

Case study: training

New Challenge

Francis had a successful career as a driver until October 2009 when he was made redundant. His final job, a month later, was a temporary one which had lasted only two weeks. Since then he had been unable to find work as a driver.

He was referred to New Challenge, a specialist subcontractor involved in the European Social Fund programme in October 2010. His adviser Caroline noticed that although Francis was open and willing to co-operate, he lacked confidence and didn't say very much. She made sure she took time to build a relationship with him before moving on to more active measures to help him find work.

At the first assessment session Caroline noticed Francis was taking a long time to read any material he was given. He was also slow in completing a form. She wondered whether this slowness stemmed from poor eye sight or issues with literacy. It turned out to be the latter and Francis acknowledged that he found it difficult to fill out application forms and this put him off applying for jobs he wanted. He welcomed Caroline's suggestion that he take an adult literacy course. He also started an IT course for beginners. He received a certificate for Entry level 3, which was not accredited, but it meant he could enrol for an accredited level 1 course at a later date.

At the same time, Caroline and Francis looked at his CV. Caroline thought it didn't show the transferable skills he had acquired throughout his career and so she went through his employment history with him to see what they could add.

She realised that although he had a full, clean UK driving licence, he didn't have a digital TACO card which prevented him from applying for jobs he had skills for, such as driving a 3.5 or 7.5 tonne vans. So the next step was to apply to the DVLA (Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency) for the card entitling him to drive heavy goods vehicles, thus extending his employment opportunities.

When they had done this, they started to work on job search skills. Caroline coached Francis on how to speak to employers. When employers asked for candidates to apply by phone, she phoned them first and then let Francis speak to them. She took the same approach with written applications. Francis would draft his applications, which Caroline would check, before he filled in the actual forms. They also sent speculative applications and held mock interview sessions.

Gradually Francis's skills and confidence increased to the point where he was able to complete job applications on his own. Caroline also encouraged Francis to network to extend his range of options. As a result of his networking, a friend pointed him in the direction of a job opening at an international courier company who were looking for delivery drivers. Francis approached the company himself and secured a one-

week work trial. Because of his good performance, he was offered a permanent position as a 7.5 tonne lorry driver.

Behind his success was the range of training he had undertaken and the personalised approach adopted by New Challenge. In the end, he succeeded in finding a job independently.