

# Making a Difference

## Career Guidance: Making a Difference

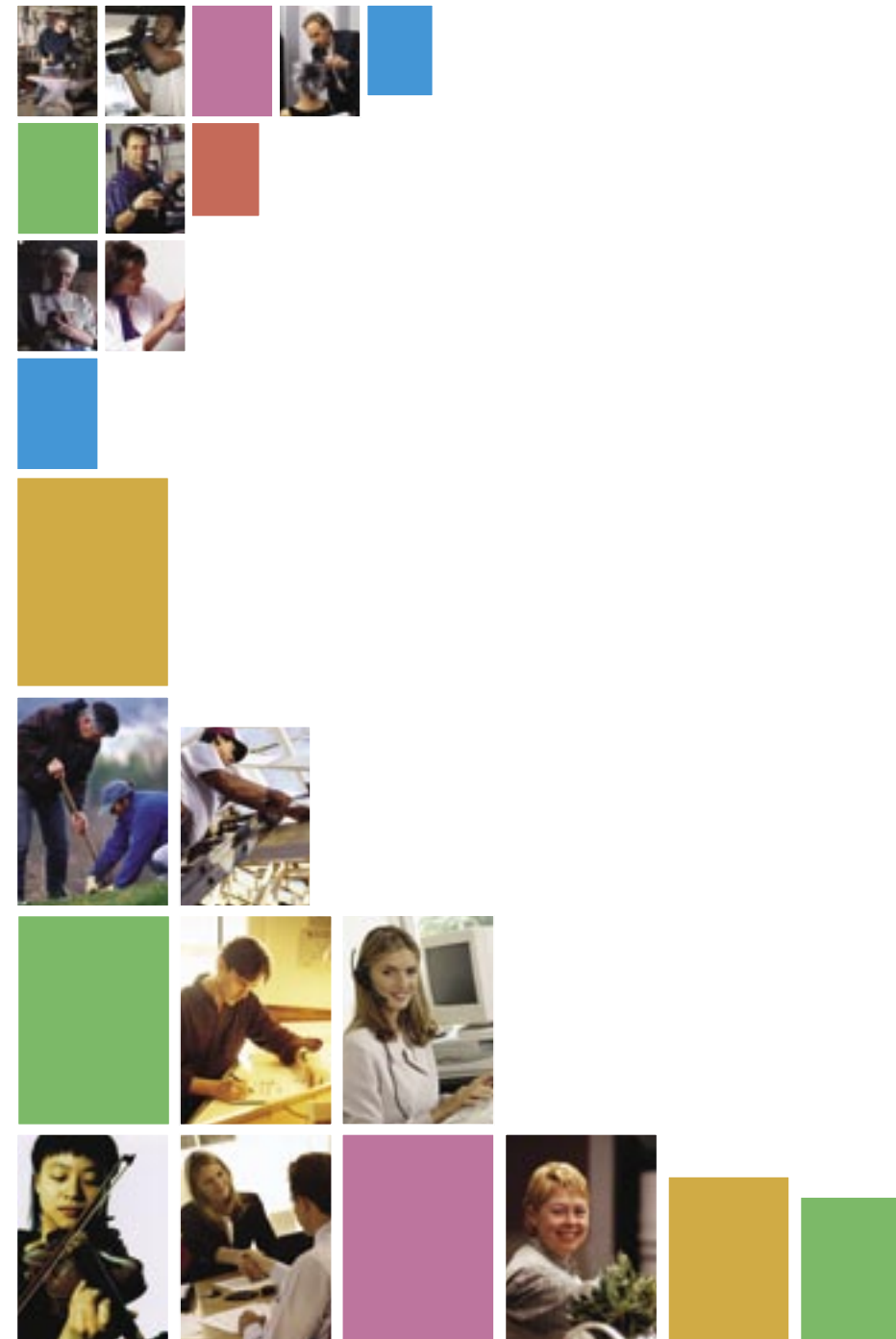
Second Edition



The Institute of Career Guidance  
Third Floor  
Copthall House  
1 New Road  
Stourbridge  
West Midlands  
DY8 1PH

Tel: 01384 376 464  
Fax: 01384 440 830

[www.icg-uk.org](http://www.icg-uk.org)





The Institute of Career Guidance would like to thank the following organisations for supplying images for this publication

VT Education and Skills,  
The Institute of Plumbing and Heating Engineering,  
The Big Issue and The Environment Agency

For reasons of confidentiality the identities of the client and in some cases the adviser have been changed.  
The images used in the publication are not those of the individual featured within the case study

The Institute would like to thank the following Advisers for their time and dedication in helping us put together this publication

Maggie Hatcher, Greater Merseyside Connexions Partnership Ltd  
Sandi Fisher, Stockport College  
Jenny Campbell, Connexions Leicester Shire  
Yvonne Hurrell, Central Careers Consultants  
Pat Fitzgerald, Prospects South London IAG Partnership  
Jeff Riley, St. Mary's College, University of London  
Suzie Lawrence, London School of Economics  
Kim Lambeth, VT Careers Management Ltd  
Phil Thomas, VT Careers Management Ltd  
Jen May, VT Careers Management Ltd  
Cheryl Jones, Sheffield Futures  
Monica Feiner, Lifetime Careers  
Linda Laverick, Future Prospects  
Victoria Griffith, Independent school, Wiltshire

The ICG would also like to especially thank Maddie McGowan who worked tirelessly in putting this publication together

#### SECTION INTRODUCTIONS SUPPLIED BY

Sandra Furby MBE, Business Development Manager, Network Publishing  
Barry Cummings, Head of Offender Management, HMP Northallerton  
Pat Fitzgerald, Project Manager, One-Stop Service, Prospects Services Ltd  
Steve Crump, LDD and Equal Opportunities Co Ordinator, Connexions West of England  
Jill Leaver, Personal Adviser, VT Careers Management West Sussex



Institute of Career Guidance

# making a difference

An occupation is often the foundation upon which people structure the rest of their lives; be it paid, unpaid, voluntary, part time, self-employment, often it's the work that facilitates all else. So those who work to help people to make sense of that pivotal occupation can have a profound impact, not only upon an individual but also the other people around them. They can make the kind of difference that reaches far beyond the hours spent with a client and which has resonance across families and organisations and for years to come.

But one of the hardest things career guidance practitioners are asked to explain is how they do what they do. Much of the difference they make is achieved because they have developed a professional sieve through which they pour skills, experience, knowledge and intuition. The resulting blend of interpersonal chemistry creates the right conditions for the client to make a crucial change for themselves. But how precisely was it done? "Hard to say" they'll tell you. "You had to be there". "I can't really remember..." So the explanations that are offered often tell only the "what" of the client's story and miss out the subtleties of "how".

In pulling together the first edition of 'Making a Difference' I worked with excellent careers advisers who patiently endured close examination of their working practices in order to help me understand how they had brought about real change for their clients. People were kind enough to say that this is just the kind of material that's needed to help explain the impact and benefits of professional career guidance and once again, I've been lucky enough to work with some fantastic professionals in drafting a second version. This time we've also tried something new by including 'break out' case histories that seek to highlight the elements of the professionals' toolkit by separating them from the usual narrative story. Many thanks too to all the people who have provided introductions to each of the sections, so helping to provide the reader with a context in which to better understand the work done with different client groups.

In working on 'Making a Difference' I've been privileged to work with some real unsung heroes, as time and again it's struck me just how ordinary practitioners believe they are, and yet how extraordinary is the work they do.

**MADDIE MCGOWAN**  
CONSULTANT

# Section 1 Adults 20+

Susie learned how Lisa, whilst handling a course with a notoriously high workload, had also been dealing with difficult family issues - the bankruptcy of her father's business and the death of two grandparents

## LISA LISA

Once people are 'over 20' there is this myth that everyone has their lives mapped out, they have chosen their career path and they are going to live happily ever after! In reality there are very few people who decide what they want to do and forty years later are still doing the same thing.

The situations you will read about in this section, illustrate some of the issues facing people once they are over 20. No one can predict when redundancy, changes in family circumstances and other factors will occur. Trying to balance work and life issues is an ongoing struggle for some people, who feel that looking for rewarding employment opportunities is a luxury they cannot afford and do not have the time to pursue. So people can get stuck in a rut.

When working with this client group, advisers need to have an approach that is supportive, helpful and understanding without seeming to patronise. Some clients will have fixed views about what they want to do and feel they only need some support to get there. This is fine, and an adviser will certainly follow this path with the client, however the client may sometimes have unrealistic expectations and the adviser will need to be honest about this whilst assisting the client to make realistic choices. It can be difficult for a client to remain positive and motivated at this stage and the adviser will need to channel the clients enthusiasm into more realistic options. In addition to extensive knowledge of the local learning and work opportunities, an adviser needs a strong referral network to specialist support services.

One of the main barriers to learning and work for over 20's is lack of confidence and low self esteem. This is particularly relevant for people who have been made redundant and also people who have taken a career break, perhaps to bring up a family. In a redundancy situation, the individual can feel

bitter as they do not have a choice about giving up their job. They may also be in denial and think that it won't happen to them. The adviser is there to help them move forward but has to get them to deal with the anger and hurt before they can do this. This may involve referral to specialised counselling service. Clients in this situation may also be driven by the need to find paid employment of any sort, rather than looking for the 'right' post for them. They may feel that training is not an option as they need an income quickly. Advisers have to show their sensitivity to the clients circumstances whilst encourage them to look at reskilling to meet the needs of the labour market. This can be very difficult if the client has had previous poor experience of education.

Working with this client group can be very challenging but also very rewarding as a good adviser can really make a difference not just to an individuals' employment prospects, but also in building their confidence, changing their approach to learning and gaining a positive outlook for the whole family.

**SANDRA FURBY** MBE  
BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT MANAGER

### BACKGROUND

In her third year of a finance and accounting degree at the London School of Economics Lisa sought help with job applications from career adviser Susie, who specialised in her subject area. A very able student, her tutors were expecting an excellent degree and the adviser's task appeared at the outset to be the straightforward one of CV building and job hunt support. However during a brief 'screening' interview it emerged that Lisa was not a 'typical' LSE student, having attended a south London Comprehensive and come to University on a scholarship. She was the first of her large extended family to have a university education and they expected great things of her. Susie learned how Lisa, whilst handling a course with a notoriously high workload, had also been dealing with difficult family issues - the bankruptcy of her father's business and the death of two grandparents. As she had been living at home and was the most able, it had fallen to her to liaise with social services on behalf of her grandparents and deal with the financial and legal implications of her father's business situation. There had been little space for extra curricular pastimes.



### THE KEY ISSUE

By the time she met Susie, Lisa was on the edge of despair. She felt exhausted by the demands made upon her from all quarters and urgently needed support. Her apparent competence and real-life experience amounted to a life that she perceived to be less interesting to employers than those of her fellow students. She was worried about disclosing the extreme pressures she'd experienced as this would mark her out as 'different' and 'a problem'. Lisa felt, in short, that she wasn't going to be able to compete with other candidates and had little to offer.

**By the time she met Susie, Lisa was on the edge of despair. She felt exhausted by the demands made upon her from all quarters and urgently needed support**



She was working hard to contain her emotions but a tense, fidgety manner and tight-lipped exchanges gave her away

#### LISA'S NEEDS

- Lisa needed help from an objective, impartial source so building a positive working relationship was critical to the success of the guidance process.
- Susie agreed with Lisa that they should take things forward in two ways:
  - A practical focus on Lisa's career management needs and in particular, articulating her skills and experience in terms that would appeal to prospective employers. One of Lisa's difficulties was filling in application forms, as she couldn't think of anything to say that wasn't negative.
  - Offering emotional support that would help to 'unblock' overwhelming feelings of panic that were preventing Lisa from moving forward. Susie recognized that Lisa might need to move beyond the career guidance process into personal counselling in order to tackle some of the emotional needs she had.

#### ASSESSMENTS & ACTIVITIES

Susie attended Lisa carefully in order to assess the best ways in which to help her.

- It was easy to see that her client was very troubled but experience told her that Lisa's panic had frozen her into inertia. She was working hard to contain her emotions but a tense, fidgety manner and tight-lipped exchanges gave her away.
- Susie recognised that time was important. Lisa needed time to reflect and to overcome pressures by herself before her confidence could be restored.
- As they worked together Susie was aware that Lisa's exceptional story could very much interest an employer but she needed Lisa to recognise this for herself through the process of preparing her applications. During a further two sessions the adviser helped Lisa to think laterally and see her situation in a more positive way.
- Lisa began to see that she had skills such as liaising with external agencies, finding innovative solutions and acquiring a knowledge of how organisations, such as legal and social services work. They highlighted qualities such as tenacity and resilience and were able to demonstrate these.
- Susie referred Lisa to the University Counselling and Welfare Service in order to provide her with a regular source of specialist help so she could operate more effectively at this crucial time in her life.

Susie referred Lisa to the University Counselling and Welfare Service in order to provide her with a regular source of specialist help

Lisa feels reassured that she had much to offer and her confidence in her abilities have been restored

#### THE ADVISERS SKILLS AND EXPERIENCE

- Building a positive working relationship with Lisa was crucial, but this involved convincing her that it was OK to be 'helped'. Lisa had always had to be the strong one and this was the first time she had been 'allowed' to be vulnerable, an experience that she found both exciting and scary.
- Lisa and Susie were conscious that their beliefs about the roles they were entering needed some adjustment. Lisa's experience of dealing with unsympathetic University staff had created in her some apprehension and uncertainty. The adviser, more used to 'quick' enquiries and straightforward requests for help had to work harder than usual to demonstrate an unconditional positive regard for her client.
- Communication skills were vital and mainly used to probe and clarify the situation for Lisa. Susie was able to 'reach' Lisa by reading and interpreting verbal and visual clues.
- The empathy extended by Susie to Lisa helped her to be confident enough to reveal her vulnerability so she could talk about what she experienced.
- Soon Susie was able to use humour and teasing to help Lisa to gain another perspective.

#### KNOWLEDGE DRAWN UPON BY THE ADVISER

- What employers look for in graduate recruits
- Interviewing skills that help to explore an individual's capability and skills
- Transferable skills
- Employability issues
- The opportunity structure
- Career Guidance training

#### OUTCOMES FOR THE CLIENT

##### 'Soft' outcomes

- Lisa's attitude shifted to become more positive and forward-looking
- She became less vulnerable and more able to make the best of herself
- Her natural drive and energy began to re-emerge
- She gained a more objective view of her situation
- Lisa can see her experiences objectively and understand how they have shaped her as a person
- Lisa felt reassured that she had much to offer and her confidence in her abilities was restored

#### OUTCOMES FOR THE ADVISER

##### Working with Lisa;

- had provided the opportunity to do more in-depth work using classical career management skills rather than the more frequent and restrictive advice & guidance function she usually offered. This led to greater and longer-term satisfaction as it demanded more of her expertise.

##### 'Hard' outcomes

- Lisa has completed five online applications
- She has experienced two interviews and received positive feedback from both

#### CRITICAL REFLECTION ON THE PROCESS

- Would have taken the guidance process more slowly in order to tackle some of the deeper issues around Lisa's self-awareness and preferred working environment.
- Recognised that Lisa's need for career help had also opened the door to in-depth counseling that she would not otherwise have sought.
- Was reminded that maintaining her professional boundaries as an adviser made her more effective i.e. not engaging in-depth emotional counselling but referring Lisa on to appropriate services
- Was reminded through her work with Lisa about gender issues where women commonly devalue the skills they see as commonplace

There was a sort of balance in her life, with financial success and plenty of friends who told her how lucky she was

# ANNE

AT 41 Anne had achieved a great deal, running her own graphic design business efficiently and making time to get on with the part-time fine art degree she'd promised herself. There was a sort of balance in her life, with financial success and plenty of friends who told her how lucky she was, but Anne was restless. She visited a careers adviser at the university having first filled in a preliminary form giving some background details. It was this that had worried John, the adviser, a little as although his careers experience was extensive and he'd spent a lot of time extending his skills and learning new techniques, he didn't know a great deal about the arts and rather wished he did.

When they met, John noted that Anne seemed a bit 'frayed' and ground down and as they talked about her work, Anne revealed how trapped she felt. Having spoken with her for some time, John



**The key ingredients that came up for Anne included project working, creativity, and an international and business dimension**

noticed that she appeared 'half-hearted' about her career search. He was determined to examine what motivated her and began to ask structured questions, seeking for a handhold that would give him clues. John asked about her strengths and weaknesses, major successes and enthusiasms and invited her to fill in the eight segments of a tool called 'The Balance Wheel' to try and pinpoint what the elements would be in her dream career. The key ingredients that came up for Anne included project working, creativity, and an international and business dimension. So why, John asked her, was she exploring, albeit listlessly, things like teaching? What did she really care about?

At this Anne began to talk and spoke with most energy about her idea for an art installation project. John asked what elements of her balance wheel would be engaged if she was to actually make the project real and after some reflection she said with surprise, "all of them". She would need to be a business woman to raise the money it would take, an artist to create it, would be a project and it would have an international theme. John was putting the client in touch with her motivational 'drivers'. Work, for Anne needed to mean something, so she could put her energy behind it and this project could be the key to exploring alternative careers using all her skills and energies.

**Anne began to talk and spoke with most energy about her idea for an art installation project.**



John helped Anne to draw up some goals that would bring the project within her reach. They decided she would engage with the arts profession across the board to bring this to fruition, talk to the industry, look for commercial sponsors, research exhibition spaces and build a career by just going out and getting started. Anne, by now really 'fired up' set about the task with real tenacity, keeping the adviser abreast of her progress by email along the way.

Anne felt more optimistic and this new sense of purpose affected her existing work as she no longer felt trapped. Where before she'd been listening too hard to what others thought she should do, now she was in touch with herself and gaining confidence all the time. Working with Anne had also reminded John that he hadn't needed to know much about Art; information-giving was not as important as having the skills and experience to help the client to find their personal key to progress, and being courageous enough to help them to use it.

**Anne felt more optimistic and this new sense of purpose affected her existing work as she no longer felt trapped**





## Logistics - A career, not just a job.



As the UK's fifth largest industry, employing nearly two million people across 65,000 businesses, logistics is essential to the efficient performance of the UK and its economy. If you ask those within the industry they will tell you that UK logistics is world class. It is a very forward thinking and highly technical sector to work within.

Development in technologies such as RFID (radio frequency identification) ensures a sophisticated approach for tracking products, the digital tacograph monitoring drivers hours and training tools such as truck simulators demonstrate how sophisticated the industry is. There are many career opportunities available, requiring diverse skills at a variety of levels within logistics.

### The Professional Development Stairway

Skills for Logistics, the Sector Skills Council for the freight logistics industries, is developing a pioneering 'Skills Stairway', setting out the groundwork for an extensive, well-structured and continuing vocational development framework for life-long training and learning in the logistics sector. Working closely with employers to identify industry specific training and development needs this initiative demonstrates the type of jobs and skills required from entry level through to logistics director. It will set a common framework for skills development (to be known as the Professional Development Stairway - PDS) which will be used to communicate the skills requirements of the logistics industry amongst employers, employees, government and training providers.

### Logistics is not just about drivers

Contrary to popular belief logistics is not just about driving, indeed it is not just about trucks - there are many opportunities and career paths that can be taken in logistics and the industry is open to people at any academic level, from unqualified through to graduates. The real beauty of logistics is the challenging opportunities it provides to employees and the breadth of skills it encompasses.

### Skills required

Skills required for working in the industry include people management skills, the ability to work on a tactical and strategic level, customer services, numeracy and literacy, languages, geography, communications, map reading, health & safety and other legal requirements, spatial awareness, problem solving and ICT to name a few.

Logistics organisations look for a wide ranging skills base from employees, due to the varied nature of tasks they will be asked to respond to in the line of work. No two days are the same and real responsibility is given as soon as the job starts.

### Sources of Career Information

There are a variety of sources of information available from gaining practical advice from those already in the industry to websites such as Careers in Logistics (CIL) [www.careersinlogistics.co.uk](http://www.careersinlogistics.co.uk). CIL is the UK's first logistics career focused website. It aims to increase recruitment in the industry, positively promote the image of logistics and provide an insight into the varied career routes available in the logistics industries. The website is full of useful information and advice covering all aspects of the industry. It includes real life interviews and case studies of people who have followed a variety of careers within the logistics industry. There are a series of job profiles providing an insight into the type of work carried out and a vast wealth of careers advice, including information on routes to entry into the industry and training, funding and logistics related qualifications. Job searching facilities are available, along with the opportunity for jobseekers to upload their CV to a database and register to receive updates of relevant jobs by email. Employers can post vacancies and search through potential candidates details.



Update is the Skills for Logistics newsletter which regularly features information on skills development & training. Subscribe to Update by visiting [www.skillsforlogistics.org](http://www.skillsforlogistics.org).

Skills for  
Logistics



He was a little 'lost' and felt desperate to get onto the right track and this was fuelling a sense of urgency that stopped him thinking objectively

TOM

### BACKGROUND

After university Tom wasn't sure what to do so for a while he drifted from one job to another, eventually finding some work on an oil rig. By his mid-twenties Tom was aware that time was passing and decided to pursue his growing interest in Environmental Health. He did his homework and determined to apply for a job that he'd seen advertised. Tom reckoned that the quickest way to get the job was to ask a careers adviser for some help with his application form. By the end of their first meeting the adviser was convinced that Tom's choice was a good one, yet she was uneasy. Although some of Tom's experience was relevant to the work of an Environmental Health Officer there were large skill gaps that would hold him back but Tom refused to acknowledge that this could be a problem, so he was determined to get on with his plan. He was a little 'lost' and felt desperate to get onto the right track and this was fuelling a sense of urgency that stopped him thinking objectively. He was convinced that the right words on his application form would do the trick and he just wasn't prepared to waste time winning the job.

### THE KEY ISSUE

To Jane this was a familiar story. Helping clients to prepare a good application became easier and more realistic if there was something appropriate to write about. Acquiring unpaid relevant work experience would strengthen his approach. The key to helping Tom to make progress was helping him see the need to prepare properly and do the vital but apparently unexciting things that would make all the difference. Jane also suspected that the reason Tom was nervous about his application was that it mattered almost too much to him, so she was going to have to boost his confidence in order to lower the pressure. It wasn't going to be plain sailing but over three meetings they covered a lot of ground. They spent time:-

- Defining his needs
- Setting goals
- Strengthening his CV and application form
- Acquiring relevant work experience

### DEFINING TOMS NEEDS

- Improving his confidence - turning the CV into a 'living document' that charted his progress towards his goal the adviser helped to improve Tom's confidence
- Developing a practical plan to make his goal more achievable
- Raising Tom's awareness of the need to prepare himself fully to maximise his chances of success
- Raising his level of motivation to take the necessary steps





**GOAL SETTING**

- Developing a back-up plan. The adviser encouraged Tom to consider postgraduate courses that would strengthen future applications if he was unsuccessful in the short-term
- Gaining appropriate skills
- Following-up contacts that were itemised in the action plan
- Attending planned meetings according to the dates listed

**SUPPORTING TOM IN IMPLEMENTING HIS ACTION PLAN**

- Jane saw that Tom didn't believe he needed to work hard to win his chance so she had to cajole and encourage, using small successes to galvanize him into action until he was able to see his progress for himself and become more self-motivated.
- She helped Tom to research relevant voluntary work opportunities. With her encouragement he followed these leads up and began volunteer work. The adviser then amended his CV so Tom could see how this simple action had strengthened it.
- Jane suggested that Tom used the voluntary work along with his relevant previous experience as a platform to start looking for more formal environmental health work experience. Tom had made some good initial contacts whilst researching the work but hadn't thought to approach them to ask 'work-shadowing' opportunities. This approach led to some good relevant experience and demonstrated his enthusiasm and determination - again this was added to his CV.

**The key to helping Tom to make progress was helping him see the need to prepare properly and do the vital but apparently unexciting things that would make all the difference**

**SKILLS DRAWN UPON BY THE ADVISER**

- 'active listening' - hearing and sorting information, forming hypotheses about what client is saying
- 'reflecting' - Tom wasn't a good listener so Jane needed to reflect and check his understanding to ensure he'd properly heard
- offering reassurance that he hadn't failed because he wasn't yet on his chosen career path
- challenging Tom's self-understanding and providing information to change perceptions
- persuading Tom of the relevance of with taking action to help wisely
- relationship building - using empathy to demonstrate understanding of Toms position in order to win trust and build rapport
- analysis - processing information and breaking it down into methodical, steps that invite action
- 'reframing' provides the client with a new way to view the situation (i.e. as the employer)
- giving directives - tells the client what action to take in order to start him off
- encouraging - motivating Tom to recognise the need to make the best of himself

**KNOWLEDGE AND EXPERIENCE DRAWN UPON BY THE ADVISER**

- Motivational techniques (basic Neuro Linguistic Programming) - using visualization to encourage Tom to look forward and back in order to inspire him to buy-in to the idea that preparation could improve his employability
- Counselling theory - matching body language verbal language style to build rapport
- Recognition of the mixed confidence and uncertainty that often leads to inertia from Jane's previous experience of client with similar problems
- Knowledge of application techniques, recruitment approaches, employer requirements, skill analysis and transferable skills

**SOFT OUTCOMES FOR THE CLIENT**

- Greater confidence from direct experience of the work and his suitability for it
- Higher levels of motivation to succeed
- Self-awareness of areas of strength's and weaknesses
- Knowledge of the career-management tools he could use to improve his chances of success (planning, networking, decision-making)

**HARD OUTCOMES FOR THE CLIENT**

- Practical work experience
- Appropriate referees within the industry who were also sources of support and advice
- A temporary job with the Environment agency which puts him in an extremely strong position

**CRITICAL REFLECTION ON THE PROCESS**

If she had the chance to go through the process again Jane explained that she would have been more directive with Tom in order to galvanise him into action earlier



**THE MOST RESPONSIVE SOFTWARE FOR IAG CONTRACTS**

IAGmanager has been used across the country for the last 4 years with outstanding results – managing over 60,000 adult clients.

IAGmanager has played a significant part in driving up the quality of delivery for Advice and Guidance offered. As an integral part of the customer service and management information reporting, IAGmanager is ultimately ensuring that knowledge is retained within the organisation, and can be retrieved at a click of a button.

*"We decided to switch to IAGmanager because it provided Greater Merseyside Connexions with a system that was proven to deliver results in managing adult IAG contracts"*



Reidmark ebusiness systems  
1 Temple Square  
24 Dale Street  
Liverpool  
L2 5RU



For further information  
visit [www.reidmark.com](http://www.reidmark.com) or call 0845 601 2715



Lian, a third-year computing student, had been invited for twelve interviews but had failed so far to get any of the jobs

# LIAN

Lian, a third-year computing student, had been invited for twelve interviews but had failed so far to get any of the jobs. He thought he must be doing something wrong, so decided to get some help from a career adviser, Sam. Together they explored the questions that tended to come up and the answers that Lian gave, but he didn't seem to Sam to be doing anything obviously wrong.

After a little while Lian made a chance remark about how someone on his course didn't like him and to Sam something in the statement didn't quite 'fit' so he decided to explore some of Lian's underlying attitudes more fully. Using a technique called 'Life Shock' the adviser asked Lian to write down everything he thought his classmate didn't like in him. The adviser examined every statement, pulling out the interpretation that lay beneath them until Lian's private convictions came to the surface.

**It emerged that because of his Chinese origins, Lian felt he didn't belong, didn't deserve a place at the University and was resentful that things weren't different**

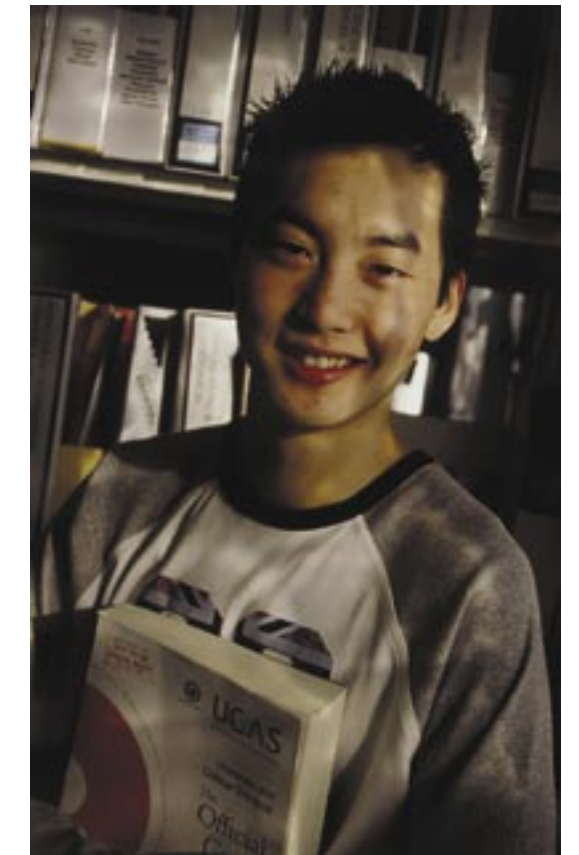
It emerged that because of his Chinese origins, Lian felt he didn't belong, didn't deserve a place at the University and was resentful that things weren't different. His distress was self-evident and the adviser suspected it pervaded every aspect of his life and interactions. To challenge the validity of these perceptions Sam asked Lian to justify each of the statements he'd made and to strike out everything that was untrue or that he simply didn't know for sure. Together they worked slowly through the list and at the end, not much was left.

**He'd been expecting to fail and had therefore been inventing a negative response from interviewers.**

Lian saw how he'd been projecting his own beliefs onto situations he encountered and immediately recognised that he'd been taking this attitude to his interviews too. He'd been expecting to fail and had therefore been inventing a negative response from interviewers. Once he'd decided they weren't interested in him he behaved accordingly and 'shut down', displaying little interest in winning the job. It was a real moment of revelation that left Lian with much to think about.

**The benefits for Lian however went far beyond the joy of the new job, he had begun the process of changing some old and very damaging beliefs**

Shortly afterwards Sam heard from Lian that he'd got the job he wanted and that once he'd become aware of the ways he was manipulating the interview situation, it had proved easy to stop doing it. The benefits for Lian however went far beyond the joy of the new job, he had begun the process of changing some old and very damaging beliefs that affected his relations with others and would have seriously impeded his progress at work. He was more self-aware and no longer had a distorted view of himself, and this new perspective and resulting greater confidence propelled him onto greater things as he got the next job and then rapid promotion. The adviser was able to apply his experience by spotting the small but significant clue that was the key to helping Lian to release himself from a self-imposed burden and to go on to make the most of himself.



**He was more self-aware and no longer had a distorted view of himself**





He'd become very depressed and as they talked Sarah recognised that the root of Gary's problem was that he felt completely powerless to affect what was happening to his life

## GARY

In December 2002 an aeronautical engineering firm were in the middle of a large downsizing programme after the cancellation of passenger jet orders. It was a difficult time and they'd enlisted the help of local partners including an FE College. Sarah, a careers adviser with the college, had been asked to provide redundancy counselling and she and her team had their work cut out, seeing groups totalling 600 workers during their first week alone.

**Sarah had to tread carefully making sure she allowed the men to preserve their threadbare dignity even whilst revealing their innermost fears**

Gary had been an electrical fitter with the company for years but had been trying to work out how to establish a different working pattern because he now had a young family he rarely saw. Nevertheless he wasn't ready for redundancy and when he first met Sarah, despite appearing fine at first as so many of the men did, it didn't take long for his distress to surface. Sarah had to tread carefully making sure she allowed the men to preserve their threadbare dignity even whilst revealing their innermost fears. Gary had been living with the spectre of looming redundancy for a long time without knowing if he was in the firing line, which had placed him under enormous stress. He'd become very depressed and as they talked Sarah recognised that the root of Gary's problem was that he felt completely powerless to affect what was happening to his life.

He knew there was no future at the firm but didn't fancy the redeployment options as they involved downskilling. Together they explored and listed his skills and interests and established that Gary wanted to remain in a hands-on industry and have a little more control over his life. He accepted that there was little prospect of employment in the same line of work and so Sarah raised the idea of transferring into plumbing. She knew there was a skill shortage in plumbing which made it an attractive prospect and that it offered the potential for self-employment. However the downside was the two-year part-time training that would prevent Gary from supporting his family.

The college had been asked to manage a Rapid Response Fund, (government funding for large-scale redundancies), and Sarah had the beginnings of an idea. She visited the plumbing section at the college to ask if it would be feasible to cover the basic qualification in a full-time 14 week course – but they laughed her out of the building. However Sarah was a professional career adviser and had extensive knowledge of the training structure and could see that lads like Gary had much of the required learning under their belts already. She urged Gary and his friends to do some research amongst local plumbers, discovering that two out of three local plumbers would be keen to take them on if and when they got their NVQ level 2 and increase their pay as their speed improved. Armed with more information she had another try with the college plumbing lecturers and following a lengthy period of negotiation, Sarah won the day. They agreed to design and run a course where Gary was able to pick up basic technical knowledge prior to undertaking his NVQ which he gained while working alongside a qualified plumber. In the months following the initial 14-week training course, Gary sailed through his NVQ, and having become fully qualified to NVQ standard he even returning later on to add a couple of Corgi gas units to his accomplishments.

**Gary went on to start a business that allowed him to work four days per week and spend time with his little girls until he became too busy to take time off**

Sarah had used a wide range of professional skills and knowledge in supporting Gary and his colleagues. She'd begun with career counselling and diagnosis, added her knowledge of skill shortages and labour market information to her understanding of the education system and come up with an innovative new solution that so far has provided a new start to sixty fledgling plumbers. Gary went on to start a business that allowed him to work four days per week and spend time with his little girls until he became too busy to take time off. But he's delighted with the outcome and thrilled that redundancy proved to be the gateway to a better, more balanced working life.



# Section 2 Offenders/Ex-Offenders

He'd become accustomed to being judged by others, and had decided for himself that he was a failure, so training or study held little appeal for him as he'd had negative experiences of these in the past

## KEVIN KEVIN

When working with offenders you must ask, do I have the skills to assist a person that may have no work, no real home, just recovered from a substance or drink problem and wants to start again but is in prison and going to be released.

Up until now, everyone your client has ever met and trusted, in their opinion, has let them down but you now need to help the client seek employment that will sustain them over a long period of time, keep them out of prison, and help them to live an offending-free life style.

In many respects people who are in prison are seen as different. They are the people who take what they want, who don't care for anyone or anything other than themselves. But the reality is that someone who wants to change themselves is very vulnerable because they are stepping into unknown territory.

Many do not have qualifications that are acceptable to employers and many have gaps in their CV that require explanation. However, it is these factors that can make the role of working with offenders so rewarding. While prisons are committed to providing offenders with the opportunity to gain qualifications and employment support while in prison, the assistance of staff is required once the individual has left prison if society is to be successful in reducing the reconviction rates of offenders.

A person working in this field has to have patience, as well as other professional qualities that those in any guidance role possess. If you can take time to build trust with an individual that allows them to see you can help and will not let them down, the process of change can begin.

You must be able to deal with difficult people and difficult problems when anyone else would give up and you need to be reliable, honest and have the ability to communicate at many different levels. You have to work in a way that always offers hope when there is little to offer, and that inspires an individual to achieve when success is not something they are used to.

If you are able to reward someone for doing good, but do not need thanks for doing it then you will begin to understand what you are working with. You will also understand that they don't oppose showing gratitude, but simply don't know how to. Success is not measured in the normal way and it may be that a successful outcome has not been achieved. Success may just be seeing a person about to start on the path of change.

The work can be extremely challenging and frustrating but is always worthwhile. It is without question a difficult challenge but one that tests practitioner skills and proves to be immensely satisfying.

**BARRY CUMMINGS**  
HEAD OF OFFENDER MANAGEMENT

### BACKGROUND

Kevin was 21 and in prison for the third time for minor offences. He joined the five week education and preparation for work course with others who were due for release. The course is built upon a foundation of professional career guidance and involves action-planning, benefits advice, counselling support, psychometric testing and job search assistance, all aimed at helping to ease the transition to the outside world. Kevin had no qualifications and had drifted through a range of casual jobs on short-term contracts. The joker of the group, his high spirits masked low self-esteem and poor confidence in his ability to achieve anything worthwhile. He'd become accustomed to being judged by others, and had decided for himself that he was a failure, so training or study held little appeal for him as he'd had negative experiences of these in the past. He was one of the prisoners that worried prison officials because as statistics showed, multiple short stays in prison often led inexorably on to more serious crimes and longer sentences. Monica, his career adviser recognised the pattern from her long experience of working with the inmates of HMP Moorland and she knew that it was crucial to find the catalyst for change before Kevin was out there on his own.

**The key for Kevin was to find a sense of self-worth by working with someone who wanted to help the person behind the reputation.**

### THE KEY ISSUE

At HMP Moorland in Doncaster, Monica doesn't refer to prison records when she meets prisoners for the first time, preferring to draw her own conclusions about prisoners' needs initially. She believes it's crucial that all her clients receive the same impartial, professional service and explains that the key to success lies in the fact that she isn't part of the 'prison machine' and doesn't get involved in the prison service. The key for Kevin was to find a sense of self-worth by working with someone who wanted to help the person behind the reputation. This gave him a chance to emerge from the pattern of behaviour that kept him on the wrong side of the tracks and drew him to crime. Monica's refusal to judge Kevin unlocked the barriers he'd built for himself and helped him to start to change his attitudes; to recognise that he was worthwhile, to understand what he had to offer and to learn that he had as much right to success in the outside world as anyone else and that the route forward was open to him.





**KEVIN'S NEEDS**

- to gain more confidence and self-esteem
- to get past his fundamental belief that he was a failure
- raise his aspirations and understand that he could 'get there'
- general support to help him through the career planning process
- a focus to carry him through the first weeks of his release and into a purposeful occupation
- a well-paid job but he needed to be realistic about the way to achieve his goals. i.e. Kevin needed to reverse the 'anti-education' stance he took about a system that he believed had failed him

**PROFESSIONAL ASSESSMENTS AND ACTIVITIES**

- Experience told Monica that 'the joker' of the group was covering up insecurities. By using personal disclosure in interviews she challenged Kevin's perceptions of others, and therefore himself
- To defuse his defensiveness, she stressed her impartiality and without referring to records, asked him to tell his own story. This covered everything from his earliest years, reflecting his great need to 'set the record straight'.
- Kevin needed to learn to 'aspire'. Psychometric assessment helped to demonstrate his strengths and for the first time Kevin had an 'official' validation that proved he had a good range of practical abilities
- As she worked to release a sense of personal worth in Kevin, she also strove to help him to understand that he could fulfil his potential through learning, making him understand that qualifications were the route to a trade rather than just a job.
- Kevin had very little opportunity awareness and had never learned about action planning or career management. Monica worked out a step by step programme that would help him progress from 'today' to his target.
- He also needed to relate what he was learning about his options to a realistic understanding of his own environment. They looked at his home area, industries and companies, jobcentre opportunities using a live computer link, training and modern apprenticeships and support available from other agencies. Kevin learned that he could gain qualifications locally without going to college – a crucial revelation!
- Monica recognised that Kevin needed to be supported in disclosing his prison record to employers so coached him through the process and stayed with him whilst he overcame the hurdle and actually handled some calls.

**To defuse his defensiveness, she stressed her impartiality and without referring to records, asked him to tell his own story**

**THE ADVISERS SKILLS AND EXPERIENCE**

- Researching opportunities and the best routes towards them
- Advocacy role in supporting prisoners through the procedures of accessing benefits, housing and work. (Monica found the CITB contact for scaffolding training in Kevin's area and also helped Kevin find an employer who was willing to take him on).
- Tailoring mentoring and counselling approaches to support individual needs
- Ability to remain impartial no matter what the offences committed – without this no progress is possible

**Monica recognised that Kevin needed to be supported in disclosing his prison record to employers so coached him through the process**

**KNOWLEDGE DRAWN UPON BY THE ADVISER**

- Knowledge of the prison system and experience of the attitudes and approaches that lead both to success 'outside' and reoffending
- Clear understanding of the distinction between the role of career adviser and other 'helping' agencies
- Legal obligations and constraints affecting the search for work opportunities
- Experience of approaching potential employers about employment of ex-prisoners
- In-depth understanding of the cycle of criminal activity and the psychology of offending patterns

**OUTCOMES FOR THE ADVISER**

- Great satisfaction that she'd found the catalyst that gave Kevin the reason to pick himself up and make progress for himself
- Delight that she'd turned a sceptical candidate into an advocate for the service as peer-recommendation is very powerful in prison
- Renewed confidence that her impartial approach was the correct way forward, no matter what the background of prisoners
- A confidence in the belief that when prisoners make such progress for themselves they come back with lesser offences or not at all



**OUTCOMES FOR THE CLIENT**

**Soft outcomes**

- a more positive attitude to his prospects and the future
- a changed attitude towards himself and an understanding of his own worth
- reduced need to cover up his insecurities with 'bravado'
- an almost tangible sense of growing confidence – leading to his production of an article for other prisoners about the worthwhile nature of the career guidance course

**Hard outcomes**

- He took an interim job in a factory but carried on attending interviews that had been arranged for him to attend on his release
- The promise of work and an approved apprenticeship with a scaffolding firm once a position became available



**CRITICAL REFLECTION OF THE PROCESS**

- Monica says she would be more confident that Kevin would build upon the start made in prison if a similar service offering in-depth guidance to ex-offenders were available to him on the 'outside'.
- Recognition that career practitioners cannot work in isolation and must work closely with other agencies, particularly on the 'outside'

a critical indicator of likely longer-term success was keeping them out of prison for longer than three months

# BEN

Careers practitioner, Sally, met her client Ben whilst working with a range of other professionals including welfare assistants, prison officers, and YMCA staff for 'The Friendly Face Project' at HMP Liverpool. Their aim was to try and change the lives of prisoners by re-engaging them with the outside world and a critical indicator of likely longer-term success was keeping them out of prison for longer than three months. The prisoners needed help at a variety of levels so the team worked together to give each other's interventions a chance to succeed.

Having been born in the UK Ben emigrated to Australia at the age of ten, didn't settle well, fell in with a bad crowd, started using drugs and was soon committing crime. He'd been deported from Australia leaving behind his wife and children. He was madly enthusiastic about the Friendly Face programme in prison though, and by the time Sally



**Sally stepped into the important role of impartial supporter who would help Ben to move from prisoner to independent citizen**



met him for an interview he'd already attended 33 sessions covering everything from 'disclosure' to 'skills analysis'. Ben was due for release in seven months time and was already panicking. He quite literally had nothing – no national insurance number, identification, birth certificate, home, occupation, family or friends. Whilst Sally colleagues concentrated on helping him with practical concerns such as housing and money, Sally stepped into the important role of impartial supporter who would help Ben to move from prisoner to independent citizen. She began by helping Ben to take stock of all the things he could do until he recognised the skills and

**without goals and a belief that things were possible, Ben would have no reason to change his ways**

qualities that he had in his 'life fund'. As he grew in self-awareness and confidence Sally turned her attention to improving his levels of motivation, as without goals and a belief that things were possible, Ben would have no reason to change his ways. Her background in motivational techniques came in useful and once she'd helped him to see that it was possible for him to build a life for himself, they began to tackle some 'real life' issues by analysing some of the barriers he had to overcome, such as self-imposed time-keeping problems and coping with his prison record. The main danger for Ben was that he might relapse into drug-taking so Sally worked with her colleagues and her extensive network of professional contacts to find somewhere for Ben to go on his release that would help him to keep away from drugs and support his progress into work. In the meantime Ben worked with Sally on his CV, interview techniques and applications.



On his release Ben was referred to 'Progress to Work', an organisation who work with drug users who are in danger of relapsing but who support people through training and employment. They fixed him up with bed and breakfast accommodation and after a time, judged with Sally's help, that Ben was ready for more independence. He was referred to the 'Big Life Company' selling The Big Issue. The aim was to raise Ben's self-esteem by helping him towards self-sufficiency and improving his social skills. He moved into a hostel and six months after leaving prison Ben was still successfully selling the Big Issue. With Sally and the team's help Ben had survived the most difficult phase of his rehabilitation. Sally remains in touch with Ben, continuing to provide the impartial career-based guidance that has served him well so far.



**six months after leaving prison Ben was still successfully selling the Big Issue**



Gradually, and by offering tiny measures of encouragement, Marie helped Stephen to begin to shift his thinking and to get to grips with the reality of his situation. One of the keys to success was to regularly help Stephen to see the progress he was making until he gained in confidence enough to realise that change might just be possible

# STEPHEN

Marie sighed when she met Stephen. Another hard case, she thought, who'd only joined the pre-release career guidance course so he could wangle a place on the Fork Lift truck training that everyone coveted because it gave them easy access to work on their release. At 26, Stephen had been in the 'closed' part of the prison for most of the past five years, serving time for a violent crime, and knew prison life better than anything else. Coming from a family with a history of unemployment and expectations of regular periods in prison, Stephen's story had been no different. Now, he sat before Marie in the first group session with his arms folded and a 'you can't help me' look on his face. Everything about his body language screamed resentment and his attitude was, from the first, entirely negative. Like many of his peers he refused to consent to a 'fresh start' interview and sign on for benefits on release because of the associated 'stigma', wouldn't conduct a mock interview in the job club and certainly wouldn't discuss his ideas in front of his mates. Marie's challenge was to find a way to reach past Stephen's deeply-ingrained beliefs about his place in the world - and his practiced cynicism.

**Marie helped Stephen to recognise that he was no different to many others who get onto what she described as a 'hamster wheel' of behaviour**

In a one-to-one interview Stephen was more willing to talk and revealed that he'd had little schooling and possessed very little opportunity awareness. Treading carefully, Marie began to help him to recognise his needs and to think logically about what he wanted out of his life in the longer-term. By talking about others she'd worked with through her long experience of prison work Marie helped Stephen to recognise that he was no different to many others who get onto what she described as a 'hamster wheel' of behaviour, rarely stopping to talk to others or to think objectively, but leaving the prison only to come back again for a longer stint each time. Gradually, and by offering tiny measures of encouragement, Marie helped Stephen to begin to shift his thinking and to get to grips with the reality of his situation. One of the keys to success was to regularly help Stephen to see the progress he was making until he gained in confidence enough to realise that change might just be possible.



**For the first time in his life he'd seen something positive written on paper about him and he began to get a glimmer of hope that it might be worthwhile to have aspirations. But it was a sobering moment too as he recognised the waste of his talents**

With coaxing, he consented to take a psychometric test but was unprepared for the results. His profile reported extremely high ability levels and suggested a range of 'professional' jobs as being suitable for a candidate of his quality. For Stephen it was an overwhelming surprise. For the first time in his life he'd seen something positive written on paper about him and he began to get a glimmer of hope that it might be worthwhile to have aspirations. But it was a sobering moment too as he recognised the waste of his talents and regretted his refusal ever to put himself in a position where he could try to use his abilities.



Marie recognised that what he now needed was not only to learn to understand how to find, win and hold a job he also needed to experience the self-sufficiency that comes from engaging with work so she consented to put him forward for the fork-lift training course. He completed this successfully and by now, Stephen was a different man. He looked forward to his meetings with Marie, diligently learning how to search for jobs and to understand how to manage the limitations that his conviction would place on his career choice. As Stephen's release date approached they even began to talk seriously about FE which Marie recognised was an astonishing measure of the progress he'd made since their first meeting. Now all she could do was hope that Stephen could keep up the momentum on the outside.

**As Stephen's release date approached they even began to talk seriously about FE which Marie recognised was an astonishing measure of the progress he'd made since their first meeting**



## Section 3 16-18 Year Olds

The work of a guidance professional with 16-18 year olds presents many challenges and the practitioner needs to have, as a starting principle, a genuine interest in young people and a respect for individuality. Each client brings their own unique circumstances and challenges and the practitioner must use a wide range of skills and knowledge to meet the needs of each one.

Every young person has different expectations when seeing a guidance practitioner. For many it is an opportunity to get some information, to find out about college courses and entry requirements for example, and relate it to their own needs and circumstances. Some need practical help such as making applications to college, attending open days and carrying out their own research. However surprising numbers of young people need more fundamental guidance support such as becoming familiar with their own strengths and weaknesses, working out what interests them and understanding their aspirations better and learning the techniques involved in managing their career. It's quite common for young people simply to want the practitioner to tell them what to do; to solve the problems presented by a wide open future for them. Career guidance, however, is not about professionals making decisions for their clients but enabling and empowering clients to make decisions effectively for themselves. All clients must find their own path and make their own decisions with as much support and guidance as they need from trained and experienced professionals.

A 'careers interview' can be many different things and a huge diversity of enquiries and discussions will take place under this umbrella term. Guidance practitioners will help young people unravel the complexities of post 16-18 education. They may provide information but are more likely to point the way toward a range of resources to be found in libraries or websites and encourage students to do their own research. Practitioners will raise awareness of potential hazards to progress and educate their young clients to be aware of their rights to equality of opportunity and the pitfalls of gender stereotyping. They will work strenuously to motivate underachieving students and ensure as far as they are able that those who appear to be doing fine also access the help they might need; a student anticipating A\* grades may be just as confused about the future as anyone else, yet is often left alone to struggle.

Guidance practitioners work across a huge range of different organisational cultures and they must establish effective relationships and networks with a great range of individuals and organisations. As the imperative upon the practitioner is to be impartial they must always put the needs of their young clients first and this position can occasionally lead to friction with those who have other interests. A school or college may for example, be anxious to keep pupils in the sixth form rather than encourage them to leave and join a training scheme, or parents may feel uncomfortable that a practitioner needs to discuss career options with their child that might not accord with their aspirations for their son or daughter.

The expanded European community and increasing numbers of international students attending Further Education colleges has meant that guidance practitioners are increasingly working with students whose education has primarily been in other countries. For these students the complexities of the British education system are even more taxing.

All our work is done against the backdrop of economic and social change. Young people and their parents can be surprisingly traditional when considering career choice and we have to try to be inspirational! We must stay on top of the latest data about market trends, emerging 'new' jobs and courses, aware of skill shortages and the broad range of opportunities that are available across new and developing occupational areas. The demands are enormous, the tensions ever-present but professional guidance work can offer huge rewards in terms of variety and satisfaction to those who remain committed to both the interests of their clients and the development of their own knowledge and skills.

**JILL LEAVER**  
PERSONAL ADVISER

## ➤ Groundbreaking project challenges work-based stereotypes

### What is the GERI project?

The GERI (Gender Equality & Race Inclusion) project is a highly successful venture created to break-down the real barriers faced by young people considering non-stereotypical careers.

Funded by the EQUAL Community Initiative, Connexions Partnerships throughout England and the Learning & Skills Council, it has been designed as a practical solution to tackling occupational gender and racial stereotypes.

GERI's Project Manager John Flaherty explains, "The GERI project actively tackles the racial and gender barriers preventing young people entering their chosen career. Despite arguments to the contrary the reality is that doors are closed for many individuals interested in non-traditional roles."

He continued, "A young girl attracted to a job as a motor mechanic may not face the very open derision she would have done 20 years ago, but the real obstacles are still there. They're the attitudes and expectations of families and friends."



Other contributing factors include hostile work environments where the culture favours a particular age group, gender or race, and surprisingly the attitudes of teachers, careers advisors and trainers, who often inadvertently reinforce stereotypes.

"This is not just a problem in the UK; gender and racial stereotyping is a global issue" said Mr Flaherty.

In acknowledgement of this, the team has clocked-up 3,534 miles (6,010 km) taking the groundbreaking venture to six European countries in only five months.

Most recently the team were in Brussels, other events have taken GERI to Germany, Finland, Spain, Holland and even Lithuania, all in effort to tackle equality issues faced by young people entering the workplace.

Using practical solutions to break down barriers is the aim of The GERI Project and through its range of initiatives and products, success has been incredible.



### Training Products & Resources

GERI has produced a range of multi-media training and learning materials promoting the opportunities available to young people in a fun and interactive way.

Printed training programmes, e-learning, online training packages and classroom based guides are all available.

The GERI 100 Top Role Models DVD, featuring real people working in non traditional roles presents attainable goals and role models for young people. And, the innovative GERI Dramas DVD provides an interactive experience where viewers can choose and influence the outcome of an equality situation.

A comprehensive product catalogue will be available from mid-July, in the meantime many of the products are downloadable free of charge from the website at [www.geriproject.org](http://www.geriproject.org)

To receive a copy of the GERI product catalogue contact:  
**JoHughes@positivestepsoldham.org.uk**  
**T: 0161 621 9400**

For all other enquiries, or just to find out more about the GERI project, contact:

**John Flaherty**  
Project Manager  
Tel: 07870 693512  
e-mail: [john.flaherty@geriproject.org](mailto:john.flaherty@geriproject.org)

or visit our website at:  
**[www.geriproject.org](http://www.geriproject.org)**



## By the time she met her career adviser Fiona, Jess desperately needed someone to really listen to her

# JESS

Jess, a charismatic and popular sixth form student with an amazing singing talent was, to the astonishment of those around her, having a crisis. Everyone had assumed that Jess would do a degree in music that would lead to a career as a professional singer. Yet here she was refusing to apply for higher education! They thought she couldn't fail with a talent like that, but Jess, trapped by her own abilities was stubbornly resisting. By the time she met her career adviser Fiona, Jess desperately needed someone to really listen to her.



Fiona listened hard, working actively to signal to Jess that what was most important was the girl behind the voice. After careful questioning and reflection Jess admitted that she was torn in two. She didn't want to let her singing tutor down but didn't want to fail as a singer and end up teaching others as he had done – but hadn't been able to tell him this. She loved music, but had spent all her life in a girl's school and wasn't ready to commit her future to the narrow and rarified world of music. But who would understand this? What if she let a wonderful chance go by? On the other hand what if she ended up singing, trapped in a gilded cage never having flown free?

**Fiona listened hard,  
working actively to signal  
to Jess that what was  
most important was the  
girl behind the voice**

Fiona saw that she had to lower the pressure and help Jess to look at her feelings about music more dispassionately to ensure that she wasn't running away from something good. She began by confronting Jess's fears. Together they looked at the realities of life at music college and how music scholars could mix with other students via the union and other facilities. Fiona challenged Jess's perceptions and made sure she had balanced information. They looked at her worries about 'ending up' as a music teacher and Jess saw that she had only considered the negative outcome and refused to accept that she might achieve a successful career.

She had legitimate worries too about her future financial security so Fiona helped her to research a wide range of careers linked to music until she saw that teaching was not the only option as a back-up plan. They did some exercises together, visualizing different working scenarios and learning environments to 'unlock' Jess's fixed ideas. Then they thought about how a gap year could be used positively, perhaps to try out some teaching to see how she liked it, rather than as an escape route.

Jess still hasn't decided what to do next but is considering music alongside other ideas. For Jess, a musical talent has been as much a problem as an opportunity. She's needed the calm, client-centred guidance of her career adviser to support her in making her own considered choice about the future rather than bolting from the expectations of others and missing her chances.



‘50% of school children to enter higher education’

And the other 50%?

The UK's leading provider of vocational qualifications, with over one million learners working towards one of our 500 qualifications at any one time.  
[www.city-and-guilds.co.uk](http://www.city-and-guilds.co.uk)

**City & Guilds**

**SkillsActiveCareers**

Active Advice for an Active Career

SkillsActive works with employers in the Sport and Recreation, Health and Fitness, Playwork, The Outdoors and Caravan Industries, and licensed by Government to lead the skills and productivity drive within these industries - known as the Active Leisure and Learning Sector.

One of SkillsActive's key responsibilities is to offer clear and comprehensive careers advice to all those individuals wanting to enter into the sector and progress through it.

Some school and college leavers don't consider working in the active leisure and learning sector as a viable career option. They make the common mistake of only considering certain roles – the professional footballer, personal trainer or full time coach – and do not see the bigger picture.

There are over 200 different job roles to choose from in these industries, with over five million volunteers already working in unpaid positions. The roles include anything from referee or umpire, activity leader, recreation assistant, play development officer; to sports scientist, caravan park manager and green-keeper.

SkillsActive has begun to establish itself as a one-stop-shop for all careers advice in the sector, and is the signposting organisation for all relevant jobs, qualifications, pathways and courses.

SkillsActive is building up local, regional and national networks of employers, private training providers,

FE colleges and HE Institutions, to raise the standards and profile of the sector across the UK.

Ongoing projects include; reviewing current levels of training and standards, developing new and relevant qualifications, promoting alternative pathways into employment, including foundation degrees, apprenticeships and other vocationally relevant qualifications, as well as addressing the basic skills shortages and gaps across the sector.

SkillsActive is developing a range of resources available for careers teachers and advisors, as well as individuals and employers that will ensure that when a careers choice is made, this exciting and rewarding sector is not forgotten.

**SkillsActiveCareers**

Castlewood House  
77-91 New Oxford Street  
London  
WC1A 1PX

E [careers@skillsactive.com](mailto:careers@skillsactive.com)  
T 020 7632 2000  
F 020 7632 2001  
[www.skillsactive.com](http://www.skillsactive.com)

**LearnDirect**  
The national learning advice line

**skills**  
FOR BUSINESS





Her mum insisted she go to the school sixth form because attending the local FE College would be tantamount to a rejection of her background and Indian heritage

**KIM** KIM

When year 11 pupil Kim, visited Lynne the careers adviser during a drop-in session at school, she didn't know where to start. She told Lynne, that her interest was in teaching, but Lynne, watching the tense, anxious face before her, experienced a powerful intuition that something was amiss. At their first interview the story began to unravel.

Kim really struggled at school. She explained her difficulties with reading comprehension and writing and how she'd been placed on a reduced timetable and was expected to achieve D/E level GCSE's. Her Indian father seemed oblivious to Kim's struggle to learn and was adamant that his daughter should take A-levels and progress to University. Her mum insisted she go to the school sixth form because attending the local FE College would be tantamount to a rejection of her background and Indian heritage. If she struggled with the courses, said her Mum, she should just try harder. Kim felt miserable and when unable to resolve the tensions, took no action.

It wasn't easy for Kim to look at the situation objectively because her aspirations had become mixed up with her father's aims for her, and his emotional support was conditional upon achievement. Lynne knew she had to enable Kim to take charge of the situation by helping her to see it objectively so she could get a realistic grasp of the decisions she must take. Because of Kim's learning difficulties Lynne had to take things slowly, giving her time to absorb information and being careful to pitch discussions at the correct conversational level.



**It wasn't easy for Kim to look at the situation objectively because her aspirations had become mixed up with her father's aims for her**

Kim looked with Lynne at the entry requirements to advanced level courses in the sixth form at school and the entry and training routes into teaching. It was the moment of truth and, faced with evidence that this route was likely to be out of her reach, Kim crumbled. Emotional and upset, she expressed her sense of loss and her fear of her father's rejection, but Lynne explained how this wasn't the end for Kim as there were many other vocational routes that could take her into work she might enjoy. Determined to the end the session on a positive note Lynne explained how job families worked, giving Kim information about becoming a teaching assistant and other related careers.



For Kim this was a revelation. She was thrilled at the prospect of working at a level that she could manage and overwhelmed by a sense of relief at no longer having to struggle. But as the realisation hit her that vocational courses were offered only at the forbidden FE College she again felt absolutely cornered, knowing only too well her mother's feelings about it. The adviser asked Kim to bring her mother to a meeting at the local college so they could discuss the position together and take a look for herself.

Lynne was able to explain directly to Kim's mother how the vocational courses worked, where they might lead and why it was that they could suit Kim's learning style better than traditional academic courses. The visit dispelled lots of myths for Kim's mother who then allowed Kim to apply with her blessing. Lynne helped Kim with her application form and also, to ensure Kim had ongoing support throughout her learning, found an organisation offering support to children of dual heritage families. Kim wrote to Lynne thanking her for everything she'd done and telling her that without her help, Kim was sure she would have carried on into the sixth form and continued to struggle and fail, whereas now she had a chance to flourish.

**The visit dispelled lots of myths for Kim's mother who then allowed Kim to apply with her blessing**



## Section 4 Over 50's

Out of all the details that had emerged however, one thing didn't fit! Pat did not believe that one incident in a successful 36 year career could have had such a devastating effect upon the clearly very strong, and dependable individual before her

# DAVE

Career guidance practitioners who specialise in working with older adults have to be ready for anything. They work with clients with widely varying issues according to their circumstances and each area is a specialism in itself. But whether they're working, retiring or changing careers some common themes do emerge.

Older clients often have difficulty accessing services as provision tends to be patchy, and then because they don't usually know what's involved they may have problems understanding the help they're going to receive. There can be a variety of barriers to negotiate before an adult is happy to work in a positive way with the practitioner. These can include a reluctance to accept help and often a limited understanding of the way the working world has changed. In my experience men in particular tend to be put off by one to one counselling but are comfortable talking to a career specialist because they see this as a legitimate area in which to accept practical support, rather than one that implies personal neediness. Before the guidance can begin the practitioner often has to do a lot of preparatory work, helping the client to prepare for and to be positive about the process of career guidance.

Work with adults is always complicated by extra factors beyond their wants, abilities and qualifications; usually the problems are about whether their situation in life allows movement. Are they going to need short or long-term plans or sideways moves? Responsibilities inhibit choice; redundancy can offer liberation. You have to help them to do what's helpful for the moment, to get a lifeplan and start moving themselves towards it. Sadly this is the client group who really need more time than younger people but actually receives less time, with an hour usually being the most that can be offered.

Employers can be nervous about practitioners talking to their staff about training and development in case they lose experienced staff and so practitioners also have to be diplomats. We explain to them that it's like preventative medicine; if you can reach people in work and make them happier and more fulfilled through learning, it's likely to lead to more experienced and settled workforces. Often a new job isn't the solution; it's about being happier in their current role.

The practitioners' skills are vital and being able to exude confidence and experience encourages the adult to accept them as experts who can help. A variety of personal backgrounds amongst practitioners really enriches the offer made by the service to a hugely varied client group and peer support is vital for practitioners as the work can be very draining at times. Specialists in adult work really need a professional supervision service in order to remain at the top of their game. Nevertheless it's work that most do, through a real sense of personal commitment and not many people can say that they've changed lives when they go home at night. But we can.

**PAT FITZGERALD**  
PROJECT MANAGER

### BACKGROUND

Pat's client Dave had a successful career as a senior Trading Standards Officer before a long period on sick leave following a dangerous incident at work that had unnerved him. Now in his fifties he wanted nothing more than to get back to work.

They had a good first meeting that covered Dave's working life in some detail and they built up a good rapport. Out of all the details that had emerged however, one thing didn't fit! Pat did not believe that one incident in a successful 36 year career could have had such a devastating effect upon the clearly very strong, and dependable individual before her.

### THE KEY ISSUE

The guidance process revealed that for Dave, protecting the public was a 'vocation'. He had deeply held convictions about helping people and for him this had become a lifelong cause rather than a job. It transpired that changes in the trading standards service had led to the recruitment of graduates with knowledge of the law but what Dave saw as a superficial attitude to public service, as a result he believed the service lacked integrity and standards had lowered. Dave felt he wasn't able to do his job properly anymore and this led to a great deal of stress. These feelings were hard to express so eventually, a dangerous incident provided the excuse Dave needed to step down. However this course of action also led Dave losing his self-confidence as he came to believe that he couldn't handle the job any more.

**It transpired that his enjoyment came from the knowledge that he was unequivocally helping others**

### DAVE'S NEEDS

- helping Dave to understand what motivated him
- helping Dave to see the real cause of his stress so he could get his confidence back
- finding a route back to work
- identifying transferable skills that he could use in a new environment
- restoring self confidence





To Pat, Dave's story didn't 'add up'. Using her experience and assessing the way he came across alongside his attitudes, experiences and beliefs, Pat judged that something deeper caused the stress

**ASSESSMENTS AND ACTIVITIES**

- > To Pat, Dave's story didn't 'add up'. Using her experience and assessing the way he came across alongside his attitudes, experiences and beliefs, Pat judged that something deeper caused the stress.
- > She judged that the most effective way of helping Dave to understand the cause of his stress was to help him to discover it for himself rather than tell him outright.
- > Pat used an assessment tool to reveal what motivated Dave at work. This revealed 'objective' information that Pat felt Dave would accept more readily than the views of another person. This showed that Dave was motivated by helping others and by exercising his social conscience.
- > An audit of Dave's skills uncovered the enjoyment he got from his extensive voluntary work with the elderly.

**THE ADVISERS SKILLS & EXPERIENCE**

- > In order to 'reach' Dave, Pat was careful to use the language of the workplace and avoid emotive terms as he wasn't comfortable when speaking of his feelings but was happy to focus on his working life.
- > Pat had an 'intuitive' feeling about Dave which arose from an exercise of acute concentration that combined insight, experience, recognition, brain and senses constantly sifting information and being alert for 'clues' that might indicate new possibilities or that didn't fit
- > Exploration required advanced listening skills. Heightened awareness and attentiveness were crucial in order to focus on what Dave was implying but not voicing
- > Pat invited further disclosure by keeping the tone upbeat and supported him by reflecting back and with clarification
- > Lateral thinking



**In order to 'reach' Dave, Pat was careful to use the language of the workplace and avoid emotive terms as he wasn't comfortable when speaking of his feelings**

**KNOWLEDGE DRAWN UPON BY THE ADVISER**

- > Experience of the different approaches to helping adults of both sexes through the guidance process
- > Knowledge and understanding of the work environment and opportunity structure
- > Knowledge of assessment testing
- > Understanding of belief systems and how negative self-talk can cause loss of self-confidence. Reflecting back and reframing these beliefs
- > Understanding of the grieving process when faced with redundancy or inability to carry out a job, and the feelings of inadequacy experienced

**OUTCOMES FOR CLIENT**

**'Soft' outcomes**

- > New perspectives on what had taken place and caused his distress
- > Restored self-confidence and purpose
- > Clarity about the kind of work that would satisfy him
- > Greater self-awareness

**'Hard' outcomes**

- > A new job on a three-month trial

**Pat derived a lot of satisfaction from working with Dave because a significant shift took place - particularly that her judgment about his real underlying need proved to be accurate**

**CRITICAL REFLECTION ON THE PROCESS**

- > Pat derived a lot of satisfaction from working with Dave because a significant shift took place – particularly that her judgment about his real underlying need proved to be accurate
- > She was reminded how powerful self-development tools can be and determined to try and achieve level B testing qualification
- > She considered using a tape recorder in future to provide the client with a record of discussions to help them to reflect on the guidance process away from the interview and to share it with others



although he'd been reluctant to admit this, as he felt it inappropriate to aspire to such a dissimilar profession

# COLIN

Colin had spent his working life in engineering as a coach builder, but at fifty years of age was facing redundancy for the third time. With school-age children, retirement wasn't an option so, recognising that opportunities in engineering were rare, he resolved to change direction to secure his future employability. He and his wife met Lucy, an experienced adult guidance career adviser, who immediately saw that Colin was floundering and had no clue about how to proceed. To restore his sense of purpose she judged it important to build Colin's confidence and make him aware of the 'assets' he had, so they began with a lengthy examination of his skills and achievements. This revealed a keen interest in IT and (CAD) Computer Aided Design that had begun as a hobby but progressed to the point where he'd built his own computer.

**this was the first time he'd been ever been encouraged to follow his inclinations and to make a career out of what he loved**

Colin also revealed his enjoyment of teaching others, although he'd been reluctant to admit this, as he felt it inappropriate to aspire to such a dissimilar profession. But experience told Lucy it was worth persevering and closer scrutiny of Colin's extra curricular activities revealed that he had real experience of teaching from youth and football training for a local school and as a scout leader, plus experience of training apprentices and delivering training sessions on health and safety to staff and management at work. It amounted to quite a teaching record and was a body of experience and skills that Colin hadn't realised could be 'transferred' legitimately to another occupational setting.

**Colin was floundering and had no clue about how to proceed**



Neither had Colin grasped that he might be able to acquire further qualifications as he'd always been locked into the role of 'breadwinner'. Lucy pulled together information about qualifications in Computer Aided Design at the local college to formalise his computer knowledge, as much to encourage Colin to believe that he was 'allowed' to use his knowledge formally as for the learning itself. She explained how this was a starting point in education from which he could proceed to a degree course, taking care just to give him a photocopied page from the university prospectus rather than the whole book so he wasn't overwhelmed by its complexity. Lucy then suggested that he return home and contemplate the implications for himself and his family of what would amount to a 'life change'.

Colin quickly returned full of enthusiasm. Lucy telephoned the local college and other training providers so he could arrange to take useful computer courses to prepare himself for Higher Education. She put him in touch with a specialist HE career adviser to talk about routes into teaching in Primary and Secondary schools and gave him some information about the labour market for teaching, explaining the current demand for male teachers. To give him courage she told him about other clients who had made radical leaps between apparently disparate professions and also arranged for Colin and his wife to meet a benefits and income advisor to discuss how

**Neither had Colin grasped that he might be able to acquire further qualifications as he'd always been locked into the role of 'breadwinner'**

they would manage through his full-time education. His wife was also determined to return to work full time to bridge the gap in the family finances, so Colin was raring to go. He flew through the relevant computer courses and then asked for help to fill in his University Admission forms. Within a few months of his first visit to Lucy Colin enrolled at Ripon and York St John's College to begin teacher training. Thanking her for all her support he explained to Lucy that never before had he felt so positive about the future as, after following his father and then his grandfather into engineering, this was the first time he'd been ever been encouraged to follow his inclinations and to make a career out of what he loved.







THE MOST RESPONSIVE  
SOFTWARE FOR IAG CONTRACTS

IAGmanager has been used across the country for the last 4 years with outstanding results – managing over 60,000 adult clients.

IAGmanager has played a significant part in driving up the quality of delivery for Advice and Guidance offered. As an integral part of the customer service and management information reporting, IAGmanager is ultimately ensuring that knowledge is retained within the organisation, and can be retrieved at a click of a button.

*"We decided to switch to IAGmanager because it provided Greater Merseyside Connexions with a system that was proven to deliver results in managing adult IAG contracts"*



Reidmark ebusiness systems  
1 Temple Square  
24 Dale Street  
Liverpool  
L2 5RU

For further information  
visit [www.reidmark.com](http://www.reidmark.com) or call 0845 601 2715



## The complete Print and Stationery service . . .

From business cards to brochures . . . letterheads to leaflets.

We design, print, store and distribute to suit your requirements

...thinking of starting up in business?

you never get a second chance to make a first impression and your business stationery may well be the first thing a potential client sees. Our designers can help you produce professional stationery and create marketing print that gets you noticed. Feel free to contact us for no obligation help and advice.

Why not try our online print quote system for an instant price comparison?

[www.claritygazebo.co.uk](http://www.claritygazebo.co.uk)



Electrium Point Forge Lane  
Willenhall West Midlands WV12 4HT

Tel: 01902 638300 Fax: 01902 637594



Institute of Career Guidance

## Section 5 Special/Specific Needs Clients

Working with young people with Learning Difficulties and Disabilities (LDD) is a key area of a Career Professional work whether they are working predominately in special schools, mainstream schools, with young people outside education or with those in post 16 outcomes.

Guidance professionals who are new to their posts can see the work with this client group as challenging and perhaps a little 'specialist'. There is no doubt that the work is challenging, but it can be a mistake to feel that you always needs specialist skills to be effective.

The key areas of the work within schools with young people with LDD, centre on the legislative areas of Transition, Annual Reviews and Assessments under the Learning and Skills Act Section 140. There should be procedures within the local area to ensure that the guidance professional is aware of the important role they have within these processes.

Key skills are required in order for the adviser to be effective and confident within this area of work and these include:

- Understanding and identification of barriers to learning and support requirements that will effect young people with LDD in accessing educational and post educational options.
- Understanding of the range of legislation and guidance.
- Knowledge of a variety of disabilities and impairments.
- Knowledge of the work of other agencies both statutory and voluntary with young people with LDD and an ability to work closely with these agencies.

- Ability to work with parents and carers of young people with LDD. Parents and carers are usually involved in planning and decision making for the future. It is however important to remember that the young person must have a key voice in any 'person centred approach'
- Knowledge of the range of opportunities available for young people, and the ability to identify and report any scarcity of opportunities.

Contact with young people with LDD is extremely rewarding whether this is through a mainstream school or more specific work within a specialist establishment. It is always important to remember that one is dealing with individuals who require support to make their choice for the future. They have every right to make those choices for themselves, careers advisers are crucial in helping to ensure their voice is heard.

**STEVE CRUMP**  
LDD & EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES CO ORDINATOR



He explained that his colleagues wound him up until he felt stressed and angry and eventually lost his temper

# DUNCAN

Duncan first met his career adviser, Sue, at sixteen. Articulate, confident and a bit of a comedian, his attention deficit disorder (ADD) had meant he'd needed extra help throughout his schooling. Now, after securing some GCSE's at grades C-F and completing a BTEC First in Landscape Gardening at FE College, he'd been out of work for some months. Duncan was frustrated because finding the right job was proving troublesome; finding a gardening job was impossible because of transport difficulties and although he'd done a stint as a cashier it hadn't worked out, in fact he'd found working with others really tough. He explained that his colleagues wound him up until he felt stressed and angry and eventually lost his temper. Now there was nothing on the horizon and Duncan was feeling pretty low.



**Duncan agreed that his tendency to play around and act immaturely was his way of covering up the uncertainty he felt around others**

Sue spent some time building up a detailed picture of what had happened at work and the sorts of things that typically made Duncan angry. She tackled the problem by helping him to build-up scenarios and then he would tell her what would need to change about the situations in order for him to be able to remain calm. As they talked, Sue deduced that Duncan didn't have much self-esteem and that his outward bravado was a cover-up for a lack of inner confidence. In order to really help Duncan, Sue knew that

he needed to first acknowledge his needs. To pinpoint what these needs were, they worked through an APIR assessment profile exercise which demonstrated to Duncan that he needed to work on his basic skills, his life-skills and his people skills. To date he had very few achievements to build upon and had difficulties in participating in group activities. Duncan agreed that his tendency to play around and act immaturely was his way of covering up the uncertainty he felt around others, and saw that perhaps it was no coincidence that many of his hobbies were solitary activities, such as fishing and long-distance running.



**Once he had made the adjustment however and knew what was expected of him he was much better equipped to fit in and make a success of his work**

Sue suggested that Duncan joined a group of others who were undertaking an 'Entry to Employment' programme. The programme, supported by career advisers, kicked off with some outward-bound team building activities and then looked at a range of work-preparation activities. These included discussions about issues that might arise in the workplace, interviewing, time management and improving basic skills and importantly Duncan learned a few strategies to help him cope with daily frustrations. A work placement followed and with support, Duncan had selected construction, an area of work not dissimilar to landscape gardening that he thought he might also enjoy. Duncan thoroughly enjoyed the programme and learned how to moderate his behaviour and to mix with others more positively. It really boosted his confidence and he decided to return to college to follow a course in construction that was structured in such a way that he could try out many of the disciplines involved. Sue had recognized that Duncan had needed the opportunity to prepare himself systematically for working life by acclimatizing himself to the demands of a new environment. Once he had made the adjustment however and knew what was expected of him he was much better equipped to fit in and make a success of his work.



Because of her experience of young people with Martin's condition, Helen recognised that he needed to find his pathway via his experiences

# MARTIN



At 16 Martin was a friendly and polite teenager who coped well with his autistic spectrum disorder, Aspergers Syndrome, but who hadn't yet begun to consider his future. A specialist career adviser, one of a team of three who would eventually work with Martin helped him to explore his skills and interests. She researched information about job ideas that came up, taking care always to keep their discussions practical as this helped Martin to digest information properly. To help him she chose appropriate careers software and library resources, organised college visits and spoke tentatively with local employers about potential placements. Martin decided he was interested in combining college and work, possibly working with ICT in a library or business setting and he applied to the local sixth form college.

**he confided that his dream job was to work with crime, mystery and children's books**

He liked it at the college on his one year business IT course. It was a fairly sheltered environment which suited him well, and he wanted to stay on. But the college felt that Martin would cope better

with a vocational option, rather than further academic study and asked a career adviser to step in once again. Building on the preparatory work done by her colleague, a second member of the specialist careers team, Helen, discovered that Martin was still interested in library work. He was visiting the local community library regularly because he liked the environment and he confided that his dream job was to work with crime, mystery and children's books. Helen realised that his individual needs made using planning techniques difficult for Martin. He related well to the 'here and now', but to him, visions of the future only threatened the present. Because of her experience of young people with Martin's condition, Helen recognised that he needed to find his pathway via his experiences, so it was crucial that these laid foundations he could build upon.

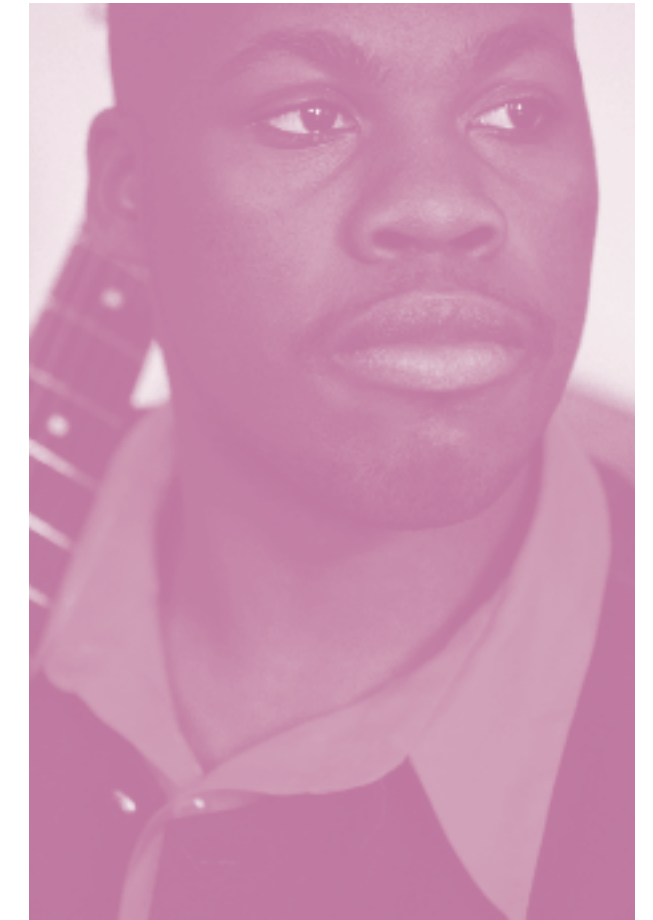
Martin agreed that a vocational course would best suit his learning style so Helen recruited the help of the Learning Support coordinator at the Sixth Form College. They planned a meeting to discuss the possibility of paid, part-time work at the college and to ensure that they were fully prepared Helen used her network of professional contacts and her knowledge of partner and learning organisations to research every aspect of the situation.

**Martin was offered part-time work on a year's contract in the Library and IT departments at the College**

She contacted libraries and associated training organisations, distance learning organisations, the Learning and Skills Council and the job centre for financial support and, determined to come up with a solution, explored the idea of collaborative working between the College, Modern Apprenticeships, the Millennium Volunteers, Adult Education and Saturday work in the local community library. After the meeting Martin was offered part-time work on a year's contract in the Library and IT departments at the College – a fantastic result and Martin was really pleased!

After a time the college asked for support in helping Martin to make a success of his placement and a third member of the careers team began working closely with Martin. She suggested strategies such as a learning log so Martin could chart his progress, and coached him on ways he could access appropriate help. She suggested the college use his fluent reading ability to give him checklists and time schedules to help move him through his working day. She also researched training options eventually arranging for Martin to take the European Computer Driving Licence, just like the staff at the local library.

**She suggested strategies such as a Learning Log so Martin could chart his progress and coached him on ways he could access appropriate help**



Whilst Martin doesn't like the idea of leaving the college library if his contract ends, the foundations are being laid for his transfer to the local library, a place he's already familiar with. With the help of the careers team he's got a job, is working towards appropriate qualifications, has grown in confidence and is now showing signs of being ready to plan and take responsibility for his own progress in a career he enjoys.

Peter was very far from independent, suffered from an emotional illness, was easily-led so found himself in tricky friendship situations

# PETER

When Peter was in year 9 he told Jim, his careers adviser, that he was keen to go to college and learn to work with cars. It was a bit difficult to 'read' his rather dead-pan expression, a legacy of the neurological disorder that meant he verged on the autistic. In a meeting with his mother however Jim learned the extent of the limitations imposed by his condition. Peter was very far from independent, suffered from an emotional illness, was easily-led so found himself in tricky friendship situations that had led to encounters with the police and also had a limited comprehension of language. On top of all this, Peter had a tendency to overestimate his abilities.

**as he approached his seventeenth year it was obvious that he just wasn't going to cope at a local college**

His special school was a highly structured environment and the careers adviser saw Peter regularly during years 9 and 10 and attended his annual reviews. She had come to clearly understand Peter's needs and had been working, together with the school staff and Peter's mother, to help him to become more realistic about what he could do, thereby making it possible for him to be satisfied with an occupation that was within his abilities. He also needed more maturity, confidence and independence before he could contemplate a change of environment. But independence seemed a very long way off as he still couldn't cross a road by himself and as he approached his seventeenth year it was obvious that he just wasn't going to cope at a local college. Jim made an application for the three years of funding necessary to keep Peter at his school and after meetings to advocate this as the best, and only, real option for Peter, he managed to secure it.



At nineteen, Peter is now on a full-time course, travelling independently and doing well

Peter had become more aware of his needs and was content to stay in the school and made good progress. His independence skills remained a problem and Jim encouraged him to work hard on these. He began to look forward to his transition at year fourteen and various specialist colleges around the country were considered. Using his knowledge of their staff and provision, Jim helped Peter and his mother to consider the various options. However Peter was very reluctant to move away so Jim explored the non-standard option of a link programme with his local college during year thirteen. At Jim's request the school made an exceptional decision to fund such a link programme and negotiated an appropriate programme with staff at the college along with weekly work experience.

Peter had to learn to travel on the train and to cope with the new relationships and environment of college after his long years with the familiar surroundings of school. A major challenge was learning to cope with the unrehearsed or unexpected, but with his adviser's encouragement Peter remained motivated. It was difficult but he persevered and Jim picked up on his interest in ICT and helped him through his application and interviews for a full time course, also applying for benefits and supported accommodation outside of his school. At nineteen, Peter is now on a full-time course, travelling independently and doing well. He's had a period of working and his adviser is now helping him to find part-time work. With patience and encouragement Jim had supported Peter as he struggled to overcome his difficulties to become a more confident, less vulnerable and almost independent adult.

**Jim picked up on his interest in ICT and helped him through his application and interviews for a full time course**

