

Case Study 1

“Mr L” was referred to us in April from Job Centre Plus. At our first meeting “Mr L” did not really seem that he was entirely complicit in being referred to us as he felt he was getting on with his job searching on his own, but maybe we could help with a Cardiff Works application.

He was polite but a little stand offish and it was quite a brief meeting. “Mr L” was going to send me his CV the next day, to cast an eye over it, but almost a month later nothing had come.

I did a follow up email with a job that I thought “Mr L” might like and reiterated my request for his CV again. I thought Luke was not going to engage but on the 25th May he emailed his CV and asked for help applying for a position with Admiral. We met, had a look at the application and made some amendments to his CV. “Mr L” had what I would describe as a dog CV. I work well with others, I can work on my own, I can learn new skills, and I am loyal. All of these things describe my dog, but they would not do well in a call centre. We made some significant changes and got a little creative.

“Mr L” called four days later to say he had a Teams interview with Admiral the next day, so could we meet up to use my computer. We met the following day and I felt that “Mr L” was a lot comfortable meeting up this time, but also tense about the interview.

I put “Mr L” in the Yurt at Cathays Community Centre and sat opposite him, with his permission. I have found that’s “Mr L’s” pace of conversation speeds up in correlation to how nervous he is feeling. He was very nervous. The first part was loading the Admiral Website and finding information as directed by the interviewers, which he did well apart from one where he had to find the percentage discount you would get for two cars. Fascinating stuff.

The second was ‘teach us something you know in five minutes’. “Mr L” definitely resembled a deer in the headlights of a car, he froze, for what seemed to be a very long time. As I frantically scribbled ideas on paper to try and prompt him, “Mr L” found inspiration and started to explain how to build a feather board fence. Although the pace of delivery was fast, he did well.

The last question was: You have two eggs and you have to work out the height you can drop one from without it breaking!!! “Mr L” gave a reasonable answer but when we Googled the answer afterwards he had not given the textbook response. We both agreed it was a daft question.

A week later he got the news that he did not get the job, so to try and maintain momentum we put in for the Cardiff Works Assessment. They were quite quick in responding and it was scheduled for the 28th June. We met again to prepare as best we could and “Mr L” said he felt confident. The day came and went and “Mr L” rang straight after to report on how well he thought he had done, which was well.

On the 6th July I invited “Mr L” to help volunteer to build a new outdoor shelter for Cathays Community Centre. This was going to give us more space to meet people without having to go into buildings. “Mr L” came and worked for four hours returning later to see the finished structure where he expressed a sense of pride about being part of the process.

The next day “Mr L” rang to say he had been offered a position with Cardiff Works and I needed to complete the reference for him, a number of roles were discussed and I think “Mr L” will be able to choose an appropriate role at his next meeting. We met the next day at Cathays and I was able to make “Mr L” a Wood Fired Pizza as we were having an open day at the centre. It is quite possible that I will meet with “Mr L” again, this time as a colleague rather than as a participant.

It took a couple of months for the relationship to develop from a purely utilitarian one. One where I was just another person who was delivering a service. Now I feel there is a sense of reciprocity in our interactions, one where “Mr L” wants to give back and not because he feels obligated or is being directed but because he sees the value in helping someone else.



Photos showing the new outdoor shelter that “Mr L” volunteered to help build

