

# Case Study



## Thomas

### Background

Thomas Joined Work Routes in July 2018. He disclosed that he had not worked for over 10 years due to his on-going and long term mental health issues, suffering from anxiety and depression. Although a grown man (aged 31) he attended all of his initial appointments with his Mum. He admitted to lacking confidence and during these sessions presented as a very anxious individual.

Thomas, a claimant of ESA disclosed that for many years he had not been able to leave his family home and during this period even consigned himself just to his bedroom for many months. He agreed that he was beginning to feel a little better and although often wracked with debilitating anxiety attacks desperately wanted to resume a normal life style.

### How did we overcome barriers?

We worked with Thomas through a planned series of support interviews where we gradually gained his confidence and trust. We provided careers guidance to assist him to achieve a realistic job target. All of Thomas's previous work experience had been involved in IT. He felt however that it was too difficult for him to return to this occupation but did volunteer his love of cooking.

Taking this as lead we encouraged him to take up an afternoons training, that we arranged in conjunction with the National Carers Service, for a Basic Food Hygiene Certificate.

Thomas, with our support was able to attend this training and pass the accreditation. He was extremely pleased to have achieved this and it gave him great encouragement in fostering a more positive outlook.

We sourced a very limited voluntary work placement for just two hours per week through Aspire colleagues at "Millrise" a part sheltered housing complex where a weekly "lunch club" was being run for residents. This had to be organised to coincide with Thomas's Mothers work commitments as he was totally reliant upon her for transport (not having the confidence to use public transport himself). Thomas started to attend these weekly sessions and this experience gave him further confidence in his ability and helped to improve his self-esteem.

We assisted Thomas to draft a fresh CV as his current version was out dated and inappropriate for his fresh job target (kitchen porter). This document was carefully scripted to give Thomas the best chance of finding work. Once this was completed we started to offer supported job search sessions to seek to identify vacancies that he might be prepared to apply for.

Due to Thomas's inability to travel independently we suggested that he prepare a map of food establishments within walking distance of his home. We also encouraged him to consider visiting these places to leave one of his new CV documents. By mid-September we were encouraging him to target possible "seasonal Christmas vacancies" at restaurants. Thomas followed our suggestions and secured trial day as a kitchen assistant at a local Toby Carvery which is a short distance from his home.

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## What outcomes were achieved?

Thomas was successful with his trial and was offered a temporary job in the kitchens over the busy Christmas period. He was so successful at this that his job offer was extended and made permanent.

Thomas has sustained work with this employer ever since. He is now one of the chief “carvers” and is liked by his colleagues and regular customers alike. His Mother reports that he is physically much healthier having lost a great deal of weight since commencing his job. He is mentally also in a much better place. He travels independently to and from work without any concerns and he enjoying much improved mental health. He has on occasions even attended social outings with his new work friends, something that would have been beyond him when we first met.

His Mother claimed that all of this was down to how we had treated Thomas in our work with him and believed in him. She said that the help and support from the Employment and Skills service had been life changing for her son and appreciated everything that we had done to help him.