

Central London Forward Into Work – Candidate Case Study

Quarter/year: Q3 2015/2016

Provider: Groundwork London

Name of candidate and employer: Charlie Mitchel/ Groundwork Reuse

Charlie Mitchel aged 44 from Hackney Islington was unemployed for 5 years before being supported into work as an Estate Reuse Assistant based on the Pembury Estate in Hackney, as part of the Central London Forward Into Work programme.

- Charlie had to leave his last job due to family circumstance which meant he was suddenly a full time parent to his young son. For the next three years Charlie was involved in a complicated custody challenge which was followed by a period of sickness where he was receiving health benefits. Things finally settled down a year and a half ago when he started to look at a return to work. Although Charlie had a good previous work record he identified his main barriers as his period out of work & wanting to have employment close to home, ideally part time in order to still be around for his son.
- Charlie initially found out about the opportunity through on his estate where Groundwork had been promoting the roles to residents. He contacted the Peabody family liaison team who helped Charlie put together a CV and cover letter to Groundwork & a Groundwork advisor made some minor changes then forwarded it to the recruiting team.
- In the initial action plan at the beginning of October 2015 Charlie was very open about his situation, he was confident with his communication skills but wanted advice with regards to preparing for interview. The role of Reuse Assistant involves collecting unwanted furniture, upcycling to prepare for re-sale or recycling as appropriate. Charlie was particularly interested in the role as was part time, based on his estate & as an amateur 'upcycler' himself it was a project he felt he could contribute to. In Charlie's words he wanted to 'spread the recycling message & help to educate other'.
- As part of the pre employment pathway Groundwork delivered a group interview preparation session for the four people shortlisted for the Hackney role. This included responses to common questions as well as a video of a similar project delivered from west London. The interview would also include a tools identification assessment which the candidates were advised about how they could offer a full response including health & safety best practice & their previous experience. The role asked for community liaising abilities & in particular Charlie was encouraged to talk about his knowledge of the area, awareness of fly tipping & appropriate communication with residents to get their buy-in to what would be a brand new project opening up on their estate.
- Feedback from the employer at interview was that he stood out as the best candidate because of his motivation & enthusiasm. In addition being local was a particular bonus. Charlie was successful at interview & offered part time work which started on the 28th October. Groundwork provided specific in work support within his first week of work to help calculate an estimate of in-work benefits & advice on how he could apply for this as he was eligible for Working & Child tax credits.

- Two months on, feedback from the employer has been that since starting his role Charlie has shown dedication, continued enthusiasm, pride in his work & demonstrates a real belief in the project. Having been out of employment for a while he's grateful to be working again, especially in a role that he enjoys. As this is a new project Charlie has been of real value in terms of his local links; he can offer a daily view of what's going on & understanding of what the local residents need.
- Quote from Charlie, 'I am absolutely ecstatic that I am working again, it has changed my whole life basically. My son was on at me, get a job, get a job & he's over the moon. Even he has noticed the change in things like, there's always food in the house & he gets what he wants! I am much happier, I was depressed sitting in doors; it was driving me mad it was. Now I look forward to getting up in the morning!'

