



Work Choice



Elaine

Welcome to the latest edition of Spotlight.

As you will see from the facts and figures contained inside, Azure's Employment Programmes Team has been working very hard this year to meet and in some instances exceed our Work Choice programme targets. Although this is a wonderful achievement, we are mindful never to forget that our customers are our main priority and focus.

This edition shows just a few of the customers we have helped gain employment and acknowledges some of the organisations who've helped along the way.

YOU KNOW WHO YOU ARE AND THANK YOU!

The latest news about Work Choice is that the final date for new referrals onto the programme has been brought forward – details are below!

BREAKING NEWS!

It is official - Work Choice has been extended!

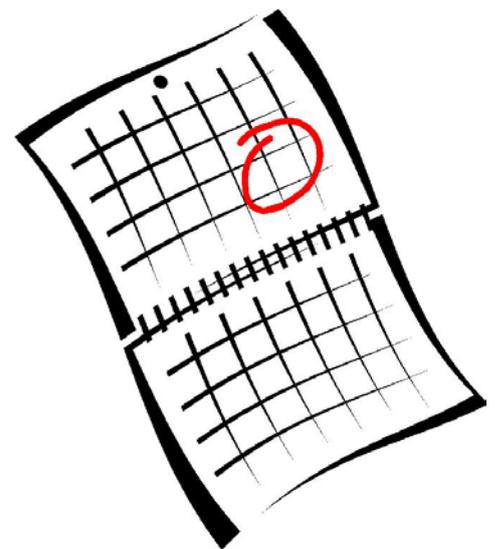
We will now be able to receive referrals up to end November 2017.

We have also been informed that our Supported Business Contact has been extended until December 2018!

We have 54 protected places within our Supported Businesses. 30% of these are dedicated to clients who have had no previous work history, are having to consider re-training to enter a new vocational area due to change in circumstances or someone who has been out of the labour market for some time.

Roles usually available within our Supported Businesses are varied and cover a range of sectors including:

- Retail
- Landscapes
- Horticulture
- Hospitality
- Care/Support
- Administration



If you have any clients you feel would be interested please send us a referral or get in touch - quickly!

New relationships

We are pleased to have developed new relationships with some local and national organisations.

We are working with these organisations to see if we can develop ways of further supporting people with disability.

VOICES NORTHUMBERLAND



Empowerment through Employment

Generation NE

Make the connection



Community Transport

We'd love to hear from you!

We strive to deliver a professional service to our clients, host employers and other stakeholders. So we can monitor how we are doing we welcome any comments, compliments and suggestions. We use feedback in our annual self assessment process.

If you have an area for improvement or a concern, please also contact us so we can work together to resolve the matter and to allow us to develop our service for the future.

If you would like to give us feedback you can contact us the following ways.



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Disability Confident

Azure Charitable Enterprises is delighted to announce that it has been certified as a Disability Confident employer and awarded the certificate in July.

We have progressed from being Disability Committed and are on our journey towards the next level and our goal of being a Disability Confident Leader.

You will start to see this logo appear on our printed material over the next few months as we proudly display our achievement.

By being Disability Confident Azure is committed to:

- challenging attitudes towards disability
- increasing understanding of disability
- removing barriers to disabled people and those with long-term health conditions
- ensuring that disabled people have the opportunities to fulfil their potential and realise their aspirations



David at Azure Printing



Being out of work for some time, David was referred to Azure's Work Choice programme in May 2017.

As do all our clients, David was allocated a dedicated Adviser and Sheena met him soon after his referral was received.

Sheena was fascinated by David's distinctive work history; since the age of 15 David worked as Decorator, then for over 20 years worked as a Decorative Artist. David then went on to obtain a Fine Arts degree before gaining employment working for Northern Stage as a Scene Painter. David then moved to work on movies and TV programmes including favourites such as Inspector George Gently.

Once Sheena knew David's background – there was one obvious route – to introduce him to our Printing department!

Azure Printing Manager Darren Turner was impressed by David and offered him a 3-month paid position and David jumped at the opportunity!

In June David started working for Azure in a Supported Business position in the role of Print Finisher. During his contract, David was supported by Employment Adviser Alex Scott, who met regularly with David to create a Development Plan and review progress. During his employment David learned how to use the printing machinery as well as operate the guillotine.

David commented that the team at Azure Printing are great to work with and are very supportive and friendly. David went on to say that it is a happy environment with people committed to their job.

About how Work Choice has helped him, David commented:

“ Having been ill and out of work for so long it has given me the confidence to go back in to the working environment. ”

Darren reports to it being a real joy having David at Print. It has been a pleasure to get to know David a little. He has demonstrated many skills and talents and I really wish David well for the future.

We want to express gratitude to Darren for offering David this opportunity and thank David for leaving Azure with such a lasting impression.

Job start success stories

We have had a massive 33 job starts in the last 6 months! Many of these are with external employers.

Here is a just a small selection of the amazing job start stories.



With a first class honours degree in Mechanical Engineering Tom was referred to Azure in January. After intensively working alongside his Adviser Tom Arthurs, Tom felt able to begin applying for jobs relevant to his qualifications. Tom gained many interviews and travelled widely across the country to attend them. His hard work and determination paid off when he was offered and accepted a position of Mechanical Design Engineer. Tom not only gained a new job but had the added excitement of having to relocate down South.

We wish you well in your new career.

Spencer had some work history and experience in voluntary positions, but had been out of work for some time. His Adviser, Sheena Smith knew when she met him it wouldn't be long before he got a job; his enthusiasm was infectious. Sheena became aware of vacancies with Amazon and felt Spencer would be the perfect candidate! She supported him to achieve Workplace Safety and Manual Handling certificates to support his application. Spencer was invited for interview and was successful in gaining the position of Warehouse Associate. Access to Work funding was sourced to assist Spencer in the workplace. Spencer reports that things are going well and enjoying working for Amazon. Well done Spencer!



Brian has a sound employment history and a wealth of experience in information technology and teaching. Brian had worked for the North East Ambulance Service in the past on a short term contract. So when Bridging the Gap funding became available we immediately thought of approaching them. They fondly remembered Brian and discussions began to take place about the type of role he could fill. In August Brian started a 6-month contract working again for the organisation in the position of Administrator. Brian's employer is incredibly supportive and he is enjoying getting back into the swing of things.

Congratulations on your new job.

Sam was referred in March 2017 and came to Azure with a solid platform of administration experience via work placements and volunteer positions but with only a limited amount of paid employment. Sam worked closely with her Adviser Brian Hunt and a work placement was sourced at the QE hospital in Gateshead. Sam thoroughly enjoyed the experience of learning how to digitise patient records ready for archiving. Sam's supervisor was very impressed by her and Azure worked with the QE to convert the placement in to 6-month paid position. Sam is now employed as an Archiving Officer and is taking on new tasks.

You're hard worked paid off Sam, well done!



With previous experience in administration Jason was keen to get back in to work having been unemployed for some time. Jason's main barrier was travel; although owning a motorbike he was only comfortable driving in his home town. Adviser Tom Arthurs sourced a placement opportunity at Mitie in Cramlington with a possibility of it being converted to a paid job. Tom spent time travel training with Jason and soon Jason was able to travel to Cramlington with confidence. Jason did tremendously well on placement so much so his manager offered him a part time paid position and started work in May as a Project Administrator.

What a great achievement.

Daniel was re-referred earlier this year. Daniel's situation meant he was seeking nightshift work and preferred to find employment in his local town. With previous experience in hospitality in both paid positions and voluntary, it was an industry he was interested in re-entering. Daniel's Adviser Tom Arthurs supported him to apply for lots of vacancies the Daniel spotted an ideal job, in fact two part time roles for the same employer; a Kitchen Assistant and a Night Porter. Daniel applied for the roles and was offered the jobs. Daniel started work at the Waterford Lodge in July.

What fabulous news Daniel, good luck in the new jobs!



Robin is a good citizen

Robert has successfully passed the rigorous telephone and application process for volunteer work at Citizens Advice. His role, after training, will be in the Digi hub based in Morpeth.

This new experience and role is perfect for Robert who has a natural thirst for knowledge and a gift for connecting with people. He has completed online programmes in a range of subjects such as a Diploma in Cognitive Behavioural Therapy, Life Coaching and has just completed a Level 2 in Business Administration. Robert's ability to retain information will be invaluable in his new volunteer position.

Robert describes his new role as being, "an important first port of call for people with a variety of different concerns." He feels his understanding of people will also help in empathising and supporting clients. He sees the role as a way to



“

empower people to make decisions

”

and this is very much the ethos of Citizens Advice.

Whilst working with Azure he enjoyed training in Data Protection and Equality and Diversity, areas of real significance to his new role. His background in Care will also stand him in good stead, having developed his already excellent skills as an active listener and as patient, people-centred person.

When asked what he will enjoy about the role he said,

“

Every day will be unique; every new client will bring a variety of different problems and challenges.

”

He is also looking forward to furthering his knowledge of employment law, Equality and Diversity and support for people with addictions.

Robert's combination of humour, sensitivity, patience and a genuine desire to help those who need support will make him a successful and valued member of the Citizens Advice team.

Statistics centre

Over the last 12 months we have been working harder than ever – and we are proud to have achieved...

108

new referrals on to the Work Choice programme

103%

of programme start target

201%

of job start target

129%

of jobs gained in this period have already lasted more than 13 weeks

41%

of jobs gained in this period have already lasted 26 weeks

... and all this accomplished with a department of

7.

All the photographs and stories used in the production of this newsletter have been obtained with the full consent and permission of each client or learner

Azure Charitable Enterprises is working in partnership with Shaw Trust to deliver Work Choice.