



Communities for Work Plus Case Study

Community Employment Mentor – Lucy Sparkes February 2021

This case study highlights the effective partnership working between the CfW+ and legacy programmes.

DB originally came to the CfW+ programme for support in applying for a job we were advertising on the Project Facebook page @cfwplustorfaen. Through discussion with the CfW Triage Officer, DB explained how she had been made redundant in March 2020. Since then she has been claiming Universal Credit and struggling each month – living to every penny.

As the allocated Mentor, I contacted DB and discussed her circumstances further. We soon established an agreed way forward for her action plan and explained my support in the process. Living on her own and with her rent taking up the majority of her income, DB was struggling financially. I discussed a referral to the Crisis/Financial Inclusion team and DB was thankful that somebody was listening and could advise on what she could do differently to help her manage her finances better. We also discussed her CV and the support I would give her in helping to update and produce on the computer rather than the current screen shot that she was using.

One opportunity that we discussed was through our Employer Liaison Officer, Richard Murphy who had built up an effective relationship with the local B&Q store and was supporting the manager with their recruitment. DB was happy for her CV to be forwarded on for consideration and was thrilled that these opportunities had been identified so quickly.

A few days later DB had the call inviting her to an interview. DB called me to let me know, and she was over the moon! We completed interview preparation together over the telephone, talking through research into the company and possible questions that may arise.

DB had a successful interview and was offered the job! B&Q told her she was perfect for the role, with a good knowledge of retail and felt that she would be a good fit for the team. However, as the job is only 20 hours, we discussed the top up benefits she could still possibly receive. In agreement with DB, I made another referral to our Financial Inclusion project who made an appointment with the Citizen's Advice Bureau to support DB with the advice needed and options available to her.

After the appointment with Citizens Advice we spoke again, it was confirmed that DB would be better off each week financially working 20 hours, which was the news we wanted to hear! This was a really important aspect to establish before accepting the role, ensuring DB would be financially stable. Once DB discovered that she would be better off financially, she accepted the role!

I contacted DB a week after her start date to see how she was settling into the role and DB described how she was worried about her funds being very low due to having to wait a month for her first wages. I explained I would look into this and see what support we could give. With advice from the Financial Support team, we organised a food parcel for DB. I also helped DB to complete a DAF application as DB was worried about her energy bills. This payment was received a couple of days later. Again, DB was thankful and described the support as a weight being lifted from her shoulders.

Participant quote:

“Lucy has been amazing with me after almost eight months looking for work. I had only been with Lucy a month when she got me an interview and I got the job. Plus, she always checked if I was ok. Lucy also got me some gas topped up as I was struggling as money was very short plus a food bank parcel. This is the only person to seem to go out of her way to help - thank you so much for all you have done for me... lovely to see someone that is passionate about her job and other people”.