

(n.b. names have been changed to protect identities)

Case Study 1

I received a referral concerning a lady who had been unemployed for over 3 years, despite her extensive work experience in varied roles. The client is a lone parent and a main carer for her children and was experiencing financial hardship due to a relationship breakdown, which was having an adverse effect on her confidence. She also faced further barriers to seeking employment due to long term health conditions.

The client communicated an interest in creating her own handmade jewellery and personalised gifts and expressed a desire to set up a business that would showcase her creative skills and enable her to make improvements to both her health and wellbeing, and her long-term financial stability.

During our initial discussions we identified the need for several interventions that would be key to overcoming the specific barriers that may otherwise prevent her from making a success of her business.

My client felt the main barrier facing her was lack of funds; alongside Reach Out Funding, I was able to access a further funding opportunity via the DWP Flexible Support Fund, which enabled my client to purchase the essential equipment and materials required for her business and ensure that she was registered accordingly with HMRC.

She also disclosed that, due to ongoing personal issues, she struggled significantly with the self-confidence and motivation required to set up, and successfully maintain, a small business. To overcome this barrier to success, I encouraged her to engage with an external business mentor who was able to stay in constant contact offering support and encouragement during COVID19.

I am pleased to confirm that she was able to launch her business in March 2022. I have maintained contact with her since then and she has positively reported a period of self-employment for 26 weeks.

Case Study 2

I received a self-referral from a 52-year-old male who had been recommended our services by a friend who had benefitted from support provided by Reach Out. This gentleman had experienced significant mental health problems throughout his life and had never been able to gain employment. At the time I met him, he was experiencing severe anxiety caused by financial issues arising from changes to his benefits and was distrustful of the process. He was unable to buy basic household essentials and was experiencing feelings of isolation due to being confined to his home.

When I first met with my client, I was able to gain his trust by listening to his worries about his circumstances. I assisted with practical support, such as

emergency food hampers from our Community Hub, and advice around obtaining fuel vouchers, and access to social supermarkets and food banks.

Once my client was feeling more secure around his immediate situation, we were able to open a discussion regarding his journey into work. I was able to uncover my clients many strengths, including his interest in driving and his clean driving licence, so we decided that it would be a good idea to seek employment in this area. After assisting my client to put together his CV, I was able to find several job opportunities that were of interest to him, and after a couple of unsuccessful interviews he was able to secure full time employment. In preparation for my client starting work, I was able to process the funding he required to purchase the items he needed to start his new role.

I remained in contact with my client as he began his work journey, and he has since disclosed that his circumstances and wellbeing have improved significantly.

Case Study 3

Whilst running my job club at Eastham Library, I met a lady who, due to personal circumstances, had recently moved from Liverpool to the Wirral, with her two children. During our initial conversation she made me aware that she was experiencing some difficulty in finding her place within her new community and was experiencing feelings of anxiety and isolation. Due to being the sole parent of two young children, who had recently started new schools, she was struggling to find an employment opportunity that would fit in with her family life and caring responsibilities, particularly in the hair and beauty industry, which is where she felt her skills and experience where the strongest.

We felt the first task we should take on was to improve her CV and ensure that it encapsulated her breadth of experience and skill in her desired industry. As our discussions progressed, my client discovered further strengths that she felt she could apply to a different role, which broadened her horizons and opened further opportunities in alternative industries such as education. I felt that due to my client's personable nature and positive attitude, she should perhaps explore a role as a teaching assistant as this would work well around her parenting responsibilities.

My client was very keen to explore the possibility of a role within education and quickly applied for an opportunity at her children's school. Prior to the interview I supported her with improving her interview skills and identifying the transferrable skills she had gained in previous roles, which left her feeling more confident to tackle the interview and take on the role, if successful.

Happily, my client was successful in obtaining her desired role and has since returned to my job club to thank me for the support she received from the Reach Out project.

Case Study 4

Sarah, a 51-year-old single parent, was referred to Reach Out via our Lighthouse Domestic Abuse Team. Sarah had recently relocated to Wirral, after escaping an abusive relationship and was experiencing significant challenges with self-confidence, despite being a highly educated lady with extensive work experience in education and law. Sarah is parent to a high school aged child with Special Educational Needs and has been experiencing difficulties finding a job that would accommodate the flexibility needed, to enable her to provide the level of support her daughter requires. Reach Out were able to provide Sarah with support to improve her confidence and wellbeing, and with practical support, such as CV writing, to get her ready to apply for suitable positions.

Sarah expressed that, due to her significant responsibilities as a carer to her daughter, the best option for her was to seek a remote working position, or to set up self-employment. I met with Sarah several times and was able to provide her with Advice and Guidance around creating a business plan and maximising her skills around online marketing and advertising. To assist with the practical side of self-employment, I was also able to provide advice regarding a Unique Tax Reference and online accounting.

I was able to provide ongoing support to Sarah by setting up a Teams meeting with Wirral Borough Council, which was invaluable in providing her with the support to proceed with her plans to become self-employed. Sarah disclosed that she was feeling more motivated and was confident that she would be able to move forward with her journey back into the workplace.

Unfortunately, Sarah experienced significant obstacles with being able to attend specific courses, due to her family situation. However, as her Job Coach, I was able to find an employment opportunity that would work well with her caring responsibilities and other commitments. I assisted Sarah to apply for this position and liaised with the employer around interview availability. I worked closely with Sarah on her interview preparation, and I was very pleased to hear that she was the successful candidate. Reach Out were able to assist in overcoming further barriers by providing financial assistance to enable Sarah to prepare for this role, and to attend the workplace.

Sarah has settled into this role well and is currently providing maternity cover. Being back in the workplace has boosted her confidence significantly and Sarah still plans to take advantage of the support and guidance she has received with a long-term plan to start her own business.

Case Study 5

During registration, my client disclosed that she had not been in work for over 7 years due to ongoing issues with her physical and mental health. She had recently been diagnosed with a serious heart condition and had a pacemaker fitted to save

her life. As a result, she had developed mental health issues including depression, anxiety, and low confidence. She did not feel like she was a suitable candidate for work as she could not see what she had to offer, this left her with feelings of hopelessness and isolation. Despite her persistent low mood, my client was eager to obtain meaningful employment, as she felt that this would significantly improve her mental wellbeing, and she was keen to set a positive example to her children.

Our first step was to work on improving her confidence and explore her transferrable skills and experience. It became clear during our sessions that my client was uncovering a strength and confidence she had not realised she possessed and began to grasp the fact that she did have a lot to offer prospective employers. My client felt that her greatest strengths were in caring for people and following the experience of raising her children with Special Educational Needs, and providing end of life care to her grandmother, she was passionate about pursuing employment opportunities in the care sector.

Together with our Employment Engagement Officer, the client was introduced to a local employer who was the owner of a care company. She was offered a position of Care Assistant and successfully completed all the required training.

Prior to commencing employment, it was identified that the client was facing further barriers to work due to her financial situation. The Reach Out project was able to assist in overcoming these barriers by providing the funding for her DBS Certificate and the purchase of smart clothing and hygiene products, which boosted her confidence as she started her new role.

My client has remained in touch with Reach Out and has advised that she remains in employment and feels confident and proud of herself. Her quality of life has significantly enhanced with the improvements to her financial health and mental wellbeing.

Case Study 6

The participant was referred to Reach Out initially for support in improving her CV, upon initial discussions we discovered further barriers that were preventing her from securing employment. The participant disclosed that she was struggling with mental health issues, including anxiety, and was struggling to envisage how she would move forward with her life.

Over several meetings I was able to support the participant in putting together an action plan, with a focus on what she can do and not what she couldn't do. The participant advised that a focus on constructive actions left her feeling much more positive and confident to begin her job search.

The first step we were able to tackle together was to get the participant's CV ready to send to prospective employers. She also felt that a voluntary role would help to build her confidence in looking for paid employment and ease her concerns about nervousness around being in the work environment and around a lot of people.

I was able to support the participant with applying for a voluntary role, with which she was successful. She has since confided that her confidence has improved greatly and is feeling more positive about returning to paid employment.

Case Study 7

Whilst running an awareness stand for Reach Out in the Pyramids Shopping Centre, I met a young lady who was struggling to secure employment. She expressed a strong desire to work in retail but felt that her confidence and general emotional wellbeing were presenting a significant barrier to employment and, due to being the sole carer of her young son, her work experience in this sector was limited. Recognising her barriers was the first step to overcoming the hurdles that were preventing her from achieving employment.

I referred her to Reach Out Job Coach, Brian Kee, who agreed that looking for a voluntary position would be helpful in gaining work experience and increasing her confidence in the workplace. Having established an excellent relationship with Sports Trader, a business operating from the Pyramids Shopping Centre, I was already aware that they were looking to fill some voluntary positions. The lady agreed to accompany me to speak to the manager of Sports Trader and she was thrilled when they offered her voluntary hours.

Having performed well in her volunteer role, this young lady was rewarded with the offer of a permanent position, which meant Reach Out were able to offer further support with funding to break down her remaining barriers.

I have maintained contact with this client, and since securing a permanent paid position she has grown in confidence and has made improvements to all aspects of her life.

Case Study 8

John is a 26-year-old male who was referred to Reach Out via Job Centre Plus, for support with looking for work. When first engaging with my client we discussed what practical support I could offer to assist him in returning to the workplace, such as CV writing, access to job clubs and support in searching for suitable roles. As our discussions continued John felt he was able to disclose details of the barriers he was experiencing in his personal life. John disclosed that he was struggling with access to his 1-year-old son, due to a strained relationship with his controlling former partner and I felt that John would benefit from some additional support with these issues, before tackling the task of finding employment. I gave John some information regarding our partner, Talking Together Wirral, and he felt that it would be beneficial for him to make a self-referral for further mental health support. I was also able to provide him with details of agencies to provide further support with his family situation, which was proving a significant barrier to both his mental wellbeing and his ability and motivation to find work.

I maintained regular contact with John and ensured that he was strong enough to return to his job search. The first step was to support him with updating his CV and I provided advice and guidance on how to upload this to job search websites. John was very keen to progress with his job search as he felt employment would greatly improve his mental health, and his ability to maintain contact with his son. I was able to support John with completing applications for the roles he was interested in and provided advice and guidance around interview skills, including interview skill sheets.

John was relieved when he was offered a full-time position and told me that he felt a weight had been lifted. I was also able to access funding for John to relieve the financial barriers that he continued to face prior to starting employment and prepare him for commencing his new role. Although he disclosed that he was still dealing with his ongoing mental health problems and relationship difficulties, John was able to see light at the end of the tunnel and is feeling much more confident about his future.

Case Study 9

Upon registering with the Reach Out service, my client disclosed that he was made redundant from a long-term lorry driving role and, due to financial issues, he had been unable to renew his CPC License, which was preventing him from seeking employment within this sector.

My client further disclosed that he was caring for his terminally ill daughter which was placing huge financial pressure on the family and severely affecting his mental health. Due to his lack of employment, my client was having trouble in financing the required adaptations to his home to ensure the safety and quality of living for his daughter, and he was very concerned that he was at risk of losing the family home. My client had unsuccessfully applied for several roles outside of his expertise and was becoming more and more disillusioned with his job search, which was contributing to his already poor mental health.

My client was keen to seek a driving role, as he has significant experience in this industry, and we both felt that this would present the best opportunity for him. I was able to provide Reach Out funding to support the client in financing the renewal of his CPC License, and within just 3 weeks he was able to secure a new permanent position as a lorry driver.

Since commencing his new employment, my client has informed me that his mental health has vastly improved, and he has been able to take better care of his daughter. I am pleased to report that my client was able to maintain his employment throughout the pandemic and is now in a much better position in terms of his wellbeing and financial stability.

Case Study 10

Following a sustained period of unemployment, due to after a family tragedy and relationship breakdown, my client came to Wirral Change to access the Reach Out Project after obtaining the details from the Job Centre. After struggling for a long time with feelings of depression and isolation, he felt that it was the right time to start his job search, which he hoped would improve his quality of life and relationship with his young daughter.

My client was initially unsure of what industry would be best suited to him, so we looked together at the available opportunities, and he decided that finding employment as an HGV Driver would be ideal. I was able to locate a local provider who specialised in providing the required training and licensing. I was able to provide advice and guidance around preparing a CV and collating the relevant documents required to apply for the training course.

I remain in regular contact with my client, and he is pleased with the progress he has made. He has recently completed the training course and has passed the theory test. His next step is to start the practical driving tests required to achieve his dream career. My client has communicated, that due to the support offered to him, he feels more motivated than ever and has already secured an interview for a permanent employment opportunity, when he completes his training and driving tests.

Case Study 11

My client came to us after having recently left employment and was keen to pursue a new career path having been left feeling dejected and demotivated after many years of medical administration work. Prior to commencing her employment search, we spoke about how she was feeling and what work she felt would be most fulfilling. As my client had extensive experience within the NHS, we felt that a caring role would be a great fit for her.

Having developed a good relationship with a new care company, located close to my client's residence, I was able to secure a meeting for my client, which she felt very excited and positive about. I provided practical support with updating her CV, to accurately reflect her strengths and extensive relevant experience. The client was very quickly successful in securing a part-time role, which fitted perfectly with her needs.

My client continued to experience financial difficulties while she was waiting for her first payday and Reach Out were able to provide financial support to ease the strain.

Since gaining employment, my client has been in contact to thank us for the support provided. She has communicated that she feels much happier and more in control of her situation. She has continued to make positive changes in her life and drawing upon the knowledge and experience gained through engagement with Wirral Change and Reach Out, she has taken on an additional part-time administrative role in a

local school and no longer relies on benefits for support.

Case Study 12

My client, from the Bangladeshi Community, approached the Reach Out Project, having been unemployed for 4 months, following the sudden loss of his job in the restaurant industry. Having been living on his savings, my client was experiencing significant financial pressures resulting in low mood and feelings of guilt. He had heard about our work clubs through his community ties and felt encouraged to come along, to be supported by our Job Coaches, and to connect with others in the same position as himself.

The client was advised to apply for Universal Credit so he would be financially supported while applying for work, and we were able to aid with navigating this process. We also provided support with updating his CV to reflect his goal of a change of industry and engaged him in carrying out job searches. Steadily, my client gained in confidence with his digital skills and began to feel confident enough to undertake job searches independently.

My client felt particularly moved by the issues that presented daily challenges to others in his community and was passionate about seeking a role that would give him a sense of meaning, in assisting others to break down the barriers that he himself had encountered.

After submitting several applications, he was successful in being offered an interview with a local care company. He disclosed that he was excited about this role but felt that his lack of interview skills may present a barrier to successfully securing the position he wanted. To overcome his lack of confidence in this area, we worked together on his interview techniques and prepared some answers to potential questions. My client was able to confidently approach his interview and was the successful candidate.

As soon as his offer of employment was official, we were able to further assist the gentleman with shopping vouchers which allowed him to support himself until his first pay day. He has since been in touch with us to let us know he is fulfilled in his new role and to express his thanks for the support he has received. His experience with Reach Out was so positive that he has since referred friends and family to the project.

Case Study 13

Wirral Change has established strong ties within the Asian Community and have assisted many of its members with obtaining employment. This client is a frequent visitor to Reach Out job clubs, having first heard of them via community outreach. She is on Universal Credit and has been actively seeking employment, preferably as a cleaner or caretaker. She is ambitious in her job search and eager to achieve permanent employment to enable her and her family to secure their financial stability.

My client felt that the main barrier to employment was her English language skills, as this has prevented her from being able to effectively navigate job applications and interviews. However, she demonstrates resilience and has been determined to achieve employment. To overcome her language barrier, we referred her to ESOL classes via Wirral Metropolitan College. She was initially hesitant at the prospect of attending college, however when she was advised that Wirral Metropolitan College hold regular classes at Wirral Change, she felt much more confident to attend sessions in an environment that was comforting and familiar. Since attending the classes, her English language skills have improved considerably to the extent that she will be able to communicate effectively in interviews and eventually the workplace.

Now her confidence has grown, we have been able to work together on updating her CV and registering her on job sites. She feels much more independent and in control of her job search now we have set up job alerts to her phone, allowing her to apply for desired positions right away. She has also taken on a voluntary role at a local community centre, enabling her to strengthen her ties with her community and increase her sense of confidence and self-worth.

My client is confident that she will continue to access the support offered by the team until she is able to secure paid employment and is grateful for the skills and experience, she has gained.

Case Study 14

My client first presented to the service having been laid off by her employer due to sickness and has engaged for a total of eight months. My client was aware that her sickness was presenting a barrier to her maintaining employment, however she was determined to use the time she had to improve her employability with a view to securing a new position at a time her health allowed.

During initial engagement we identified several complex barriers that were preventing her from securing and maintaining employment. We worked together to devise a positive action plan to combat her barriers one at a time.

The main issue facing this lady was her health, and after conducting an assessment, we were able to refer her to the internal Health and Wellbeing Team at Wirral Change, who offered health checks and supported her to communicate with her caregivers, including her doctor. We recognised that although she was keen to proceed with a job search, she was not yet in a good state of health, so instead we recommended other activities that would prepare her to proceed with her employment search when she felt ready. As she continued to engage with our team, it became clear that her general stress was decreasing, which was beneficial to her overall health.

We assisted her in overcoming financial barriers by supporting her in applying for benefits and seeking emergency support such as access to food banks. We were also able to offer support in consolidating her debts which gave a sense of relief and

control.

Like many of the clients we support, this lady also presented with a language barrier as English is not her first language. I referred her to our successful ESOL classes at Wirral Change, provided by Wirral Metropolitan College, and encouraged her to practice her newfound language skills. Together we prepared spreadsheets with useful sentences and questions in both English, and her first language, so she would feel more confident in communicating with prospective employers. We also practiced redirecting conversations by asking questions to ensure she understood the conversation.

As a result of the support provided by the project, my clients confidence continued to increase. I encouraged her, through regular support meetings, to ask questions around the job-seeking process and ensured that she always felt safe and understood. When she felt ready, I was able to refer her to a support group where she could build relationships with other people in a similar position, as she continued to build her confidence and solidify new friendships.

Soon, my client felt that her health was in a position that she was able to proceed with her goal of obtaining paid employment. We were able to support her to find a job that worked around her childcare arrangements and provided financial support in the form of vouchers, to safeguard her health and wellbeing. Due to the ongoing support, we have been able to provide, this lady has secured permanent employment which has been invaluable in maintaining her newfound feelings of confidence. She is so grateful for the support she has received from services she had previously been unaware of, that she has since referred friends and family to benefit from the support of the project.

Case Study 15

This client had been previously supported with a job search; however, he had unfortunately been made redundant and found himself in need of our support again. The job coach identified that he needed support with his Right to Work (EU Settlement) status as this was presenting a significant barrier to his employability.

The gentleman had only limited English speaking skills and needed support with contacting employers and applying for suitable roles. Once the client had identified his ideal job opportunity, we were able to overcome this barrier by agreeing with the employer that the job coach would provide interpreting support, over the telephone, during the interview process.

My client was successful in securing this position; however, he faced further barriers due to lack of public transport provision. To enable the client to travel to his place of work, the job coach supported the client to rent a bike from Wirral Change, which enabled the client to accept the offer of permanent employment.