



Male living in Sunderland, 30 years old, long term-unemployed. Originally from Eritrea. A refugee. Has a young family.

M was referred to ICOS in 2017. He had never worked in the UK and at that point he had just been through the asylum process. He had also been physically attacked whilst awaiting his asylum decision and as a result he suffered from memory problems, concussion, anxiety as well as an anger problem (those were at that time being addressed through Sunderland Counselling Service). While not all of those problems could be identified immediately or during the initial-assessment session, the client started trusting our coach more as he saw meaningful support was provided and disclosed those issues. Other barriers to progression included the experience of having to flee his country of origin.

He did have considerable barriers to progression, during the course of the initial assessment and during day-to-day work with the client, it was identified that this client had a range of skills and other assets which could be built on. These included IT knowledge (he used to study IT in his country of origin) and his experience of providing voluntary translations/interpreting for other refugees and asylum seekers while he was awaiting his status

The advisor worked with the individual to help him to progress and realise his potential. The support included:

- support with effective job searching techniques
- updating his CV and creating a covering letter
- regular support with job searching
- holistic support, for example help to enrol on a level 3 interpreting course (which included liaison with the training provider and help to register/enrol, as well as a successful application for an advanced learner loan), liaison with security industry licensing (notably, regarding his disclosure/safety check, as documents from Eritrea could not be accessed). We also provided support with travel arrangements to Birmingham to pass a level 2 security licence. ICOS also provided support with applying for state/public support, such as a discretionary housing payment.

Additionally, himself and his family were able to access specialist benefits support through our partner organisation (Sunderland CAB).

It was, especially, the holistic part of ICOS's support which was effective in supporting M to progress.

Having achieved a level 2 SIA qualification, he has now started working as a part time.

He has also acquired a level 3 qualification in interpreting, which enables him to work independently as an interpreter. It is his plan to become self-employed in the future and work as an interpreter.

He has also reported improvement in areas such as financial inclusion and a sense of stability.