C.I.C. collaborated with the Home Office Engagement team and Wolverhampton City Council to promote the Windrush Compensation Scheme (WCS) through the Windrush Engagement Project, funded by the Home Office.

Sian's Director, Rob Allen, emphasised the importance of raising awareness about WCS, including eligibility, reasons for claiming, and the claim process. The Windrush Scandal has affected multiple generations, causing many to view the British justice system as unfair. Those impacted have lost access to benefits, housing, healthcare, jobs, banking services, and travel, as well as experienced educational disruptions and faced detention or deportation due to their inability to prove their legal status.

The British Government acknowledged the Windrush scandal as a manifestation of political malpractice. Beginning in 2017, Commonwealth citizens, particularly from the Windrush Generation, were unlawfully detained, denied legal rights, and threatened with deportation. Despite announcing a national Compensation Scheme in December 2018, less than 10% of those affected had received compensation by November 2021, and 23 eligible individuals died before receiving payment. The scheme aimed to compensate those who suffered losses due to their inability to prove their lawful status in the UK.

Recognising Sian Computers' commitment to the community and digital inclusion

We were shortlisted for the Health Service Journal Partnership Awards in March of this year and won Bronze for 'Best Social Value Initiative of the Year' and 'Most Impactful Project Addressing Health Inequalities', as well as Silver for 'Best Community Services Partnership with the NHS.'

In partnership with the NHS ICB, Sian Computers is delivering the Black Country Connected programme. The programme is to loan residents in the Black Country a Geobook Laptop with an option to receive connectivity to enable them to access information such as health, care, social, and wellbeing sites, general information sites, educational/college sites, social media, online shopping, and connecting with people/organisations via email, video call, and apps.

The NHS Black Country Integrated Care Board (ICB) Digital Inequalities Programme, 'Black Country Connected,' brings together people from health and care organisations, the community, and the voluntary sector.

The COVID-19 pandemic accelerated the rapid deployment of digital tools across health and care services. Still, we recognise these tools would only be effective for our population if we provided the necessary training and support.

The programme provided a Geobook laptop and connectivity for those who do not have internet access at home, as well as a dedicated support service

to manage the referral process and distribution. This included delivering training in using a digital device and giving people the confidence and skills necessary to use digital devices so they could access health and care services such as the NHS app, other healthcare apps, and online healthcare services.

The NHS did not just want a large 'consultancy' type of organisation or just a 'tech' company; they wanted an organisation that not only had IT technical expertise but was also involved with their local communities. Sian Computers worked alongside the ICB to help develop and shape the programme. As time went on, their experience of good working relationships with diverse community groups has helped strengthen the reputation of the NHS partnership approach across local communities.

Sian Computers would like to thank the NHS Black Country Integrated Care Board (ICB) Digital Inequalities team for forging this partnership, which is making a difference for digital inclusion in both individual lives and the wider community.



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