



# Good News Stories



job

Thera East Anglia's supported employment programme aims to find enriching and meaningful employment opportunities across all sectors for people with a learning disability that have been recognised as ready to work.

Our three Job Coaches – Terri, Rick, and Eloise, are extremely dedicated and passionate about helping individuals build on their social network and transferable skills to ensure they can be a valued member of any working team.

Here, we want to offer a spotlight feature for trail-blazing job seekers who have successfully landed work through the programme.

## Sarah's Story



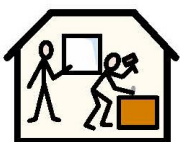
care

For Sarah, her gentle and compassionate nature has helped to carve out a pathway for a role in the care industry. Having worked extremely hard to complete both a Level 1 and 2 Care NVQ, Sarah has shown an extreme amount of proactiveness and resilience in getting her foot in the door.



passion

"I'm a caring person and following my mum and sister's footsteps as they've gone into the care industry has made me realise that this is something I want to do. I took care of my nan and so I had a personal and close experience with caring for the elderly. I used to help her with her shopping when she couldn't get out and about, as well as around the house with housework. It really is a job that is close to my heart".



college

Through her college, Sarah was able to secure a work experience placement at Herons in March as a Domestic Carer – helping the residents by serving food and cleaning their rooms.

She was also able to build on her transferable skills by undertaking a role in Sainsburys as a Store Assistant and Scope as a Volunteer Assistant.



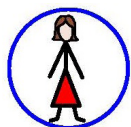
skills

“Employers often look for applicants who can demonstrate a good set of transferable skills,” mentioned Terri. “These are often developed early on throughout life both at home and in school, but also through hobbies, volunteer placements, a course or work experience. These skills - such as teamwork, time management, delegation, and communication, are all incredibly valuable to employers and can be built upon in any workplace setting, even ones that are not directly related to what you want to do”.



work

Sarah then spent the next ten years as a stay-at-home mum, taking care of her son Josh from the moment he was born. As he started to get older, she began volunteering at a charity shop.



mum

“It was unpaid work, however, their expectations of me started to disrupt the work/family balance I wanted to keep equal, especially now with a child. They constantly wanted me in every week and weekend at short notice and so it was hard for me to have any time at home. I was even training other members of staff, yet they still never wanted to pay me despite asking several times, which was quite demoralising”.



voluntary

It was around this time that Sarah was put in contact with Terri, where they were both able to complete a Vocational Profile and a CV. Terri also completed workshops on how to successfully attend an interview as well as how to complete application forms for vacancies. With this new knowledge under her belt, Sarah then applied for several roles that matched her skillset, however, to no avail.



workshop

“We kept trying yet no-one got back to me. It made me feel rubbish, as all I wanted was a job and I felt like I wasn’t getting anywhere. The worst was where companies didn’t respond even after requesting feedback as to what I could improve on in the future. That was incredibly disheartening”.



disappointed

Unfortunately, the pandemic breakout in March 2020 meant further setbacks for Sarah, however, this didn’t deter her from her job search.



COVID-19

“Me and Terri worked around the pandemic by using Zoom. It is nice to see people on camera, but it is better to have someone to talk to face to face, as I was also juggling with looking after Josh who was learning from home. I really needed to just get out and get back on my feet”.



zoom

Terri highlighted to Sarah how she could use Zoom to her benefit in her quest for employment.



zoom



interview



CV



jobs



interview



confidence



job

“Seeing other people in person will naturally always be our first choice”, reflected Terri. “However, we were incredible fortunate to be able to put a positive and accessible spin on the use of technology when applying for jobs in lockdown. For instance, Sarah underwent a Zoom interview for a paid post at a charity shop. Not only was I able to sit alongside Sarah in her house during the interview for moral support, but she was also able to have her handwritten questions and any answer prompts at the ready with her. Obviously, the pandemic had it’s downsides but we really tried to use it to our advantage in supporting people to use technology through this time too.”



In July 2021 Thera East Anglia’s new Job Coach, Rick, took over to work with Sarah. Using his prior experience in recruitment, he rebuilt Sarah’s CV from scratch.

“I really took this as an opportunity to get to know Sarah and the steps that she wanted to take in the future. As jobs in the care industry were scarce, we refreshed our approach in the job search and looked at roles that again could build on her transferable skills, such as in customer service”.

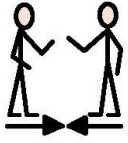
It was there that Rick and Sarah successfully secured an interview at The Exchange; a Tapas restaurant based in March.

“Rick came with me to the interview, as it has been a while since my last one and so it was reassuring to have him by my side. It made me feel a lot better to have someone there, especially because I’m deaf in one ear so to have someone help explain that I struggle with hearing was a huge bonus. However, as it was an apprenticeship programme, I felt that it wasn’t right for me due to the studying that needed to be done on the side that would be hard to juggle with my family life”.

Sarah also interviewed with Tesco and Co-op, with assistance from Rick who went through possible interview scenarios and questions.

“Even though I wasn’t successful in securing the roles, having these scenarios from Rick really gave me the confidence to answer to the best of my ability and also know what to expect”.

From there, she used her initiative to speak to a family member who worked at a bar called Cassanos, where she successfully got a catering and cleaning role.



meet

“I am really enjoying it. It’s something different and has given me the opportunity to get me out the house and meet other people. They also invited me to my first work party, which I’ve never had.



team

It was the very first time I got to meet everyone who worked different shifts, and it felt so nice to feel like I’m part of the team. I have also built my confidence in working in a team, communicating with customers and being able to prioritise my different tasks whilst I’m on shift”.



advice

### **What advice does Sarah have for other who are also seeking paid employment?**

“I would just tell them to go for it, and to use your passion and get out there whilst you can. Even if you go for a role that isn’t directly what you are after, you are still building on those important skills!”