

Back in Control Project

Case study

Robert's story

Robert (not his real name, is originally from Somalia) in September 2020 contacted ICOS and an initial registration was made through the phone. Robert stated he needed some assistance with a work related issue. He had found employment working in a restaurant and had purchased a black uniform. His friend had advised him; his employer would refund him for the cost of his new black uniform. When he approached his employer he refused to refund him. This left Robert short of money as he did not have recourse to any savings for food. Therefore, Robert was advised that it would be beneficial if a face-to-face appointment was made at his home address in order for Aurea, a Back in Control project worker to discuss in with him in depth his work related issues. This meeting was arranged promptly, the day after Robert had completed his initial registration. When Aurea met Robert, there was a language barrier as he does not speak English and she overcame this by using Google Translator to improve the discussion.

Aurea helped Robert apply for the Red Rose Fund; a cash grant which gives people the support they need during the coronavirus pandemic as Robert had not been paid his first wage. He also stated he required the money not just for food but also money for transport. Aurea and Robert met his employer at the restaurant where he was employed. Aurea asked why Robert had not been reimbursed. His employer clearly stated that he had never informed Robert that he would refund him for his uniform and that he would get his money back. Robert's friend who does not work with him advised him with the wrong information that employers in UK pay for staffs' clothes. His employer advised that the company gives out the black t-shirt with the logo on it to waitresses (the main room staff) and other staff from the kitchen can wear all black trousers or leggings and a white shirt (without logo) which comes from their own expense as its not seen as uniform, its rather seen as dress code.

The requirement was for all staff in the restaurant to wear all black as he does not provide a uniform for his staff. However, the employer did offer to pay Robert's wages in advance. After this clarification, a couple of weeks later Aurea contacted Robert and asked him if he would like help in finding another job. Robert declined the offer as he is happy in his current role.