

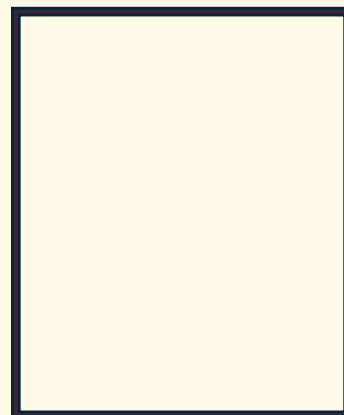


Case Study



Connect to Work
Cheshire & Warrington

Name	ABC
Age	60
Barriers	Mental and physical health
Employer	Self-employed



Summary

Through Connect To Work's programme of support, a programme participant is able to overcome her anxiety of returning to work and start a new business with a four star licence.

Background

ABC is a 60-year-old female with a long history of anxiety and feelings that overwhelm as well as a physical condition, both of which impact her ability to cope in traditional employment settings. ABC enjoys a game of golf which she reports is good for both her physical and mental health.

ABC wanted to investigate self-employment as she felt that would provide more flexibility. Due to her physical and mental health issues, ABC was keen to work within a controlled, home-based environment; this would enable her to manage her own schedule and workload, according to her own timescale.

ABC's ultimate goal was to establish a doggy daycare business, combining her interest in animal care with a sustainable and manageable working model.

Challenges

The biggest hurdle for ABC to overcome was feeling easily overwhelmed. The idea of work had become stressful so her advisor Carol began by looking at individual triggers to address. Over several discussions, Carol broke down the self-employment process into clear, structured and achievable steps.

Engagement

After discussing a timescale and steps required to become self-employed Carol supported ABC to writing a detailed business plan and marketing plan, developing policies and



procedures to meet licensing requirements and designing marketing materials. Although this seemed quite an intimidating task Carol helped ABC to complete these and suggested ways of personalising the content to best reflect her circumstances and aims.

Carol suggested conducting some market research, including reviewing existing platforms and the National Association of Registered Pet Sitters (NARPs). Through this ABC gained an understanding of local competition, the services offered and pricing structures. This research helped ABC realise her goal was achievable.

In later appointments, Carol and ABC looked at initial start-up costs to assess feasibility. They created a financial forecast to demonstrate how the business would achieve break-even, ensuring ABC had a realistic understanding of income and expenditure. This again contributed to her growing confidence in herself and her plans.

When ABC was ready to launch the business, Carol assisted with support around business finance (credit rating, National Insurance, pensions and tax), setting up IT equipment and physical adjustments to the property to accommodate dogs. By this point ABC was confident and organised enough to create her own dedicated filing system for tax and National Insurance documentation.

The licensing outcome exceeded expectations. ABC was initially advised that a 2-star licence would apply due to the fact that she was not yet trading. However, the business was awarded a 4-star licence, which is highly unusual for a new business. This was a direct result of the quality of ABC's policies and procedures.

Impact

ABC has progressed from her initial idea to being fully prepared to begin trading, demonstrating significant development in confidence, organisation, and business readiness. ABC is now actively marketing her business and has accepted her first clients, with more booked in for the busy summer period.

As well as starting her business ABC reports that her confidence has improved enormously. Her overwhelming feelings are much more manageable as a result of her increased independence and resilience.

Carol will maintain weekly contact for the first few months 3–6 months of trading to ensure sustainability of the business and address any emerging challenges.

ABC reflected on her journey, saying:
I would never have got this far without your support. I'd have given up as it would have been too overwhelming.

If you are interested in taking part in Connect To Work, please contact connecttowork@cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk



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