

PAULINE'S STORY

“My confidence had taken a real knock....now my life's turned around.”

Single mum Pauline Kirlew has never looked back after being put in touch with Tomorrow's People.

Despite having been in full time employment since her early twenties, she was forced to give up her job as an office manager nine years ago to look after her young daughter.

When she wanted to join the job market again she had lost confidence and felt out-of-touch.

“I had always worked but when my mum died I had no one to look after my daughter while I was out at work”, says Pauline, now aged 39. “So I had to give it up. I kept myself busy and stimulated by taking courses until my daughter was old enough to be at home after school by herself. But by then I had been out of the job market for nine years and my confidence had taken a real knock. I was terrified of going for an interview.”

Pauline enrolled on a business and administration course to update her computer skills and passed, but she still could not find a job.

At the local job centre Pauline was given Tomorrow's People's phone number, and decided to call, but only to make use of the organisation's computer equipment.

She said: “I really thought by going to see Tomorrow's People it would just be another tick in the box, I didn't think it would lead to anything.

“But from the minute I walked through the door I knew this was different. They didn't look down on me because I was unemployed, or that I had been out of work for so long. And when I explained my lack of confidence they totally understood.”

Pauline began visiting Tomorrow's People's Getting London Working Support Centre at Southwark, South East London, three times a week. During this time her advisers taught her how to update her CV and how to fill in a successful application form. Pauline underwent a series of videotaped mock interviews with her advisers, which were studied and evaluated afterwards. And when she was asked to attend a real interview Tomorrow's People even helped her with a free new outfit and makeover.

She said: “We went through interview techniques time and time again, with my advisers telling me what was positive and what was negative. At first I was really nervous but over time that changed.

Case Study



“I went through all the newspapers and kept applying for jobs and a lot of the time I wouldn't even get a response. That would really get me down, but my advisers were great, so positive. They encouraged me to just take time out from my search every now and then and not to give myself a hard time.

“And when I came back from interviews feeling disheartened, they would always take the time to go through the questions with me and help me see how best to answer them.”

After three months of applying for administrative and secretarial roles, Pauline was recruited as an administrative officer at a hospital near her home at Borough, South East London, ahead of six other candidates.

Eight months on and Pauline is enjoying her job with a new found confidence.

“It's funny”, she said. “My manager always tells me that they recruited me because of my strong interview, when interviews were the one thing I was so nervous about.

“Tomorrow's People has really turned my life around. I really was despairing as to whether I'd ever get another job.

“I didn't want to stay on the dole, but it's not that easy to walk into a job after having been out of work for so long. I hope my story will encourage other people like me to accept help and not to give up.”

Pauline is now so confident she would eventually like to move into a training and development role, helping others to fulfil their true potential. And she is still in touch with Tomorrow's People.

Julie Sexton, Tomorrow's people Programme Manager, said: “When Pauline came to us, she had excellent experience but of course had been out of the work environment for nine years. She kept going for jobs but was not successful and was understandably very frustrated. She kept asking us ‘Have I lost my touch?’

“We realised something was wrong because her CV was very good, and then looked closely at her interview techniques. With a bit of time and encouragement she learned not to be so nervous and to give real, and well thought out answers.

“Pauline is a very tenacious lady, an excellent role model to others out there who have been out of the work place and are nervous of getting back to work. It wasn't the case that she wasn't capable, just that nerves got in the way. We were thrilled when she found her new job, it was thoroughly deserved.”

Tomorrow's People is a specialist charitable trust, with a 22-year track record of success in helping people out of long-term unemployment, welfare dependence or homelessness, into jobs and self-sufficiency.

Case Study



The trust has helped change the lives of more than 400,000 people who had been resigned to long-term, even life-long, unemployment, since it was established in 1984. On average, 76% of people helped by Tomorrow's People are still in employment 12 months on.

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