

CASE HISTORIES

The following case histories were put together to give a flavour of the experiences of client's involved in the various organisations moving towards employability. This information assists us in understanding the situations of the client and what interventions may be effective. The case histories were compiled from the relevant websites of organisations featured, or from presentations at JU4J forum.

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Apex Scotland

Client arrived at Apex after a 3 year sentence. Staff found him abrasive, but put that down to his lack of confidence and extreme sensitivity. Client remained unconvinced for the need for him to write a disclosure letter, believing that it would be held against him.

Apex staff helped client in getting a gym membership. The exercise greatly helped him release his anger and helped with feeling more positive about his future. Client agreed to do a disclosure letter. After he had completed the disclosure letter he left a sense of relief. Client applied for and got a job in a factory. This was the first time client had disclosed his criminal convictions by letter. The manager appreciated his honesty.

A4e

Having not worked since 1985, client took the decision to contact the A4e Job Broker Service to explore what help she could get towards moving back into work. Client was diagnosed with depression and anxiety, so she was understandably nervous when a job interview date was arranged. However, A4e fully supported client and helped her to have confidence in her own ability, to believe in herself and to appreciate that she has a lot to offer an employer. She is now reaping the benefits with a full-time position at one of the UK's biggest retail stores.

Enable

Client was referred to Woodhall by Careers Scotland. He was supported in a work experience placement in the City of Edinburgh Council Inch Nursery. His Careers Scotland worker supported him travelling to the placement. He was supported by Woodhall to apply for a part-time SVQ 11 course in Horticulture.

He was very nervous about going to College and required a lot of support and encouragement from both Woodhall and Careers Scotland. Woodhall and the College worked very closely to adapt the course material for client, who has difficulty reading and writing. His colleagues at his placement in the Inch Nursery helped him to learn the difficult plant names. After the first year of college, client successfully applied for a full-time Gardener position with the Council. This was successful. He is now in employment and has recently completed his SVQ 11

Forth Sector (Parkview Laundry)

Client joined Parkview Laundry in July 2005. He had been diagnosed with schizophrenia 8 years ago and had been in the Royal Edinburgh Hospital on a couple of occasions. His health seemed to have been improving over the past year but client felt his life now lacked structure and direction.

Both client and his Community Psychiatric Nurse felt the time was right to try something more challenging. Client hadn't tried working for almost 7 years but after reading about social firms he thought that might be a good first step. Client was very nervous to begin with so we had one of our supervisors work alongside him for the first couple of weeks. Eventually client began to increase the hours of work and his confidence steadily grew. Client increased his attendance up to twice weekly and took part on our different training courses.

He has built up good friendships with some of the other staff in the laundry as well as some of the guys in the Forth Sector football team and has become an important part of our small team.

Forth Sector (Soap Co)

Client has been on placement in our Soap Co for just under a year. Client had done shop work in the past but her last job had been very stressful and had led to her becoming severely depressed. Client was unemployed for over 3 years before she decided the time was right for her to consider moving back into work.

Client was understandably very anxious about taking this step so decided to try a placement as way of getting back into work but in a more supportive environment. Client is using her placement as a way of getting used to work routines again and building up her stamina as well as regaining her confidence around being with other people before she starts applying for paid positions. Our Training & Development team is currently supporting client to put together a C.V., look for suitable paid positions to apply for and help to work through some of the difficult feelings she has about returning to mainstream employment.

Integrate

Client self referred to Integrate having had no contact with any drug agencies before. Client was using heroin on a daily basis and on the verge of losing his job. His relationship with his parents was very fraught. With a team member's support and input a meeting was arranged with both his GP and the CDPS. After a wait of approximately six weeks during which client got regular support from Integrate, client secured a methadone prescription. Client gradually reduced his prescription and eventually became drug free. He also accessed an ongoing counselling service.

To date client has been drug free for two months. His job is secure and his relationship with his parents is good. His financial situation and health shows a clear improvement. Support from Integrate continues on a much lesser basis to ensure this situation continues.

Intowork (Moving Intowork Autism / Asperger Service)

Client was referred by Lauder College - it was suggested that the college terminate his placement due to the difficulties he was facing. Client has Asperger Syndrome, dyspraxia and marginal dyslexia; he has also suffered clinical depression since he was 12 yrs old.

Initially client had very little communication and only gave one word answers. MIW engaged with No6 (Autism Initiatives) and supported client to take part in their social skills programme. He also attended weekly meetings at MIW to complete the Vocational Profile, and took part in additional session training around improving communication skills, and stress and anxiety management.

His Employment Development Advisor started to prepare him for work by looking at interview techniques and exploring topics of conversation appropriate to the workplace. A six week work placement was organised through Blackwells Bookstore, which developed into a 6 month job offer with the company. Client has since moved onto a new career as an Apprentice Bookbinder, organised through Intowork. His employment worker keeps in touch by email and client is now working independently with minimal support

The Action Group

Client was referred by an Occupational Psychologist to the Action Group. She had previously worked in an Edinburgh Children's Nursery, but had been let down by a lack of support from the management. The Action Group supported her to find another job working 20 hours per week and with advice on the effect on her benefits of working which included helping her with an application for Tax Credit.

The Action Group also helped with the completion of an enhanced disclosure and subsequently with completing the required SVQ qualification. Client now receives support from The Action Group's Housing Support service to live independently in her own tenancy.

The Engine Shed

Client has a learning disability and also required support through Young Peoples Unit for emotional/personal difficulties. He comes from a family where members did not have a record of achieving. Client's training took place 2003-06 and included work training at the Engine Shed, work placements with employers and the chance to gain qualifications. This gave him the opportunity to build up work skill and also confidence as a young capable adult.

Client was placed in job which developed from a work placement within Scottish Executive (catering). Becoming a 'chef' had been his goal and he is now well established within a catering setting. Client won best employee of the month award after six months in post. Client feels he has achieved a work/personal life balance.

Wise Move

Client was referred to the Wise Move service by Izzy Rogers, a resettlement worker from the Castlecliff Hostel. Wise Move client caseworker David Scott started working with client. He hadn't worked for some time and his confidence was a bit low. His previous work experience was mainly in catering, employed as a cook for several years.

After an initial assessment, David helped Client draw up an action plan which included working on interview skills, this being one of the areas identified where client felt he required some support. Client felt he would like to return to catering as this was what he was good at. David contacted Vicki McQueen one of the project managers of 'Springboard' (Tourism & Hospitality Academy) based at Telford College, Edinburgh. Vicki has many contacts in the catering sector and was able to arrange some interviews for client. Vicki and David also carried out other methods of job search and assisted client with application forms and covering letters.

After attending a catering 'Jobs Fayre' with Vicki at St. Andrews Square job centre, client secured an interview with the City Restaurant. The interview went well and a 3-day paid work trial was offered with a permanent job on successful completion. The work trial was a success and client is now employed as a cook. On client's first day a customer commented to the owner that "she had just eaten the best omelette in her life." Client was the cook! Throughout a person-centred approach was maintained and client's needs and aims were the focal point of any actions. During this period, the old Greyfriars hostel was being closed down and tenants and staff were in the process of relocating to the new Castlecliff premises.

Despite this hectic time, Izzy and other Castlecliff staff were available to pass on information and messages with regard to client. This commitment to joint working between the agencies involved helped secure a positive outcome for client. The final word must go to client himself: "My morale had been very low and I was a bit depressed, but with the help of Castlecliff, Wise Move & Springboard staff I am now on the right track, enjoying my new job, building up my confidence, meeting new people and feeling much more positive about life in general."

Wise Move

Client was made homeless on the 26 September 2001 when his landlord sold the private rented accommodation he was staying in. He had been unemployed for many years and was not a priority with the City of Edinburgh Council Housing Department. Originally from Edinburgh, client spent the next seven or eight months staying with friends and family until all his options were exhausted. He visited The Access Point (TAP), a service run by the local authority in Edinburgh which offers help to secure accommodation and support to overcome difficulties associated with being homeless.

With this help he managed to find temporary accommodation at Greyfriars hostel in the Grassmarket. He stayed there for approximately three months, and with the hostel staff's help and support, he moved into a local authority council flat one year after being evicted from his rented accommodation. Client was a relatively high achiever at school, gaining 5 "O" grades and 3 Highers grades. Whilst unemployed, client volunteered in a Day Centre helping people who suffer from Dementia. Client also participated in an action team phone-in at Radio Forth. Through New Deal, client did the European Computer Driving Licence, which he managed to complete in 2 months and indicated that he would like to work in a call centre.

Client was referred to the Wise Move project by his resettlement worker. At this time, project staff were in discussion with Scottish Business in The Community who were partners with Centrica's (Scottish/British Gas Account Services), 'Ready For Jobs Initiative'. This initiative aims to secure opportunities for groups most distanced from the job market on an UK-wide basis. Homelessness was viewed as a high priority area from which to encourage potential job entrants. After some guidance and a few tips, client did a telephone interview with Centrica. He was then invited to attend an interview day with the company.

He was successful with his application and was offered a full-time permanent position with Scottish Gas Centrica. Client was the first person in the UK to enter employment with Centrica via homelessness on the 'Ready For Jobs Initiative' route. Client said: "Homelessness can happen to anyone at anytime. You don't have to have a drink or drug problem to end up being homeless, it can happen to anyone."

Women onto Work

Client applied for the WOW course because she had no idea where her life was going. She had gained some IT and administration qualifications but had no experience in this type of work. In fact, she wasn't even sure if she actually wanted to work in an office. Client hoped that by attending the course, she could get some focus, as well as meet new people. Her work placement at Liberton Hospital helped her to decide that office work was a good option. It not only gave client an insight into working in an office, but it also showed her that she had the skills and qualities required to do this type of work.

As the course progressed, her self confidence grew as she learnt about transferable skills; completing application forms, interview preparation and techniques. Client went on to work as the Administrative Assistant at Employment Access South Edinburgh. Client enjoys her job very much and continues to learn new skills, for example, she has recently started to help clients with their job search and application forms. Client has no doubt that without the continued support from WOW, she would not be where she is today.

Women onto Work

As a blind person, client wondered if the course would be set up for her, but WOW were extremely helpful in that they transferred written handouts on to audiotape. Client also had a Personal Assistant who scribed for her and escorted her in unfamiliar surroundings. The WOW course provided client with a variety of benefits; among these were an increase in confidence, a degree of independence and an opportunity to face personal fears.

Since leaving, client is now Chairperson of Southhouse Tenants and Residents (STAR), this has led to involvement with Home in Scotland's magazine editorial board. Client is also involved with Burdiehouse Residents Organisation (SABRO) plus a variety of other related organisations. WOW has boosted her confidence and she now feels able to participate in singing classes, Tai Chi and Salsa Dancing. Overall, she feels WOW has enabled her to make great strides forward.