

Work Choice Newsletter

Issue 3 – October 2011

Azure
charitable enterprises

In partnership with
ShawTrust

This edition is bursting with lots of good news stories...

- Module 1 - John's story
 - Tony & Michael get a job
 - Janet & Rachel gain employment
 - Barrie & Craig gain employment
 - New roles for Hilary & Janice
 - Module 1 – Terence's story
- ... and much more!

Work Choice one year on ...



John Gemmell
Senior Manager

It is hard to believe that we are starting year 2 of the Work Choice programme - as many of us never thought we would survive year 1!

However, the frustration and stress levels of the early months have passed and are now just a distant memory as all parties involved start to come to terms with the requirements of the programme. There is no doubt that different stake holders have had different concepts of what Work Choice could do and what clients it could support. Hopefully year 2 will see an improvement in outcomes as we support appropriate clients, in more realistic numbers, to achieve their goal of employment.

The big change for Azure is definitely the level of activity in module 1 where we do feel that even clients who leave without a job start success are now much better equipped to cope with their ongoing job search.

We are pleased with the level of job starts we have achieved. Although lower than originally profiled but these targets were set in different times in relation to the jobs market. However every job start is a huge success to the individual involved and must be celebrated whatever the overall Work Choice outcomes might be.

Our module 2 and 3 activity (supporting clients in employment) has always been a strength of Azure's. However we often think not enough recognition is given to the enormous effort that goes into ensuring clients retain their jobs when there are issues with their employment. We work with many wonderful employers but our relationship with them is not made any easier by the increased demands the new programme has made on their time and the reduction/removal of any financial incentive.

What do we hope for year 2? Work Choice is a programme with many positive features that just needs some readjustment (an argument I could have used for Workstep!!!). It is only really starting now and if we are given appropriate clients and longer to work with them in module 1 (six months is too short for the majority of this client group) then it has every chance to succeed.

Happy 1st Birthday Work Choice

Module 1 – Job Clubs

CPA7



My name is John, for 30 years I have worked in the construction industry until I contracted an illness which prevented me from continuing to work in the industry. I found myself in the strange environment of the job market, a position I had never encountered before.

I felt out of touch with modern ways of job searching; I had no IT skills, no CV and had never completed an application form before. I was new to different interview techniques and online job searching; in fact it would be fair to say I was a complete dinosaur! I approached my DEA for help and in December 2010 I was referred to Work Choice.

Once with Azure I began attending a Job Club one day per week, the first thing I achieved was compiling my own CV, with the help of my Advisers Alex Scott and Claire Gardner I now possess a very professional and impressive CV.

My first impression of these sessions was that I had discovered an organisation that treats you with respect and more importantly, understanding.

Over the next few weeks we moved on to interview techniques and completing application forms. What you gain most importantly is confidence building and because of the skills of my advisers this progressed naturally.

But that still left the problem of IT; I couldn't even switch on a computer. I discussed this with Alex and Claire and I enrolled on a short level 1 IT course at Azure, delivered by Shaw Trust. I now feel confident in using a computer for a variety of job seeking activities.

Having been working with Azure I feel my chances of gaining employment are 10 fold. I think it is only a matter of time and dedicated job search.

“ John now enthusiastically gets involved when using the computer and will happily help his fellow job searchers who are less confident with IT. ”



Alex Scott
Recruitment
Adviser



Claire Gardner
Employment
Adviser

Job Starts (short job outcomes)

CPA7

Barrie was referred to Azure in December 2010 and has been a regular participant at our North Shields Job Club; being actively involved in all activities. During his time on Module 1 Barrie attended several interviews but wasn't successful in being offered employment. Not deterred in his determination to get a job, Barrie kept applying for vacancies with the support of his Advisers Alex Scott and Chris Nash. Intensive one-to-one interview technique support was provided prior to Barrie securing another interview.

All of Barrie's hard work paid off and the position of Support Worker with Flexible Support Options was offered to him which he was thrilled to accept.



“ I'm over the moon about getting a job. The support from Azure has been brilliant and the two lads have been great, I feel a lot more confident.

”

Craig featured in our last edition of the newsletter, taking part in an interview technique session at our Morpeth Job Club. Since then Craig has been successful in gaining a job as a Horticultural Apprentice with Doxford Hall Hotel and Spa. Craig commenced in employment in early September.

Craig is gaining a vast amount of experience in his new position, he works between three sites, spending one month in each area. So far Craig has been involved with grass cutting, pruning and leaf picking.

Craig has settled well into his new job and is Really enjoying it.

“ I've found Azure helped me with my interview skills. Without the mock interview I wouldn't have known what to do wear or how to make eye contact properly.

”



Tony was referred in November 2010 and was an active participant at our Gateshead Job Club; having 100% attendance.

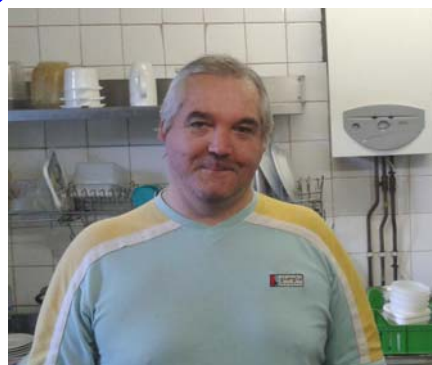
Tony has always been aware of his capabilities and during his time on Module 1 he displayed total motivation and dedication towards his job search. Tony identified and applied for countless vacancies with the support of his Advisers Tony Kelly and Peter Stokel.

Tony's commitment was rewarded when he applied for and was offered a job as Kitchen Assistant with the Victoria Bar and Kitchen in Gateshead.

“

Joining Work Choice through Azure was a good move as it has given me an entry into employment.

”



Job Starts (short job outcomes)

CPA8

In June 2011 Michael was referred to the Work Choice programme with Azure. Michael had some work history but had been unemployed since 2007 however was keen to get back into work.

With the support from his Adviser at Azure Michael applied for a vacancy and gained his first interview whilst being in Module 1; just 12 weeks after starting on the programme.

Michael was successful and was offered a cleaning job at the Raby Arms in Hart, Cleveland.



Michael started in early October is doing very well within his new role.

“

Azure's help and support gave me the confidence to apply for the job and attend the interview.

”

Job Starts

CPA8

Hilary was referred to Azure in early 2011 after having been unemployed for approximately 2 years. Having a wide range of work experience within a variety of environments Hilary was keen to get back into work.

Working alongside her Advisers Luke Robinson and Pat Ramsey, Hilary applied for a number of positions.

After attending just her second interview whilst being on Module 1, Hilary was successful in being offered a job as a Kitchen Assistant at Strikes Garden Centre in Northallerton.

“

I'm delighted to be back in work now. I received fabulous support from Luke leading up to getting my job, and it's nice to know that Steve is on the end of the telephone if I need him

”



In November 2010 Janice was referred to Work Choice. Janice has a good employment history, having worked in a range of roles within a variety of industries.

Janice has been a regular attendee at our Darlington job club; actively involved in all activities. With support from Recruitment Adviser, Pat Ramsey, Janice attended a work placement one day per week to update her skills.

After applying for numerous vacancies Janice was offered a 16 hour per week job as a Customer Service Representative with Tool Station and has progressed directly into unsupported employment.



“

Thank you to Pat and Luke for their help and tips, all that I learnt at the job clubs helped me secure this job.

”

In November 2010 Janet was referred to Work Choice. Janet was made redundant after over 20 years service and was very anxious at the thought of getting another job. During her time on Module 1 Azure provided encouragement and support to Janet until she felt confident to apply for a job.

After application and interview for the position of Assistant Cook with Executive Care Group Janet was offered the job at their Yew Tree Care Home.

Before employment could commence Janet had to sit a Food Hygiene exam which Azure arranged, Pat Ramsey provided support to Janet during this exam. Janet was successful in passing the exam and started employment.



“ It's great to be back in work and I'm grateful for all the help I got from Pat & Luke my Advisers. It's also nice to know that I've still got support for a while longer, just in case. ”

Rachel was referred in November 2010. Rachel began attending our job club where it was identified that she did not have a CV, one of the first activities Rachel was involved in was working with our Recruitment Advisers to create one.

During her time on Module 1 Rachel was actively involved in all activities and was always striving to overcome barriers. With support Rachel applied for a vacancy, Pat Ramsey worked with Rachel on interview preparation and after a second interview she was offered the job.

Rachel now works as a Receptionist at Active Life Health Club in Richmond and started in September, she also volunteers with the British Heart Foundation and has kept this up though she is now working.

“ I have been employed for three weeks now and feel I am rising to the challenge of the position. The support I have received has been tremendous and much appreciated. ”



Module 1 – Job Clubs

CPA8

Terence is deaf and has had additional health conditions during his life; he had been unemployed for 2 years after having been employed for 12 years with the same organisation. Terence was referred to Azure in December 2010 to access the Work Choice programme.

Terence began attending our Redcar Job Club and was enthusiastic in identifying job opportunities and applying for positions. Working alongside his Adviser Pat Ramsey it was identified that Terence would benefit from IT training as he was unable to use a computer. Pat sourced one-to-one IT tuition for Terence at a local community centre which started in July. Terence is really enjoying this course and finds it most informative.

A work placement as a cleaner at Cleveland Metalworkers was also set up for Terence; enabling him to keep his skills up to date. His placement provider was pleased to report that “Terence was enjoying the experience and finding it very useful.”

Terence’s DEA was glad to learn of the support offered to Terence and the achievements he has made.

Pat monitored Terence during his time on placement and kept in regular contact with Cleveland Metalworkers to ensure all was going well.

During his time on the programme Terence also used Azure’s Welfare Benefits Service; he received advice and assistance from Elaine Dobson to access benefits he was unaware he was entitled to apply for.

Terence continued on his work placement and with the hard work he demonstrated during his time there he was successful in being offered a job with the company which he was pleased to accept.



“ Azure’s support has given me confidence and helped me achieve things I wanted to do. ”

We work with many organisations that provide employment opportunities to our clients.

We appreciate their support.

- Active Life Health Club
- Acorn Computer Recycling
- Age UK
- Alnwick Infirmary
- ARC Car Clean
- Asda (Benton)
- Asda (Benwell)
- Asda (Cramlington)
- Asda (Gosforth)
- Asda (Middlesbrough)
- Ashbourne Senior Living
- Ashlea Park Care Home
- Azure Community Access
- BHS (Metro Centre)
- BHS (Sunderland)
- Bizzy Bees
- Bond Care
- Boots
- Brookfield Care Home
- Christine Forsyth
- Cleasewell Hill School
- Cleveland Metalworkers
- Collingwood School & Media Arts College
- Co-operative Food Group (Blaydon)
- Co-operative Food Group (Blyth)
- Co-operative Food Group (Easingwold)
- Co-operative Food Group (Newbiggin-by-the-Sea)
- Co-operative Food Group (North Shields)
- Co-operative Food Group (Prudhoe)
- Crimewatch Safeguard Security Systems
- CWC Mailing Ltd
- Durham University
- Executive Care Group
- Flexible Support Options
- Four Seasons Healthcare
- Garden Centre Group
- Gateshead Access Panel
- Hambleton District Council
- Harlow Printing Ltd
- Harwood Court Care Home
- HMRC
- Homes for Northumberland
- Huntercombe Group
- Abbeymore Neurodisability
- Ivanhoe Forge
- Jobcentre Plus
- John Laing Integrated Services
- Katherine's Florists
- Longhirst Hall
- McDonalds
- MacLellan International
- Marjorie's Florist
- Marks & Spencer (Metro Centre)
- Marks & Spencer (South Shields)
- Mascot Carpentry & Joinery
- Middlesbrough Council
- Morrisons (Alnwick)
- Morrisons (Byker)
- Morrisons (Chester-le-Street)
- Morrisons (Jarrow)
- Morrisons (Sunderland)
- Raby Arms
- Royal Station Hotel
- Royal Victoria Infirmary
- Rural Payments Agency
- Sainsbury's (Whitley Bay)
- Simon Robinson Racing
- Southern Cross Healthcare
- South Tyneside Council
- Strikes Garden Centre
- Sunderland City Council
- Tees Valley Leisure
- Tesco (South Shields)
- Tesco Bank
- Tweedmouth House Nursing & Residential Home
- Two Sisters Food Group
- Tyne Mills Motors
- Tynemouth Nursery Group
- Tyneside Early Education & Care
- Washington Nursery
- UKAR
- Vale Contract Services
- Victoria Bar & Kitchen
- Walkers Newsagents
- Wilkinsons
- Royal Station Hotel

If you have any vacancies or could offer any of our clients the opportunity of a work placement, please get in touch:

es@azure-charitable.co.uk or 01670 717 106