



# IPS EMPLOYMENT RECOVERY STORIES



**This booklet provides a summary of the personal experiences of individuals who have accessed IPS services. In each story, each person shares their journey accessing IPS and what this means for their recovery, their mental health and well-being and hopes for the future.**

**Getting back into employment can be a vital part of a recovery journey – providing structure, social networks as well improved mental health, self-esteem, and financial independence.**

Some stories in this booklet showcase how IPS clients have rebuilt their lives despite facing problems, others recognise what has helped them in their return-to-work journey. Each is a personal account and expression of their journey and what employment means for them. Their journey has been supported by their clinical team, IPS Employment Specialist, Employer and friends and family so we have tried to capture their perspective too.

People accessing health services consistently tell us that they see getting a job as the key to their recovery, well-being, and life opportunities. As a result of this and international research NHS England has made a commitment to scale up access to the evidenced-based Individual Placement and Support Employment approach (IPS) across England in mental health services as part of the Long-term Plan. In addition, DWP have also made a commitment to fund the expansion of IPS within addiction services. The IPS approach involves integrating Employment Specialists into mental health teams to increase access to paid employment.

A key part of IPS practice is sharing real life experiences of people accessing employment support. This booklet shares some of those stories from people accessing IPS from across England – either in mental health or an addiction service setting. Whether someone is at the beginning of their journey or facing a setback, hearing a recovery story from someone in a similar situation can provide extra encouragement, hope and motivation. Similarly, these stories can have a real impact when shared with health teams, friends, family, and employers.

We would like to take this opportunity to say a big thank you to the people who have taken the time to share their stories, which will be inspirational to many people.

If you would like further information about IPS please contact us at [\*\*support@ipsgrow.org.uk\*\*](mailto:support@ipsgrow.org.uk)

**Individual Placement and Support (IPS)** is an evidence-based approach that is internationally recognised as the most effective approach to supporting people with mental health problems and addictions to secure and sustain employment.

*"As you read this, please remember that I am only here today writing this because of one special person who's help, expertise and her job role as an Employment Specialist has kept me safe and stopped me from thoughts /acts of committing suicide. Without Karen Hogarty-Hingston (Employment Specialist) my family would have no wife or mother and the knock-on effect is too emotional to think about. I owe Karen so much and count my blessings that she is my Employment Specialist."*

IPS Client,  
Gloucestershire Health and  
Care NHS Foundation Trust

IPS aims to help people find paid jobs within just weeks of being referred to the service. Then it continues to work with both employer and employee to sustain the job placement for as long as possible, or to help the client into a different job.

IPS is strength based and is personalised to each individual's needs. It has a focus on building relationships with employers to access the hidden labour market and ensures that health teams become more effective at supporting people to gain employment. Ensuring that treatment employment plans are integrated.

IPS is based on eight key principles. These include a focus on competitive employment, rather than volunteering or sheltered work; zero exclusion, open to all who want to work; and close integration between employment specialists and mental health teams.



**It aims to support people to gain competitive paid employment...** volunteering or sheltered work are not counted as outcomes.



**It is open to all those who want to work...** with no exclusions based on diagnosis, health condition or benefits claim.



**It aims to find jobs that are consistent with people's preferences.**



**It works quickly...** job search starts within four weeks, even if a client has been off work for years.



**It brings Employment Specialists into clinical teams...** making employment a core part of mental health treatment and recovery.



**Employment Specialists develop relationships with employers based upon a person's work preferences...** not based on jobs available at the time.



**It provides ongoing, individualised support for the person and their employer...** helping people to keep their jobs during challenging times.



**Benefits counselling is included...** so no one is worse off by participating.

# IT AIMS TO SUPPORT PEOPLE TO GAIN AND SUSTAIN COMPETITIVE EMPLOYMENT

Sally  
IPS client



**H**i, my name is Sally I've been a teacher for over 20 years and to give a bit of background, in 2016 I had a beautiful daughter, went back to work after only 3 months on maternity leave which I found challenging. Especially seeing as I went back into an environment that although I'd worked for the school for 11 years at that point, there'd been a lot of change and job security was uncertain.

It turned out at the end of that academic year I was made redundant, so for the first time in my working life I was without a definite job and I struggled to get another one. I eventually got a temporary one working over in a different school which on a good day is the 45-minute

commute. I started there in September 2017, I applied for a longer-term position at the school and got it, temporary for the first year and then it could be made permanent. Anyway, by February half term they said to me "actually you're not doing what we want you to do, we think we've helped you, (I didn't think they had), but we think we've helped you, we're not going to renew your contract".

So I was back again in the position of not having a permanent job, not knowing where I went, being the sole breadwinner for my family, and again I couldn't get a job, I had interviews after interviews but I didn't make the grade to get the job, so by June 2018 I was too wound up, nervous and so stressed. I've put a lot of pressure on myself and I ended up by the end of June, I just could not go into work, I just couldn't. I was signed off sick, I had, with anxiety and depression I was put on anti-depressants, I had already

started doing telephone CBT with the wellbeing service by that point, which was my second lot of CBT in that way. They agreed I needed to go to the next level and see a councillor regularly, but they also put me onto somebody who would help me think through where I stood at work, what I really wanted to do and how I could do that in a way that was sustainable for my mental health.

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***I just sat there and cried at her for an hour about how useless I was, about how I couldn't do the job I loved, how I wasn't able to do anything.***

As luck would have it Gemma from Landau got in touch with me before I got to the top of the queue with the councillors, so I saw Gemma for about a month before I started seeing the counselling service and it was life changing. Seeing Gemma the first time I came into the Landau office I remember I just

sat there and cried at her for an hour about how useless I was, about how I couldn't do the job I loved, how I wasn't able to do anything. I couldn't see a career choice for me other than possibly stacking shelves in a supermarket, that was about as high a level as I thought I could aim for, and to have Gemma who was the first person not related to me, to turn around and say 'but listening to you, your articulate, listening to you you've got this skill and that skill', which I just didn't see for myself. I couldn't see for myself at that point, it was life changing, I'm not saying the first time I saw Gemma I thought 'oh of course, I'm cured! I'm fine!' Not at all, what I saw was somebody who believed in me, and that was so vital.



So from then on, every week once a week I'd meet up with Gemma for an hour, she would have suggestions about jobs that she'd found that she thought might suit me, there was never any pressure it was just like 'look I've come across all of these, do you think you could do any of these?'. Likewise she encouraged me to look and see what was out there, she supported me when I started supply teaching, one of things she suggested to me was tutoring, which I took up and Gemma just supported me through the process of getting through to feeling confident enough to do that. By which point I'd already started seeing Alex from the wellbeing service and the combination of Gemma believing in my abilities and being able to clearly show me my abilities, plus Alex explaining to me why my brain was working like it was and suggesting ways that I could retrain my brain.

The combination of the two together was

invaluable, I cannot say enough how much a difference that made to me professionally but also me as a person.

Landau and the wellbeing service gave me the confidence to apply for further teaching jobs because Gemma and I both agreed we would struggle to find an alternate career for

me where I could start at a similar salary to that I'd been on, Gemma knew and I know that I'm not one hundred per cent that I can carry on with teaching but it's worth another go and she supported me with that, to the point that even now having done a term of supply followed by a term working in a school where I'm going to be working in the school for another half term then I've got go back on supply until September where I've

got another job lined up. I don't feel scared about that. There's still that financial insecurity but I don't worry about when and if I could possibly get a job, because I know I can.

I know that if I get criticised at work if things aren't going the way somebody wants them to go, it's not me, it's the situation and I can take on board the advice I've been given and work with that, I don't expect to be perfect but the fact is that I now know I have a sense of self-worth and that's come straight from, yes working with the counselling service but very definitely working Landau as well and that has made the world of difference for me. Having the combination, being able to talk to Alex at the counselling service and saying to him 'I met with Gemma last week and she suggested I went for 'this' or 'this' and this is what I think about it and having him able to talk to me knowing who Gemma was likewise I could meet up with Gemma and say 'When I saw Alex last week he showed me this. Which blew my mind because it suddenly made me realise this about myself and Gemma goes 'well yeah of course, you've always been like that!' but having the combination was really powerful and made me back to being myself.

Having the insight of knowing what it's like to have been there, initially crying my eyes out, thinking I was completely worthless, going through the process of meeting regularly with someone as empathic and sympathetic as Gemma and meeting with the wellbeing service and having the support, advice and clarity. I think that puts me into a really powerful position of being able to explain the process, how it works and the positive rewards that come from that and I think that would be possible to explain articulacy either to individuals who are looking to take the same route or to people who looking to send individuals to that route, I think that would be invaluable and I would have appreciated that if that could have happened for me. □



**Landau and the wellbeing service gave me the confidence to apply for further teaching jobs**



# IT IS OPEN TO ALL THOSE WHO WANT TO WORK

Debrah  
IPS client



I was first diagnosed with Bi-Polar disorder when I was 26 years old. I would be very manic and high, I thought I could conquer the world and was spending money I didn't have. I wasn't sleeping or eating, and I was damaging relationships, ringing people all hours of the morning and being very reckless. I was also having periods of very low mood and depression.

Before I was diagnosed, I worked as a hairdresser, and I was very successful. I was featured in magazines, TV and working in 5-star salons. My future was looking great for me. I felt my life was brilliant, I was travelling, going out and being a happy person. Being unwell meant I couldn't work, and my career fell to the wayside. Since my diagnosis, I have been in and out of hospital many times over the last 25 years. At my worst I couldn't see a way out, it was a very dark place for me to be in. I wouldn't listen to music or communicate with people. I wanted to die and attempted suicide via an overdose.

I was accessing treatment through different hospitals. On 2 occasions I stayed in the hospital for over a year. I was also addicted to drugs and my daughter had to be looked after by my mother.

In between hospital admissions, I would often get arrested for my behaviour 'running my mouth'. I would also take drugs and be involved in unhealthy relationships. After leaving the hospital my care coordinator referred me to an Employment Specialist (ES) based at the South Westminster Community Mental Health Team. I wanted to go back to work as a hairdresser teacher. My ES worked with me to build my CV, develop my interview skills, and look for jobs. I was also interested in being self-

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***At my worst I couldn't see a way out, it was a very dark place for me to be in.***  
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employed and my ES helped me to explore this option as well. However, I didn't manage to start work, I was still using drugs and was in an unhealthy relationship. As much as I wanted to work, my mind was not right.

I stopped engaging with the CMHT due to moving house. When things settled down for me and I was in a healthy place again, this led me to I moved back to Westminster, and I was allocated back to the same care coordinator. I also started seeing the same ES again which meant we were able to pick up right where we left off. She understood all my needs, my personality and what I was looking for.

My ES immediately got me ready for an interview with Toni and Guy hair salon. We worked on interview skills and my outfit. I was referred to Smart Works who were amazing, I was able to go twice, and I got some amazing clothes. Toni & Guy really liked me in the interview and invited to work the next Saturday 9am-5pm. Although the shift was long, I felt ready and excited to work there. I felt like I did well, however, I was



***I was delighted when Rush invited me for an interview. With all the prep I felt ready, and I got the job!!***





not invited back for any further work, and they gave me feedback that I needed more training.

My ES and I stayed positive; we were not going to let this set us back. We worked together to update my CV and then we sent it to local hair salons. I was delighted when Rush invited me for an interview. With all the prep I felt ready, and I got the job!! My hours were perfect 3 days a week, 4-hour shifts. It means I can start doing permitted work and then can build more hours when I feel ready.

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***Being in work means so much to me, it has built my self-worth and I feel great being able to mix with society and have a normal life. It is motivating me to do more with my life too.***  
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I love the salon, the work, and the people. It is also close to my house.

My ES has helped me in work by seeing me every week, making sure I am ok. She helped me understand my contract and payslips as well as complete and send my PW1 form for me.

I feel so happy to be working after so many years of not being well. I see myself in this job for a long time. Being in work means so much to me,

it has built my self-worth and I feel great being able to mix with society and have a normal life. It is motivating me to do more with my life too.

I describe my job as fabulous and rewarding. I didn't want to disclose my mental health condition to my employer, but I feel that if I needed to my ES would help me through that and I am sure my manager will be supportive.

Being in work has really improved my mental health and I look forward to the future.

My dream in the future is to open my own small hairdressing academy and teach people and mentor people in hairdressing. □

***"The Employment Specialist (ES) recognised that my client required a tailored approach to make the most of her considerable skills. She took time to build rapport and give her achievable goals in her job search. She made her feel valued and respected which my client had not felt for a long time. Historically, my client has been taken advantage of and the ES gave her the confidence to speak up for her rights at work which is something I never thought I would see.***

***With the ES's support, in less than a year my client has transformed. Since starting her job, I have seen her blossom. She is always laughing; her posture has improved and she dresses stylishly. I can see that she has regained her self-respect. Without the ES's help, I do not believe that my client would have solidified her recovery."***

Quote from clinician

# IT TRIES TO FIND JOBS CONSISTENT WITH PEOPLE'S PREFERENCES

James  
IPS client

**NHS**  
Humber Teaching  
NHS Foundation Trust

I have been under the care of the CMHT for a number of years, I have been unemployed for 8 years. I was referred to Jackie at IPS Positive Assets at the end of August 2020.

At this time, I was living with my parents and sibling in a challenging environment which was not good for my health and wellbeing and on occasion could not fully commit to putting myself out there in the job market as I had no real support at home.

Jackie conducted in-depth interviews with me about my likes and dislikes at work, what I enjoyed doing and what skills I had and what would be my ideal job.

I trained as a joiner and am adept at using hand and power tools, I also have a lifelong interest in cars and bikes which I can build from scratch. We discussed joinery roles but also delivery driver roles as I did not think I could

commit to full-time employment, a driving role would have suited me only for the hours and I also like driving, Jackie engaged with a number of employers for delivery driver roles which if I am truthful after a couple of interviews, I did not feel they were the right sort of job for me.

Jackie carried out job searching with me and found a joinery role for a local company, the job paid 27,300pa you were given a van petrol allowance etc. After Jackie had done some finding out from the employer, she asked me about disclosure and disclosing my information to the employer about my mental health (PTSD) I agreed that this could be disclosed and Jackie found out that the company massively invest in mental health and there was already someone in their employ with PTSD, this gave me the confidence to apply for this role.

Jackie and I worked on my CV to fit the essential criteria for the role, and I was given an interview for the 22 March 2021



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***I cannot express enough how good the support I have received from Jackie; she has picked me up when I am down and encouraged and supported me from the very start of my time with Positive Assets, I would recommend this service to anyone***  
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Jackie and I worked on the interview skills required and I was encouraged and supported throughout the whole process.

I was successful at the interview and commenced employment on 29 March 2021.

I cannot express enough how good the support I have received from Jackie; she has picked me up when I am down and encouraged and supported me from the very start of my time with Positive Assets, I would recommend this service to anyone

This has been life changing for me. Thank you. □

Dughall  
IPS client

**NHS**  
Central and  
North West London  
NHS Foundation Trust



**In March last year, I went to my GP and asked for help as I couldn't deal with life. Things got to the point where I tried to kill myself many times and tried to jump off a tower block, jump off a bridge and walk into moving traffic. I was then referred to the Pall Mall Centre for Mental Health. I mentioned to my key worker that I wanted to get back into employment and get my life back on track. I was referred to Employment Services at Pall Mall.**

The Employment Services Team Leader looked at my CV (I have experience in the Army, Security, Construction and London Fire Brigade), asked me about my work life, and put all the information together. We discussed opportunities that matched my skills and aspirations. He then approached a construction company that was looking for a Passive Fire Apprentice and helped me apply for the role. He arranged a three-

way accessible interview with the CEO on Zoom. Following this, I was offered the role and completed training before commencing the role. This was important to me, as in the past I had started many jobs without any training and proper support.

The Employment Services Team Leader offered support which was more valuable to me than the support offered by counsellors. He has been there for me; I knew he would help me. He



***We discussed opportunities that matched my skills and aspirations.***



was honest with me, and he has a very strong relationship with my employers.

I feel so excited to be a part of the company. The organisation feels like a family and they have made me think that there are some good organisations out there. My employer also

knows about my mental health difficulties and is very supportive and understanding. I feel that they appreciate me. They think and care about all of their employees and give them opportunities to develop. I am looking forward to being qualified in my trade,

having my own van and my own jobs to do. This would fit in nicely with the London Fire Brigade Volunteering I am doing, and I will be able to teach my cadet better.

Having a job has made me think of new goals in my life, such as getting a driving licence, learning a new trade, becoming a supervisor within the company, and sharing my experience with the staff. Also, having a new job made me feel better about myself.

I am happy, feel more positive in life, and feel like I am in a better place than I was a year ago. This would not have happened without the help and support from the Employment Services Team Leader and my employer. □

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***“Dughall is an outstanding example of untapped talent and totally employable. Wow! What a find!”***

***The support offered by the K&C Employment Services Team Leader has been outstanding. The reassurance, openness and honesty delivered has been a breath of fresh air to receive in what has been a congested and troublesome time in society, employment and business in general.***

***I would absolutely employ another person with mental health difficulties, and we hope they would fit in extremely well amongst the many other members of the team who live with a mental health condition”***

MM, CEO of the company

# IT WORKS QUICKLY



Martha  
IPS client



I was meeting with my Care Coordinator who informed me about a new Employment Service called Fast Track to Employment and that I could be referred to see the Employment Specialist.

Back then, I was out of work as I recently had a child, and I couldn't wait to return to work. Previously, I was working as a care worker, and I really enjoyed supporting people. Unfortunately, I was told that I will have no job to return to. I was really upset as I hated staying at home. Spending most of my time at home had a negative effect on my mental health as I felt isolated, bored, and purposeless.



I was referred to meet the Employment Specialist based at the CHMT centre. Upon meeting she took the time to listen to me and what I wanted to do, it didn't feel like I was going through the same old process of other services, but rather it felt like she really wanted to know what I wanted to do and what support I needed. After a few weeks we started job searching after she helped me update my CV, within a week my Employment Specialist had

secured me an interview with the college for a role I really wanted, this role was to work as an SEN Support worker working within the classroom setting. My Employment Specialist then prepared me for the interview, which I found very scary as I felt I didn't know how to answer any of the interview questions, but with the guidance and a few practice

rounds, I felt ready to attend. The next day I got a call to offer me the position and I was over the moon.

I found the moral support provided by her as the most useful part of the programme as she was very available. I like where I work, it's a very friendly team and I really enjoy working in a classroom environment. I feel that work has had a positive effect on my mental health as I feel less isolated and more confident.

I was really looking forward to working and therefore, I would recommend this programme to everyone who wants to work. I see myself staying working here at the college for a long time. □

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# IT BRINGS EMPLOYMENT SPECIALISTS INTO CLINICAL TEAMS



Adam  
IPS client

**enable**  
supported employment services

**I first met Ash with my care coordinator Tilly. Tilly had talked to me about enable and I was given the opportunity to meet with someone from the team before I was referred – to learn more about what they did.**

Once I was referred, my first meeting with Ash focused on building rapport, how my mental health affected me, and starting to think about how we would work together.

I was very nervous at the first meeting and also quite sceptical as to whether Enable would be able to find me anything or even whether employment was the right thing for me to do. Would they be able to deal with all of my can't's / don'ts, etc.

By the end of the meeting, I felt exhausted – all I did was sit and talk, but I still felt exhausted.

My mental health was very bad when I first met Ash – my anxiety was through the roof.

I was having regular suicidal thoughts, couldn't socialise, couldn't spend time with my family – I struggled to do anything. I thought that work was years away in the future and would be physically sick at the thought of going out with friends or family.

Having Tilly my care coordinator picks me up and take me to the meeting made all the difference and made that first meeting possible.

My dream goal was to get back into admin work and a safe office environment, but at this stage I didn't really believe I had the capacity to do this – I didn't believe this goal was in sight at the time.

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I also wanted back the life I had previously had which included work. I wanted to get back onto the ladder of normality and purpose.

I had a yearning for purpose – a greater meaning in my life, something that’s mine – a desk, a phone an email address. Things that others take for granted.

I couldn’t drive and couldn’t use public transport due to my anxiety levels.

I didn’t have the ability to look for jobs and spot the potential in myself – I could only see the negatives. I couldn’t complete application forms – the act of selling yourself and blowing your own trumpet, I didn’t even feel as if I had a trumpet. I felt that I was not worth anything and this negativity had become ingrained in me. In other jobs – I had been physically sick whilst at work up to 5 times a day.

The first few meetings were joint meetings with Tilly – building that rapport and trust. She was able to help me answer questions – my memory back then was terrible – so Tilly was able to help with this. Having Tilly there made a big difference.

Ash and I then started to then meet out in the community at a café near where I live – this helped me to get used to leaving the house

and being in public. If the weather was nice, we would go for a walk, which also helped with my mental wellbeing. When I couldn’t leave the house, Ash was able to come and see me. The support I was given was very much catered to what I needed and what suited me.

Ash was able to connect with me and would ask about my family and how the weekend had been. I didn’t feel like a client but more like a friend – from a human perspective it was important to feel this way.

In our meetings – we would look at employers in the local area to build up ideas of employers I might be able to get to and where I would like to work. We discussed different possibilities and the focus was very much on paid work from the start. Ash would support me with applications – it was very useful to be able to do this with someone who believes in your worth and believes in what you have to offer.

We also looked at my triggers and used my experiences from my previous role. We agreed that finding something less sales focused, and more customer focused would help with my anxieties. Also finding a role where I could have a desk near to a bathroom – just in case.

I applied for a role with a large employer as an Admin Officer and was offered an interview.

Ash set up a mock interview with 2 other Employment Specialists from the IPS team – they used the job description and person specification and tailored the interview questions based on what the employer was likely to ask.

I wore my suit, and I was very much in the mindset of an interview: how do I tie a tie, were my shoes clean, are my trousers ironed? This meant that all of these worries were taken care of in advance – allowing me to be more focused and relaxed at the actual interview.

Ash picked me up on the day of my interview with plenty of time to spare – we went to Greggs for coffee and a bacon sandwich to help calm the nerves.

I had all the pointers and tips from my mock interview – e.g., what to do with your hands, how to maintain eye contact. Ash sat with me in the waiting room, and I went into the interview feeling calm and prepared using all the tips I had learned.

I found out that evening – they rang me to say they wanted to offer me the job. My new manager asked about enable and their support – I was able to say that I had looked at my triggers with Ash and talked about in work support needs. My new manager was understanding and receptive to this.

When I started work Ash met with my line and team manager to tell them a little bit about me, to make sure everyone was on



the same page about in work support. We would meet every couple of weeks – if ever I need anything Ash is there and able to respond quickly and meet up with me.

I am still supported by Ash. A few months into the role I was having some issues with another member of staff – Ash was able to organise a meeting with myself, my line manager and my team manager and was able to support me to

express my concerns and agree to a strategy as to how to overcome these concerns.

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**Work has been a whole lifeline to me.**

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I wouldn't have been able to get into employment, never mind into a good role like this without Ash. This

is the first job I have had where I am not on the lowest rung of the hierarchy. It is a full-time and not an entry level position.

My mum and Dad's expectations of me were hugely exceeded.

Work has been a whole lifeline to me. The alarm goes off at 7.22am, there is a job that needs doing so you get up and go. It has restored my confidence – my friends say that I am a different person. I can now go out with friends and family at the drop of a hat – I feel more like my old self. I am able to do things with my niece and nephew again. I am getting back into driving again. I have been able to save and start thinking about getting my own place.

I have a network of support – not just through Ash but in work as well – there are people who know about me and my condition. I am one of the popular people in work – it has given me a new lease of life. □

***“It is not too dramatic to say that the change that we have seen in our son Adam as a result of the intervention of Ash and Enable, is nothing short of a miracle.*”**

*They took a young man who felt disillusioned, embarrassed, ashamed, and rejected following a series of employment disappointments, which had resulted in Adam feeling very depressed and anxious, and turned him into the proud, confident, and determined son we have today.*

*We always knew this was within Adam, but his low confidence and self-esteem, would not let Adam believe anything his parents told him, and it was not until Ash took on Adam's case, that Adam started to believe in himself.*

*Ash helped Adam by assisting him with job application forms, creating a strong CV, interview techniques and interview practice, even driving him to interviews and supporting and mentoring him throughout. Adam has continued to develop and shine, and it is a testament to the dedication of Ash and Enable.*

*Without their invaluable intervention and help, Adam would not find himself in the favourable and encouraging position he is in today, and we owe our thanks and gratitude to all involved in making the man we see today. A few years ago, we as parents could not see a light at the end of the tunnel for Adam, and we could only dream of him being in such a brilliant place today.”*

Adam's parents

*"I met Adam for the first time at the enable offices in a quiet meeting room, with his mental health worker Tilly. At the time he was suffering from severe anxiety to the point that he was being physically sick during our meetings. He had very low confidence and self-esteem.*

*Tilly came along to the first 5 meetings with myself and Adam and this made all the difference in terms of Adam getting to know and trust me and for me getting to know him and understanding his needs. Even after Tilly stopped coming to the meetings, we kept in regular contact throughout.*

*The first few meetings were spent getting to know Adam and helping him to build his confidence in me. We started to complete the vocational profile – I learnt as much as I could about him: his hopes and dreams, who is important to him in his life and everything about him and his mental health condition and how that affects him on a daily basis.*

*If he was feeling too anxious, we would meet in the park instead and chat while we walked around.*

*We discussed in detail what to say to employers about his mental health and Adam agreed that I could let any employers I spoke to know about his mental health. We worked out together how to say this and to make sure that it was done in a positive tone. We revisited this each time we met to make sure that Adam was still happy with this.*

*I started to speak to employers after our second meeting – I wanted to find out more about the labour market and what was expected of the roles Adam was looking for.*

*We set up a mock interview with 2 colleagues of and Adam was given feedback at the end of this to help improve his performance at the interview.*

*On the day of his interview, I picked Adam up from home, we went for coffee first to calm his nerves. Adam's mock interview had taken place in the same room as his*

*actual interview, which made him feel more secure and comfortable. Adam wanted to do the interview alone so I made sure that I had made the employer aware of all his strengths and the support that would be available to both them and Adam if he was successful.*

*He was! We then sat down with Adam's new manager and drew up an in-work support plan in preparation for his start date. This plan included looking at triggers, early warning signs of health deteriorating, how to keep healthy whilst at work. We also looked at practical issues such as travelling to work and the day to day changes that work would bring about. Regular review dates were set, weekly to begin with and then monthly. There were a few issues when he first started, but down to the regular reviews and the in-work support plan, these were quickly resolved.*

*I'm still involved with Adam and his employer and things are going really well. I am incredibly proud of what he has achieved and truly believe that he will go from strength to strength."*

Ash, Employment Specialist

# EMPLOYMENT SPECIALISTS DEVELOP RELATIONSHIPS WITH EMPLOYERS BASED UPON A PERSON'S WORK PREFERENCES



Jason  
IPS client

**working**well  
trust



**I have worked on and off throughout the years but have sometimes struggled to maintain my employment due to my severe depression. I was referred to Working Well Trust, at the end of December 2018 and met with my employment specialist (ES) in the first week of January. I said I was interested in part-time retail or driving roles that are not too far from home. By the end of February, I was offered a role at a painting and decorating store as a part-time customer service advisor and delivery driver. I have been in touch with my ES regularly since then in order to check in with how I was doing and for extra support.**

In our first appointment, my employment specialist and I spoke about why I wanted to work and what work I wanted to do. I told her that I wanted to work in a large store doing a customer-facing role as I enjoy talking to people, as well as a varied physical role in which each day is different, and I am able to travel around. I said that I wanted to work as it would provide me with a routine and get me out of the house so regular, part-time hours were important to me.

We also discussed my mental health and how I have found it can affect or be affected by employment in the past. We talked about the effects of early starts in my last role on my mental health and so agreed that it would be better for me to seek part-time hours within



the middle of the day. In addition, I told her that my depression can cause me to lack motivation and isolate myself. This can make

.....  
**My ES assured me that as part of her role she can go out and speak with employers on my behalf.**  
.....

it hard for me to go out and find a job. My ES assured me that as part of her role she can go out and speak with employers on my behalf.

Within the week, she met with the manager of a painting and decorating trading store who had a full-time role available. She negotiated with him on my behalf about me

doing half those hours (25 hours) and then it was arranged for me to attend an interview.

We met before my interview and went through some interview preparation. My ES also travelled with me to the interview to support me. My interview went well, and I was offered the job. The manager of the store was aware of my mental health

*“Since working, Jason reports stability in his mental health and increased confidence. Jason has said that due to the support, it is one of the longest periods he has ever stayed in a role. His speech has increased in speed, he appears less lethargic and is a lot more comfortable leading conversation. In addition, this role has given him the confidence to pursue other ambitions such as becoming a personal trainer, as well as volunteering at a music therapy charity in order to be a mentor for young adults experiencing mental health issues.”*

Employment specialist

and offered support, reassuring me that he is there to help and that he will also be in contact with my ES to check-in.

I was apprehensive and anxious about starting because the role was customer-facing and I had not been in a customer-facing role for a while. The references from previous employers took a long time to go through and there were

a lot of documents to sign which could be a bit overwhelming. My ES communicated with my manager directly on my behalf to keep him updated and chased the references for me to try and speed the process to keep up my motivation.

I started at my first store in the first week of May with another new employee and have found that the role has really helped me to adapt and gain confidence. I was moved to another store 6 months ago and have disclosed to my new manager about my mental health.

My new manager has been really supportive too and has made reasonable adjustments

for me so that I only work my core hours of 11:30-5pm each day. These adjustments really help me as starting later is a better suit for my medication and makes me more comfortable.

Work has had a big impact on the speed of my recovery. IPS has given me the confidence to pick myself up and realise that I can find

work and move forward with my life without feeling pressured or inadequate. It has enabled me to function and get back to my normality and I have been really enjoying contributing to society. I don't think I would have been able to find a job without my ES, and due to the work and their support, I have been stable and have not had a relapse since starting. □

.....  
***IPS has given me the confidence to pick myself up and realise that I can find work and move forward with my life without feeling pressured or inadequate. It has enabled me to function and get back to my normality and I have been really enjoying contributing to society.***  
.....

***"Jason is brilliant; he is really eager to learn and is definitely not scared of hard work! He disclosed to me about his mental health, and how doing too many hours can add pressure. It was agreed that we would keep his hours the same everyday so that he can plan his life around them. However, he is a keen worker and still offers to help out if we have other staff on leave etc. Pleased to have him on board!"***

Employer

# IT PROVIDES TIME UNLIMITED, INDIVIDUALISED SUPPORT FOR THE PERSON AND THEIR EMPLOYER



Nathan  
IPS client

Rethink  
Mental  
Illness.

I have been working with my IPS employment specialist, Sarah, since November 2020 and have found all her support immensely beneficial to me. Sarah is a lovely lady and so easy to talk to, so this was really helpful when trying to find a job. She also listened to my needs in a job, and we had agreed on what jobs to avoid and looked into potential career paths that I had not considered before but may enjoy going into.

In December, Sarah found me the ideal role that was going on within Rethink called a Wellbeing Support Navigator, where I would be using my personal mental health experience to help benefit others in the community. This sounded like an amazing career prospect as this was something I already had a passion for and had discussed looking into similar roles in the future. I was delighted to have a lovely interview with Naomi, the project manager, and then get offered the job.

The main concern I had was getting to work as I suffer from travel anxiety so getting a train or bus was not an option for me. This is when Sarah told me about 'Access to Work' which is a government funded scheme that allows me to get a taxi directly from my house to work with me only having to pay a minimal amount each journey. This was vital as I could not have accepted the job without this travel support scheme.



I have received plenty of ongoing support since being in the job role from Sarah and Naomi. Sarah checks in with me over the phone twice a week to ask me how the job is going, and we discuss what I am enjoying about the job and whether there are any problems within it, which luckily there is not! Naomi has been a wonderful manager throughout this project and has offered more support than I could have ever asked for, especially when I began to struggle with my mental health again. We discussed what I was struggling with; sleep was the main factor at the time, and I was back taking sleeping tablets to help this. Naomi was very considerate and flexible with my shifts, adapting them to suit my needs in order for me to continue with the job and work to a good standard.

Overall, I have found all the IPS and in-work support, I have received super beneficial, and I do not think I could have been working in this amazing job without both Sarah's help and Naomi's ongoing support within the role. □

*“Nathan has done so well; he has come along leaps and bounds from when we started working together. Starting the role, Nathan reached out for support for his mental health and has come through it so much stronger. He is very motivated, and I am very happy working alongside him and continuing to hear his updates.”*

Sarah Williams,  
IPS Employment Specialist



**Stephen**  
IPS client

**NHS**  
Bradford District Care  
NHS Foundation Trust



**M**y name is Stephen. I have been receiving support from South & West Community Mental Health team since 2018. I was referred to the IPS Employment Service in 2019 by my Advanced Nurse Practitioner at my request as I had noticed that they offered employment support from posters in the waiting area when I was attending my appointments.

Prior to my referral to the employment service, I had been unemployed for 15 years. However, in March 2019, I managed to secure a full-time position as a production operative. Unfortunately, this employment came to end due to mutual agreement despite several attempts with my employer supporting me to undertake different job roles with the company. I was unable to sustain my employment due to being extremely anxious and unable to carry out tasks due to physically shaking and experiencing panic attacks. I wanted to work but knew that my anxiety was a barrier, and I knew I needed in work support to overcome this and achieve my work goals.

When I started working with my Employment Specialist, Melanie Hannar, she not only helped me prepare to look for work by creating a CV and looking for employment, but she also explored my previous workplace environments and experiences. I knew I wanted to work in a retail environment, but I was very aware that my past role had a negative impact on my mental health and confidence. Melanie explored my current benefits and a better off in work calculation. From this, I discovered that I could work on a part time basis and that Melanie would support me in work to address my anxiety barriers as well as build my confidence so I could look to work full time in the future.

I knew I needed a work environment where my employer would understand the challenges I faced with my mental health. I agreed to disclose my mental health following a discussion with Mel and she was able to approach employers on my behalf to find work. It took some time for me to secure a job, and this was also delayed due to the Covid-19 lockdown in March 2020. However, Mel encouraged me not to give up and we kept job

*"I have found the IPS Employment Service to be really helpful and supportive not only towards its clients but also to me as a manager and my existing staff. We have a good partnership and Melanie calls to see me regularly to ensure all is going well and I would not hesitate to consider applicants she puts forward for my store roles as she will ensure I have the right staff for the job. Since I have employed Stephen, he has been very reliable, hardworking, and trustworthy. He has done very well within the organisation, and I can see him developing into a store assistant position"*

Alan Quatrill, Store Manager, Heron Foods Ltd

searching together. Mel continued to approach employers on my behalf to find work.

Mel had managed to build a partnership with Heron Foods Ltd and was approached by the Manager, Alan who was looking to recruit an in-store cleaner and asked if she had any suitable candidates. Mel approached me to ask if I would be interested in applying for the role and following agreement from myself, sent my CV to Alan. Within days Alan contacted me directly to arrange an interview at Heron Foods, which was an ideal work environment for me, being close to where I live and would also give me the skills and knowledge to start a retail career as well as build my confidence. I accepted immediately.

I met with the store manager Alan Quantrill and Mel was also able to attend with me. The meeting was very informal and not the usual interview conditions I had previously experienced. This allowed me to relax and be myself and I felt comfortable talking. Alan offered me a job as a cleaner on the spot and I started

work after a couple of days of the interview. I was over the moon that I had managed to secure a job but was also apprehensive due to my previous employment experience.

I started working in October 2020 when the UK was in lockdown due to the pandemic. The lockdown also presented me with my challenges as I was experiencing a family bereavement at the time I started working and was unable to visit my family members due to their vulnerability to COVID-19. I started to feel very anxious at work and that I could not do the job. I felt like quitting but was also scared



*“ Stephen started work in October 2020 and since then I have maintained a good working relationship with management and regularly visit the store to ensure both Stephen and the manager are supported. I have also provided wellbeing literature and support contact detail for the rest of the employees throughout the pandemic to support their own mental health and wellbeing. I regularly meet with Stephen and if there are any additional mental health support needs, I will discuss this in a huddle with the CMHT as well as his ANP. I am so proud of Stephen’s achievements and determination to succeed, despite his own personal challenges and feel Stephen is on the right path to developing his career pathway in the retail sector. Stephen is an excellent role model to others with mental health conditions who may be thinking of returning to work. He has also taken part in our external fidelity review and has kindly agreed to be a part of this story to encourage other employers to be more open to supporting people with mental health conditions to work in their organisation.”*

Melanie Hannar, Employment Specialist

of failing. I got to the point where I could not go to work, nor did I contact my manager Alan to let him know I was not attending. Alan was concerned when I did not attend for work and contacted Mel to let her know.

Mel visited me at home. Initially, I did not want to discuss my problems, but Mel was understanding of my situation and reassured

me that she would support me whatever outcome I decided. I let Mel know that I was struggling at work due to my family bereavement and that my anxiety had worsened, and this had a negative impact on my mental health. I did not want to lose my job and I did not want to fail as I had before. Mel contacted Alan with my consent to explain my situation. Alan allowed me to take some time off work despite me only being there a couple of weeks. Mel also arranged an appointment with my ANP to explore other treatments for my mental health. I also discussed a plan with Mel to support me on a one-to-one basis

in work and she arranged to visit me on a weekly basis to help me address my anxieties.

During this time, there were several management restructures and Mel supported me to address my concerns around changes to my job role, pay and holidays and arranged meetings with my managers to address my concerns. As well as supporting me in work Mel also provided social support during the lockdown and we would meet outside for walks and take out coffee when government guidelines

permitted, and I was able to talk to her not only about work but also my circumstances.

Melanie has not only helped me to find a job, but she also supported me with benefit calculations, completing permitted work forms, sorting out documents required for work and preparing me for the interview. She has also liaised with the clinical team to write a supporting letter for a bus pass, so I am able to travel to work. Since I have been working, Mel continues to visit me at work on a weekly basis to make sure I am ok as well as empower me to address any concerns I have with my manager. I am now more settled in work and my anxiety has lowered considerably. I have also learnt new skills within the store such as working on the tills, merchandising and stock rotation. I hope to move onto a retail assistant position in the future. I feel a lot more confident in myself and working has given me a sense of purpose. I also feel very lucky to have obtained a job during the COVID-19 pandemic. □

.....  
***Since I have been working, Mel continues to visit me at work on a weekly basis to make sure I am ok as well as empower me to address any concerns I have with my manager. I am now more settled in work and my anxiety has lowered considerably***  
.....



***“Melanie is a great example of how Employer Engagement can lead to employment opportunities for our clients. She has maintained a good relationship with Heron Foods Ltd and Alan and has gone above and beyond to support Stephen to find and sustain employment in the midst of the pandemic. Melanie’s work with Stephen demonstrates her commitment and values in supporting people in their recovery. Alan is a great example to other employers in his approach in supporting people with mental health conditions in the workplace”***

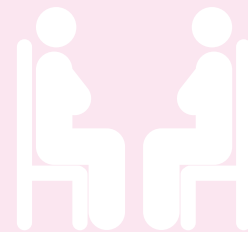
Nosheen Zabir  
IPS Team Leader

# BENEFITS COUNSELLING IS INCLUDED



Robin  
IPS client

Rethink  
Mental  
Illness.



**M**y first steps on my journey into this placement were when my IPS employment specialist, Uche, began to support me in searching for work. Uche listened carefully as to what sort of career path that I wanted to take and acted by finding me relevant positions to apply for and helping me to fill out my CV. When I began to become disheartened about not being able to find employment, Uche would refocus me with his proactive and positive perspective. He would be in contact, usually by phone, at least three times a week; this really helped as I was able to update him on my progress and share any concerns.

Uche had found me an interview with Rethink Mental Illness as a Wellbeing Support Navigator. Because of COVID-19 restrictions, it was an interview via a webcam, and even though this was not my first webcam interview, it was certainly the most natural interview I had done. In the past, it was difficult to express myself fully over webcam because of the delay in time, unwanted echoes etc. The project manager's interview style allowed me to demonstrate who I was. I was able to be clearer and more concise as I found that she had expressed interest in my answers. I felt comfortable having to do the interview via webcam as Naomi showed patience with the limitations of technology.

When I began working as a wellbeing support navigator, I found that my work environment would be amongst staff on the front line of mental illness. E.g., Nurses, Psychiatrists, Psychologists, Occupation Therapists. I was really taken aback that the peer support roles would be used in such a high precision environment, and I wanted to re-pay that trust with my best efforts.

My manager was effective at helping me to find my feet as I was able to convey any questions or concerns and get effective responses or actions right away. My first few weeks consisted of essential training which I did within the full working environment. This helped me to pick up the types of work practices my colleagues used whilst getting to know my colleagues and their roles.

Bit by bit and consistently over time, my responsibilities increased. Parts of the role that I did not think I would be good at; I

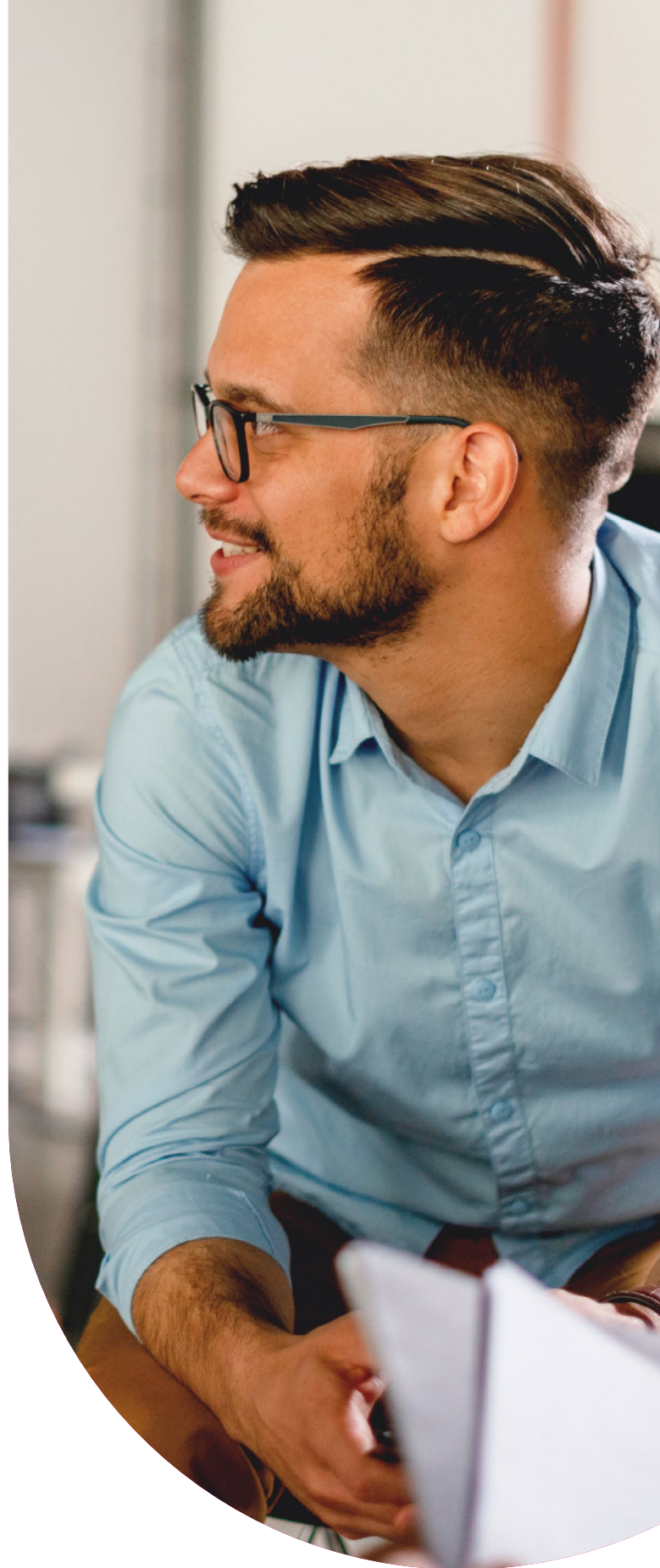
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***Parts of the role that I did not think I would be good at; I was suddenly doing without looking back and I was able to challenge and push myself forwards.***  
.....

was suddenly doing without looking back and I was able to challenge and push myself forwards. Holly (Occupational Therapist) Jackie (Occupational Therapist) and Naomi (project manager) are all incredibly receptive to either my concerns or my ideas. Holly and Jackie have been so approachable and use positive risk-taking to help encourage my progress. They do not hesitate to offer training or advice if I am finding a new

task complex or daunting. Likewise, if I am confident with a process, they allow me to excel and work under my own initiative.

A few weeks in, I was asked if I would like to progress into full time employment in the role. In preparation for this, I was supported through my an IPS employment specialist to get a benefits calculation to ensure the change would be financially beneficial.

The role transitioned into full-time over a few weeks so I could adapt to the additional hours; review whether the hours would



be manageable; and supported to keep a healthy work/life balance (especially as I have a pet at home with me).

Naomi, Holly and Jackie are always available for any questions or worries which means I am able to overcome any problems or concerns in a short matter of time. This really helps as it means that I do not get stuck at any point. Having a weekly one to one meeting and filling



***A few weeks in, I was asked if I would like to progress into full time employment in the role. In preparation for this, I was supported through my an IPS employment specialist to get a benefits calculation to ensure the change would be financially beneficial.***



out a Wellness Action Plan (WAP) means that I can gain perspective on what I have been doing, how I am doing it and how I feel. I am able to identify any concerns or obstacles and put in place strategies to overcome them. Medical appointments and blood tests are supported within my reasonable adjustments to reduce the pressure when scheduling these.

I quickly felt integrated into this team, and I have never been in a workplace like it. At first I did not understand the insistence to be open but now I recognise that this has allowed me to be an effective employee. I have been in role created for mental health lived experience before, and I honestly feel like this role and the work I am delegated to participate in is not a 'faux' role just because of my mental health issues. The team have treated me equally. They do not see a disability, but a colleague and this is hugely motivating for me. I am supported at work, but I am not labelled at work. The

training, the weekly one to ones, the attentive staff, and the WAP plan have all given me a consistent secure ground to walk on and self-assuredness to propel myself forward. □

***“Robin is very motivated and has a great eye for detail. Robin lost his confidence when a previous opportunity was put on hold due to Covid, but I was so pleased when he continued to engage and grow in confidence. He is incredibly creative and insightful, and I have learnt a lot working with him.”***

Uche, IPS Employment Specialist



## SUPPORTING PEOPLE WITH A RANGE OF HEALTH CONDITIONS

IPS is increasingly being applied to other groups including people with a range of health conditions and people recovering from addictions.

Below are the stories of just three people:

**Christopher**  
IPS client



**I first met my Employment Specialist Conor through my keyworker at drug and alcohol service, ARC Hounslow, Rea. Rea had talked to me about WDP and explained the IPS Into Work process before I was referred.**

My first meeting with Conor focused on building rapport, explaining my past struggles with addiction, employment history, and conducting a plan to work with each other.

Despite having a great first meeting I was quite sceptical as to whether WDP would be able to help me achieve what I needed to do for my future.

My recovery was going very well when I met Conor and he could sense that I was motivated and ready to take the next step into a fulfilled career. Conor edited and updated my CV to

a standard that I was very happy with and we started to plan some short-term/long-term goals for the future. Initially I really needed to get find work quickly, so Conor was quite happy to investigate long-term and short-term options on my behalf. I am an experienced mechanic and enjoy working within this field, however I have always had a longing to enter the world of IT. I expressed this to Conor, however, I was unsure as to whether I would be accepted in this industry due to my lack of qualifications.

After our initial appointment. Conor set up a meeting with a contact he made at a company named IT Career Switch. Conor and I conducted a meeting with a representative from the company named Ken. Ken explained the structure of what they do and, in a nutshell, – they run a 16-week part time course that helps participants complete all the relevant qualifications needed to enter the IT industry. Alongside this, 90% of the candidates that pass the course and gain the qualifications enter straight into a role within IT with most entering salaries amounting to £25k. The meeting left me extremely excited at the idea of being able to achieve something amazing and invest into my future in a new, exciting way.



Despite the confidence I had in myself, working with Conor and WDP has helped me in more ways than I expected; through Conor's help and reassurance, and my determination, we were both able to achieve what was needed to help me feel more comfortable and secure in these difficult times of the pandemic.

Within a few weeks of my initial appointment with Conor, He set me up with an opportunity at a local mechanic, and through my own determination, I set up a strong opportunity also with a different employer. I was left in a fortunate situation where a few different employers were happy to work

with me and I was able to choose which company I felt worked best for my career development and to financially support me throughout my studies into the IT industry.

I will maintain contact with Conor moving forward as we will both work on creating a long-term career path for myself as I endeavour into my desired industry.

I would happily use my IPS experience working with Conor and WDP as a testimony to the great work they do for those struggling with addiction, mental health issues or just in need of achieving personal employment goals. □

*"Christopher has been an excellent client to engage with from the beginning. Right from our first interaction, I could tell he had the determination and drive that was needed to use every element the IPS system has to offer, to his advantage.*

*Christopher attended every meeting always on time and was also extremely responsive with anything I needed him to complete or attend*

*(interviews, paperwork etc). He also attended a meeting with an IT organisation who were impressed by his engagement throughout. It would be a pleasure to work alongside someone like Christopher in the coming years and I have no doubt he will move on through life achieving any long-term goals he has set out for himself."*

Conor McLain, Employment Specialist

Randeep  
IPS client



**W**hen beginning with Isabelle and the IPS Into Work service, I had no concrete idea of which career path I wanted to follow and wasn't even sure whether I was able to commit to full-time work as the last time I had a job was in 2018 at a pizza restaurant.

With the help of Isabelle, we created a CV and cover letter while exploring my hobbies, interests, and transferable skills. I wanted the CV to communicate my friendly nature and communication skills. Based on these skills we started applying for sales representative roles.

While developing my IPS plan, I continued to engage in parallel with the WDP Harrow drug and alcohol service to tackle my substance misuse.

Isabelle and I practiced mock interviews, this taught me how to effectively search and apply for roles, as I had never formally done this before.

In less than two months since my first meeting with Isabelle, I successfully secured a temporary four-week contract as a PPE Salesperson. The job was in central London and despite the four-week contract not being renewed, being out in the city and entering a corporate work environment improved my self-esteem immensely and left me eager and determined to continue working with WDP and develop a career.

Isabelle and I resumed consistently sending out job applications and within three weeks, I had two interviews lined up: one for a salesman in a company selling PPE equipment and another for a Home Customer Service Agent managing different companies' CRM. I was offered both roles and opted for the latter.

I continue with in-work support provided by Isabelle, and I am now very proud to say that I

have two solid office roles in my CV and I am enjoying the work. Isabelle also assisted me to create a LinkedIn account, to help build my professional network and future prospects.

My attitude now has improved leaps and bounds, and this is due to the support I received from IPS Into Work especially being able to find my first office job during the hardest times of COVID-19. I am somebody who has stopped using cannabis and this has enabled me to be more independent and be more proactive when looking for jobs. My Employment Specialist still helps me to alter my CV, cover letters and job applications if I'm not sure what I want to include so that is a big plus. Fantastic help from WDP IPS into Work and well worth it to get your career back on track or to even start employment. 10/10 work and got me back on my feet and to know I am independent and feel good to be kickstarting my career. ■

*"Randeep's path to work was probably one of the most notable transformations personally and professionally I have experienced in a client. Having never had a job before or sense of career aspirations due to lack of self-confidence and substance misuse, he lacked purpose until he came to WDP IPS Into Work. No job was*

*too small or too big for him. He coped with setbacks of the changed work environment as the country entered lockdown. He however persevered and has now a solid career plan, including work experience and training goals."*

Isabelle, Employment Specialist

Sue  
IPS client



**T**hrough the completion of an initial appointment prior to the COVID-19 restrictions being put in place, I told my Employment Specialist, Isabelle that I had completed a six-week Peer Mentoring programme.

Following this, I had undertaken a volunteer role in a drug and alcohol service supporting other clients, co-facilitating two weekly recovery meetings, and organising and undertaking administrative and reception duties.

I reported that I wanted to develop the skills I obtained through the peer mentoring and volunteering role into a paid employment opportunity as a Recovery Support Worker. However, I informed Isabelle that there weren't many opportunities, and this left me lacking

in motivation. I had adjusted to the volunteer environment and having been out of paid work for three years, found a prospective return to paid working daunting as I was lacking in confidence.

Isabelle developed an action plan with me which included developing confidence and self-esteem; writing an up-to-date CV; learning effective job searching techniques; supporting with completing effective applications; developing interview techniques; and providing information regarding up-to-date opportunities.

Following the government's COVID-19 social distancing guidance, I continued to engage with Isabelle via telephone and was supported to apply for a number of support roles within local drug and alcohol support providers but was unsuccessful.

During a review, Isabelle suggested that I explore the care industry as this sector often provides in-house training and any experience, I would receive doing care work could be then transferred into a Recovery Support Worker role. I was enthusiastic about exploring care work and Isabelle brokered an interview with MENCAP, prior to which she provided me with some interview coaching.

My Employment Specialist has been brilliant throughout the whole time. She's encouraging, supportive and helpful. Even through lockdown she kept in contact with me and without her help I doubt I would have found a position that suits my needs.

I was successful in securing the MENCAP role and though my initial start date was postponed due to COVID-19, I commenced employment which I have now sustained for over 13 weeks.

During in-work support sessions, I reported feeling happy in my new role and I no longer wished to pursue work as a Recovery Support Worker, owing to my passion for the role I am currently undertaking with MENCAP. Furthermore, I have found that the flexibility of the role supports me to balance my work commitments with my childcare arrangements and supports me in maintaining my abstinence. □

**Sue is a 46-year-old white British female. In the beginning of 2018, she got involved with Social Services and part of her Child Protection Plan was for her to address her alcohol dependence and to fully commit to recovery.**

She had last worked in 2016 as a Senior Administrator, and although she had been good at her job, she had to leave it due to her substance misuse.

Sue first engaged with the IPS Into Work service in October 2019 after being referred by the WDP Harrow drug and alcohol service. She felt she was ready to go back to paid work and her goal was to become a Recovery Support Worker in a drug and alcohol service.

*“Working with Sue was a pleasure as she applied the same principles of her successful recovery to her job search. She would always attend appointments and be proactive and open to new ideas. Sue and I built a solid client relationship that proved strong*

*and resilient during the unforeseen circumstances of the COVID-19 pandemic and her start to work, although delayed by lockdown was well deserved.”*

Isabelle, Employment Specialist

We would like to thank all IPS clients for sharing their personal journey in this booklet. We would also like to thank all the IPS providers, funders and employers who played a role in supporting clients to make the journey back to work.

If you'd like to find out more about IPS, please contact [support@ipsgrow.org.uk](mailto:support@ipsgrow.org.uk) or visit [ipsgrow.org.uk](http://ipsgrow.org.uk)

## WHO ARE WE?

IPS Grow hosted by Social Finance, is a team of IPS experts who provide expert assistance to support the development and delivery of evidence-based employment services across the health system.



We passionately believe that access to the right employment can provide many benefits for people accessing services, their families, health systems and the wider community.

In 2019 we joined the international learning collaborative led by IPS Works USA which includes member countries from across the world. The network is made up of IPS experts from around the world, and enables us to continue to develop and refine our practice and the support we offer.

We also aim to bring together a range of national stakeholders to support the development and expansion of IPS across England via the England IPS Expert Forum.

*"My life's improved loads because I now look after my finances, I've learned to deal with my anxiety on public transport – don't get scared in crowds anymore. I'm me old self again, not letting myself go. I got paid today for the first time in years. Today I feel okay about my future, more relaxed, more calm, a lot better."*

IPS client