



Case study

Think Differently: Jason's story

Think Differently provided Jason, who struggles with agoraphobia, a safe environment for entering the workplace.

“I have struggled to find work since leaving school. I suffer with Agoraphobia which makes getting around difficult. I have been involved with many work experience programmes in the years I've been on Job Seekers Allowance. Each of these did very little to help me into finding work and due to my own limitations, it made finding work difficult ”

Jason, Think Differently Candidate, 2017 - 2018



What is Agoraphobia?

Agoraphobia is a severe anxiety disorder, that can cause sufferers to experience regular panic attacks. The triggers of Agoraphobia can be experiences in everyday life, making this a huge barrier to employment.

What is Think Differently?

Think Differently is a program to help people with a range of mental health issues and disabilities get into work. At Mitie, we understand that no two conditions can be treated the same, each candidate would need tailored support to work to the best of their ability. Each candidate on the Think Differently program has a designated, trained Mitie mentor to take them through the programme, on a one-to-one basis. The mentors are trained by our partners in a range of things including, Mental Health First Aid, Disability Awareness and TSI; different methods of training for people facing different adversities.



How we helped Jason

In Jason's case, he was first assisted by family who bought him a motorbike to eliminate using public transport - a common trigger of his Agoraphobia. Mitie Partners, Azure Charitable Enterprise, then assisted Jason in getting to and from work until he was comfortable to do the journey independently.

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Mitie employees volunteer to be disability coaches and mentors. They are trained in disability awareness, mental health first aid and training in systematic instruction to become a friendly face for candidates during the programme.

How we helped Jason (cont.)

Throughout the course of the programme, candidates use their on-site work to evidence the necessary elements required to complete a NVQ. Initially, Jason was apprehensive about taking part in **Think Differently**: “Having been placed on numerous voluntary positions over the years. I wasn't too enthusiastic, but willing to give it a try.” However, after completing the programme, and his NVQ level 2 in business administration, Jason reflected “[**Think Differently** has shown me] that there are some programs out there that sympathise with people in similar situations as myself, and are willing to give them a chance to prove themselves and better their lives. **Think Differently** helped me better my life and I'm very grateful”

Results

Since the end of the programme, Jason has been employed as a Payroll and Administration Assistant part-time in Mitie's Cramlington Office. His mentor through the programme, Isaac Parr said, “Jason fits well within the office and is bettering his knowledge of the business daily, [he] seems a lot more confident in all aspects.”

Jason has been employed for over a year and is an asset to the team. “Jason has developed himself to his role beyond even his own expectations. Every day brings new challenges and Jason is able to beat every one.” Said Isaac.

Isaac himself has experience with the barriers those with disabilities face, his own family have a hereditary Asperger's gene. “I have seen first-hand how difficult it is for members of my family to gain employment and integrate within a work team environment. Many times, they have left due to not feeling comfortable within their environment, and I wanted



Jason has been employed at Mitie for over a year, after completing **Think Differently**.

to see if I was able to help with people struggling to get work.” With more staff opting to take part in the programme, **Think Differently** is not only designed to help candidates, but to empower our staff to seek a more inclusive work force who are stronger because of their diversity.

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Jason, **Think Differently** Graduate