



Client Success Story: Josh Disability Employment Service

Josh came to Enable through the Shropshire Disability Team. He had been struggling to find employment and coming to Enable was the first time Josh had received proper support with finding long term, paid employment. After his initial assessment, Natalie, his Employment Officer was able to find him work for a cleaning company used by Oldbury Wells School in Bridgnorth. Josh started off at the School covering for another Enable client, then when a permanent job came up, Josh applied for it and was successful.

The Journey to Employment

Finding long term, sustainable employment had been a challenge for Josh and his parents, his Dad said: "It has been a very long process. Typical of finding some permanent work or a placement or even help; days turn into weeks and weeks turn into months. Considering Josh left college when he was 18 or 19, it's taken nearly three to four years to get Josh from college, to finding a full time job. Because of that length of time, it sort of wears you down a bit, you try desperately and hope that he will realise his full potential."

When Josh first came to Enable, he met with an Employment Officer where they undertook his initial assessment; this involved him letting them know what his skills and interests were, they could then use this information to work out what sort of job Josh should be matched to. That was the beginning of his journey to employment and Enable was there through every step.

Josh said: "They helped me with CV writing and we did role play to practice going to an interview - like bad situations and good situations. They helped me figure out what my skills are and what I was interested in and we wrote a list of things that I would like to do."

Josh has a passion for cycling and managed to secure a job at a bike shop. Natalie said: "On his journey to employment, Josh had, had smaller roles and so he had been supported by a couple of employment officers. When I started working for him, we got him two jobs, he works at Oldbury Wells School and he also works at Clee Cycles."

Josh said: "I work at Clee Cycles on a Friday morning. Where I clean and build the bikes up to sell."

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Beginning Work

Julie, Josh's Manager at his cleaning job, had previously employed someone through Enable who is still working there now. This meant that she knew the process and she was aware of the level of support that would be available.

Julie said: "When I first took an employee on through Enable, although he was my cousin, I still had my concerns about how he would cope as he has never worked before. However, after speaking to Natalie and hearing about the level of support that was available from her and her colleagues, I was willing to give him a go and he's fab, he's brilliant. The staff at Enable are also great; if there's ever anything wrong then I know that they are always at the end of the phone to support us."

Because of Enable's support and the success of the previous employee, Julie was very open to the idea of hiring Josh.

"When I first met Josh, I didn't really have any concerns, we have a massive turnover of staff, we have a lot of people who come for a week and then leave. I could see that Josh was a young man, wanting to get into a work environment and I was happy to give him a go. Again, I knew that I would have the support of Enable to help him settle in and step by step encourage him and help him to do

his daily duties."

Josh has now been working at the school as a cleaner since March and he is thoroughly enjoying it. Josh said: "I really enjoy my job - I started in March as cover. Now I work 2 hours a day, Monday to Friday, cleaning the tables, floors and windows and mopping and cleaning the corridors."

Ongoing Support through Job Coaching

Enable offered dedicated support to both Josh and his employer through the use of a Job Coach. John, his Job Coach supported him in his role by breaking down his tasks and making sure his cleaning was up to standard. The when he got a point where he was able to do the job independently job coaching was phased it out. There have been times when Josh has needed extra support, for example after the school holidays when he has been off work for a few weeks, he sometimes needs assistance with remembering everything - that is what Enable's Job Coaches are there to help with. Whenever Josh or his employer feel like he may be struggling, Enable arrange a review meeting where they can decide on the best way forward together with both Josh and his employer.

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Josh said: “When I started at the school I had John and Jez who were job coaching me. They would give me tips on how to do the job and they helped me with my training.”

In recent months Josh hasn’t needed any full time support from a Job Coach. Due to a third Enable client now working at the school, there is a Job Coach available as and when Josh needs them.

Julie said: “Having a Job Coach makes a massive difference. John has been able to support him with his daily routine and making sure he knows what to do with his nightly duties - just everything really. He works alongside Josh, he gets stuck in and then he takes a step back when he feels that Josh is able to make his own decisions on what needs to be done. John would draw up list with Josh, letting him know what needs to be done on certain nights - things such as mopping aren’t needed every night so this was put onto the list at the correct times. Then bit by bit it gets cemented until Josh is happy to go for it on his own.”

John, Josh’s Job Coach, said: “When we come across any difficulties, making a list is just a starting point. When you think that this is a school you would imagine that it finishes at around 3:00pm and everyone goes home but it doesn’t work like that. So there have been many times Josh and I have stood outside classrooms



wondering if we should go in or not when people are in there, it is really handy for us both to be there because we discuss whether we should or not. There was one teacher who never seemed to leave his classroom and we didn’t want to disturb him so we would creep about at first but after having a conversation with him, we know that Josh can just go in and do his job without worrying.”

Josh’s employment officer, Natalie still stays in touch through text and has visited the house a few times. As Josh is still registered as self-employed with his work at Clee Cycles, Natalie has supported him with organising his folders and helped him with his taxes as he was able to claim some back. As Josh is still self-employed, Natalie will visit on an annual basis to support him with this.

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Overcoming Difficulties

As with any new job, this one has not come without its difficulties, but having the support from Enable has meant that Josh and Julie have been able to work through them in a way that works for both of them.

Julie said: “Josh is friendly, he’s fitted in really well, he’s a team player and he does anything that I ask him to do.

Sometimes he does get a bit nervous but he’s more than happy to do whatever I ask of him. Josh is better having a routine and I know that. Sometimes we have to do a deep clean, this happens four times a year, so I have to let John and Natalie know when this happens because it means that Josh might not be on his usual area. That can really throw Josh, even though he knows what he’s doing, if he doesn’t know the area then he just needs a little bit more support from Enable, so they come in and work alongside us during the deep cleans.”

John said: “The deep cleans are a very different couple of days because it’s really all hands to the pump, cleaning things that wouldn’t usually be cleaned for the rest of the term and in a different area of the school as well. From a Job Coaching viewpoint, I always think that’s a question of just really working alongside him - you can’t just stand at



the side and direct him on what to do, you have to get stuck in as well. That way you actually do the coaching while you are working alongside them. It’s really about with them and saying that we’re all part of the same team, I’ve learnt as much from Josh and Rob as they have learnt from me.”

Julie said: “We’ve had to do a couple of reviews just to remind Josh on how to do everything properly, mainly when we’ve had a couple of weeks off and it just takes Josh a little bit of time to get back into the swing of things, but we get there and we support him through it all.”

Josh’s Mum said: “You’re always going to need a certain amount of support. It’s never really plain sailing in this situation, which makes it really helpful that

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Gaining Confidence

Josh's confidence has grown significantly since being employed, even Julie has seen a change in him. She said: "Josh has gained so much confidence, he's really grown since he came to us, he was a very quiet lad, he's always been very lovely but he's used to all the staff now and he just feels comfortable to come in and do what he has to do without anything phasing him."

When asked about his confidence in his new role, Josh said: "I feel more confident at the cleaning than where I was working before. I get on well with the staff in this job now and I have a supportive manager who is very understanding."

Others who have noticed a significant change in Josh's overall confidence and self-esteem are his parents, Josh's Dad said: "Enable - to my mind - have helped Josh to realise his full potential. He can proudly go into a pub, or meet his mates and say "I've got a five day a week job" which might not sound much, but really I think it's immense because we've been banging away for four years trying to get Josh into a job, a meaningful job, not just cleaning out the dog kennels or washing up once a week in the pub. This is proper employment that's five days a week. Often when you are talking to people you ask them what their job is,

you can't help it! Josh is in a situation now where he can say he works five days a week at a school and that's really great, as a parent that makes me feel great, let alone how it makes Josh feel."

Josh's Mum said: "It's so much more than just money that you get from work - it's your self-esteem and confidence, he's got a lot more confidence now."

The Benefits of Working with Enable

As an employer, Julie has seen many benefits of hiring someone through Enable, she said: "I would highly recommend using Enable to hire staff to other employers - it's the way forward! They know that the applicants they are putting forward to you are suitable for the role, they're not just going to give you anybody. I've had people who have come and said that they've done cleaning before and they have all of this experience and then they're absolutely useless! You can find problems with anyone that you employ but Enable offers you the support to deal with those problems."

Josh's Mum said: "It's about having confidence in someone - so many times people have been here and they'll say they will be in touch, they go away and

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then we don't hear from them again. They've sat here and we've thought, 'right we've just spent two hours wasting our time' and we don't hear from them again. It's been going on for years. This time we know that Natalie is at the other end of the phone and she calls in and keeps in touch all the time. It's such a help knowing that you've got somebody out there, just somebody, because you do feel quite alone with this sort of thing if you don't know what you're doing."

Josh's Dad said: "For all parents, to see your offspring blossom, flourish and realise their potential, is what parenting is really all about. You don't realise it, but that's what it's all about. Everybody out there is wanting to get their kids into Cambridge and Oxford or a good job, if you strip it all back, it starts with where we're at now. Believe me to get help, to get Josh into a job, it's not easy, you've got to find people with the right heart. Enable is great and it has really helped us. There are other organisations that we've dealt with, they come and they go, various people are set up with a bit of money to be the new thing to thrust someone with a learning disability into work and some of it works and some of it doesn't, but if you get the organisation right, and you get people with the right heart, then it does actually work and this is evidence of that."

Changing Lives

Josh's Dad said: "The word, fought, is so significant because really, going back to Josh when he was six, he was not hacking it at school and there was all sorts of trouble going on and then you have to try and build something from that and that's not easy - to get some help, or find a specialist school or get some tutoring, get something to smooth the way through - even at the age of six! Josh is 24 next month, so 18 years of fighting. Nothing has come easy so it's great when it does and that's what has happened with Enable. Where you've got people who care and have patience. Julie, Josh's employer has been great, she's got so much patience and she understands certain difficulties. I can't believe I am able to say that Josh has two Jobs. It's like, from little acorns, things grow and Natalie was the gardener!"

Josh: "My favourite parts about working are getting paid, meeting the nice teachers and meeting Julie my boss. I like having my own money and making my own decisions."

Josh has recently bought himself a new mountain bike with his wages and is looking forward to continuing down the road of independence.

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