



Case Study 1 – Andrew Wilkinson



Hello, my name is Andrew, 18 years ago I was paralysed from my chest down due to a road traffic accident. Prior to my accident, I had a physical outdoor job as a scaffolder, which I loved. Being unable to do this anymore I volunteered at the spinal hospital where I did my recovery and tried out lots of different sports. I excelled at Javelin enough to get into the Welsh squad and represented GB in the world championships. I then met my partner and we now have two children. I was a stay at home dad and I also volunteered for spinal charities helping others adapt to their new lives as wheelchair users.

With my youngest starting full time school, I wanted to get back to work. With no work history for many years and no qualifications, I visited the Bridges in to Work team. I had an initial appointment with Aled who discussed available options and referred me onto Jaki who would be my Employment Support Tutor. From the start Jaki made me feel comfortable and gave me the confidence to believe in myself. She took the time to talk about my interests and different courses available. Jaki also helped me put together my C.V. in preparation for applying for roles. I found a job that I felt I was suited for and was fortunate enough to be invited for interview. Panic then crept in!! After talking to Jaki about my fear, she calmed me and told me not to panic and she would help me prepare for the interview. Jaki called me every day in the lead up to my interview providing role-play scenarios. Jaki boosted my self-esteem and gave me the confidence to believe I was the man for the job. Two weeks later I had the phone call I was waiting for, I got the job!! I was speechless I had done it. I knew I could do the job but it was the help and support Jaki gave me that helped me get it. I will be forever grateful to Jaki and I would say to anyone wanting to explore their options to get in touch with the Bridges in to Work team, It could be life changing for you. It certainly has been for me.

Jaki Southgate added:

“From the first meeting with Andrew, it was clear that he already had the determination, skills and exceptional attributes to inspire and motivate others. It was fantastic learning his story and how he has adapted and used his journey to reduce the stigma around disability and joblessness in a totally selfless way and show others that if you are prepared to commit to your goals it can be done!

Andrew has a can do attitude in both his personal and professional life and sometimes it can take time to build confidence and self – belief. I totally enjoyed working with Andrew to achieve his ultimate goal of getting back into work.”