



# CASE STUDY

**Heather Matuozzo**, founder of innovative, hoarding disorder charity **Cloudsend CIC** engaged with Roots HR in 2010 on a pro-bono basis during a crucial time. A key funding application required evidence of legally compliant, up to date employment policies, which was a daunting prospect for the organisation. Heather recognised the need to obtain expert advice and improve her own awareness of HR and employment law. Heather reflects on the contribution of Roots HR in securing this funding, and the success that was to follow.

## About Cloudsend CIC

Cloudsend CIC aims to help hoarders in their homes, help people who work with hoarders through training and case studies and raises awareness of the disorder that is hoarding.



Cloudsend work with individuals who are often referred from social services, primary care trusts and housing associations. “Each case of hoarding disorder requires individual attention” Heather explains. “It may be that a specialist cleaning company is required, or help from a psychiatrist may be needed in a few instances. It’s different in every case.”

Hoarding disorder can cause a range of physical and social problems including family break-ups, social isolation, ill health through infestations and energy loss as a result of faulty appliances.

## Crucial support

With 2-5% of the adult population possessing a hoarding disorder, Cloudsend realised the need to obtain funding to be able to expand their reach and effectively tackle more cases of hoarding disorder.

In 2010 Cloudsend had the opportunity to apply for funding from BeBirmingham, which would enable the organisation to move forward and reach more of those in need of their services. So Heather feels that the support of Roots HR came at just the right time. “Roots HR’s work was a crucial part of the funding application, it was an enormous help. Without it I wouldn’t have been able to apply.”

“Employment policies were one of the things I didn’t give any regard to. I did think Roots HR knew exactly what they were talking about and I now feel better informed. Working with Jan was a real eye opener”

Roots HR provided 16 hours of pro-bono services to develop employment policies suitable for the needs of Cloudsend, whilst ensuring the terminology used and the implications were clear. “They took plenty of time out to phone me and get every last detail so they could produce tailored policies, nothing like anything I could have got off the internet.”

“The policies serve a double purpose as I can now use them in running the organisation and I have a greater awareness of employment practice, which is great.”

## Paving the way

"It's nice to think that I now have somewhere to go to obtain paid advice for any future needs. For Roots HR to do this on a pro-bono basis was not only essential from the point of view of the funding application, but it shows a secondary message that they believe in what you do, which I find psychologically empowering."

"I would advise others in similar circumstances to seek proper HR advice. Find out as much information even if it scares you to death. Knowledge is power"

The funding that Cloudsend was able to secure with the help of Roots HR paved the way for future successes. "The money allowed Cloudsend to fund the De-Clutter Bus Project which helped 13 individuals to reduce their wasted energy by clearing rooms, thus allowing radiators to function correctly, boilers to be reached, broken windows repaired and freezers to be cleared, while recycling excess belongings."

"It also enabled us to create a DVD, develop case studies and engage Sheffield University who carried out an academic study of the outcomes of our work. This allowed substantial evidence to be gathered and show that our service offering works and continues to work."

## Award win

"Cloudsend also won the Business in the Community Award for the most innovative project. I went to an awards dinner and had no idea there would be massive organisations such as Jaguar Land Rover, Muller and Powergen. The work that we were able to do as a result of the funding helped Cloudsend to win the award."

Heather adds: "It also helped to show people and persuade them that the service we offer can work, which has enabled us to work with more people."

## Advice to others

"I would advise others in similar circumstances to seek proper HR advice. Find out as much information even if it scares you to death. Knowledge is power."

"For Roots HR to have done this work for nothing is fantastic."

"They helped me to be more aware, the prevalence of things like HR is much greater than I thought and you need to know all the elements. For instance, many are aware of the term Health & Safety, but don't know everything that goes with it. Every day is a discovery, and it has proved to be the case with Roots HR."

[www.cloudsend.org.uk](http://www.cloudsend.org.uk)



### Jan Golding

Chief Executive | Roots HR

Cloudsend was the first organisation for whom we were able to offer pro bono services of more than 1 hour. I met Heather at the end of our first very successful trading year and was really impressed at her vision for addressing this little-known and very debilitating condition.

I was very pleased to be able to offer Heather up to 16 hours of pro bono policy development time from our trading surpluses. It is so pleasing to see what that support has helped Cloudsend to go on and do.



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