



## **Media Statement**

**29<sup>th</sup> March 2014**

### **The Conservation Volunteers: Supporting Employment and Skills**

TCV Employment and Training Services is proud of the work we do to transform people's prospects. We work together with people and communities to transform their health, prospects and outdoor places for the long term. We want a better quality of life for everyone, and improving people's prospects is important to improving their physical and mental health.

We help to improve people's skills and employability through our work with schools and colleges. But we also work outside the classroom – with people who need specialised help because of things like school exclusion, learning difficulties or unemployment. We have long standing experience in this area, and many of the people we work with tell us what a difference we have made to their lives.

Some of TCV's help is given through Employment Related Programmes. We are proud, particularly at a time of Government spending cuts and changes to the welfare and benefits system, that we can be part of the solution. There are growing numbers of people seeking employment, skills and confidence building, and we want to be there to support them.

We believe that we do a good job - and the vast majority of unemployed people we work with tell us so. We do not force people who are on health and disability benefits to undertake work placements with us. That would never be good for the individual or for us. And we do not use Employment Related Programmes to substitute for paid positions - either with The Conservation Volunteers or with other employers.

We know that long term unemployment damages people's health and blights the communities they live in. By helping to improve people's prospects through employability and skills, we help to improve people's prospects, and the wellbeing of individuals and communities. We are grateful for the support of our funders and delivery partners over many years of helping thousands of people to move out of unemployment and into paid work.

We regularly get 'thank yous' and positive feedback from people we have been able to help through welfare to work activities. Recent testimonies include the following:

Sheryl faced limited employment opportunities in a rural location, and needed help to adapt and update her CV. We helped her to secure a Retail Assistant position, and she has since been promoted to acting supervisor.

#### **Sheryl says:**

"When I came to TCV I found their help and enthusiasm that I could find employment in the area very reassuring. Having been in place at the store now for some months I am well chuffed to be

offered the acting supervisor role. Getting back into the workplace has made the world of difference to me.”

Graham had worked for the prison service as a Woodwork Tutor, but had had to leave his job due to a physical disability. When he was referred to TCV Employment and Training Services, he was experiencing personal problems and was very depressed. We arranged a placement at a homelessness project where he could teach woodwork skills. Whilst there, his classes became very popular and he now has part time employment with the potential of full time work in the future.

**Graham says:**

“I am delighted to be back in work and running a successful workshop passing on skills to homeless people in the hope that they too may gain employment. Thank you TCV.”

Ricky had been unemployed for 14 months and initially could not see the benefit of carrying out Work Related Activity such as Work Trials. He wanted to work within the construction industry as a labourer/bricklayer, but lack of experience had been a major barrier.

Ricky is now working as a self-employed general labourer and his contractor is the Work Trial provider who we found for him. Ricky now feels more confident and has a much needed sense of direction.

**Ricky says:**

“Thank you TCV, you have given me a purpose and now the sky is the limit. Work trials are definitely the way forward for those with a lack of experience...”

Daniel had been unemployed for 2 years before coming to us, and had struggled to get through traditional job interviews. We helped him to explore placement options with the aim of moving into paid work subject to employer satisfaction. Daniel is now in full time employment as a cleaner in social housing. He is hopeful that this will progress to painting and decorating very soon and is keen to explore different training options.

**Daniel says:**

“The voluntary work has enabled me to prove to an employer that I can do the job and not to base the outcome solely on an interview.”

Rebecca was looking to gain work experience and to improve her CV. Her main interest was customer service, retail, office or catering/bar work. We organised a work trial for her at a local pub. Rebecca did really well, and they offered her a job.

**Rebecca says:**

“Really happy that I’m working! I feel more confident and am enjoying the role. I work with a really nice team, and the customers are really nice too. I work on both floors of the pub, and like that I am trusted to work using my own initiative.”

Andrew had a qualification in Health and Social Care, but was not confident that he had the ability to get a paid job. After help with jobsearch skills, Andrew is now employed by Midshires Healthcare as a Support Worker.

**Andrew says:**

“When I first came onto the Work Choice Programme my future and career prospects felt bleak. The programme has enabled me to create a positive and professional curriculum vitae. It has offered me support and guidance when applying for jobs and I have also developed letter writing skills and interview techniques.”

**Ends**

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For more information about The Conservation Volunteers please visit: [www.tcv.org.uk](http://www.tcv.org.uk)