



'Our past does not define us as a person': Paul's journey back to work

For immediate release

"One of the most defining moments of my life was joining the Individual Placement and Support scheme. It gave me support with my alcohol dependency, and it made me look at things in a totally different way."

WithYou in Cornwall's Individual Placement and Support (IPS) service is an innovative approach that offers intensive, individually tailored support to help individuals in drug and alcohol recovery find - and retain - the right job.

Access to career support plays a vital role in drug and alcohol recovery. At WithYou in Cornwall, over the last year, our dedicated IPS team has supported 162 clients. This includes helping people to choose a job which is right for them, supporting them with the recruitment process, and offering ongoing support to them and their new employer to help ensure the person keeps their job.

Paul is one of the people whose life has been changed by our IPS team. He came to WithYou in Cornwall and met his recovery worker, Annabelle, who he says has been 'super supportive' throughout his journey.

Paul said "I can't thank Annabelle enough for everything she has done for me during my recovery. Annabelle spoke to me about the IPS service, and I was put in touch with a specialist who spoke to me at length about my work history and what I wanted to do moving forward."

Prior to finding out about WithYou, and joining the IPS programme, Paul describes his life as 'very patchy'. "I can remember some parts of it – I relied on drinking pretty much most days. I would finish work and start drinking the moment I finished work."

"I was applying for numerous jobs, but this was really disheartening as I wasn't getting any responses, and the feeling of rejection was very real. I was always questioning "why weren't employers getting back to me?"

“Nobody wants to employ somebody who doesn’t have anything to offer at that time, and who is dependent on alcohol.”

With support from our IPS team, Paul started making tweaks to his CV and regularly attended WithYou’s IPS meetings. The meetings gave Paul the opportunity to meet like-minded individuals who were going through similar experiences. He soon became an IPS champion.

“This involved attending a job fair in Plymouth, which I found very interesting. It was good to see how employers interact with the public, but it was also good to see the IPS team approach employers, and how they both interact with each other: hear employers’ views on addiction and what support there is available in their own company.”

With Annabelle, Sheree, and the wider support from the IPS team, Paul secured permanent employment.

“I’ve been here for three to four months. They have changed my contract from a seasonal 16-hour contract to a full-time 16-hour contract. It’s nice to have an employer that cares about you as an individual.”

“I like to have something to focus on: without focus [life] is very ad hoc and I’ve got no plans. But, having a job, and having somebody to be able to support me in that job has been brilliant.”

“Working with WithYou and the IPS programme has been a positive experience, and I can’t thank the whole team enough, especially Annabelle and Sherree, who have supported me through my journey.

They never judged me: they believed in me when I was at my lowest, not feeling that I was going to succeed. Perseverance and regular appointments with them all gave me hope.”

If you or someone you know is struggling with alcohol or drugs in Cornwall contact call 01872 263 001 or visit the website wearewithyou.org.uk for more information or to use our free, confidential webchat service.

ENDS

Notes to editors

- Supporting photo of Paul is available
- A spokesperson from WithYou will be available for interview (upon request)

For more information and spokespeople requests, please contact the WithYou press office at pressoffice@wearewithyou.org.uk or by calling 07929877401

About WithYou

WithYou is a leading drug, alcohol and mental health charity operating across England and Scotland. Each year we work with more than 100,000 people in over 120 locations, providing a free and confidential service without judgement to adults and young people experiencing issues with drugs, alcohol or mental health. www.wearewithyou.org.uk

In Cornwall, WithYou's offices are located in Camborne, Falmouth, Liskeard, Penzance, Redruth, St Austell and Truro for anyone over the age of 18 who needs support. The team actively works out in the community to ensure that anyone who needs support can easily access it.

There is also Chy: a residential rehabilitation centre in Truro. The service provides post-detox treatment and independent living support.

WithYou in Cornwall also supports young people under the age of 18 who are worried about their drug or alcohol use.