



A day in the life

SOUMAYA is a Personal Advisor, one of a team of Shaw Trust Job Brokers based in a busy office in East London. Sou, as she is known to colleagues, is married, speaks Arabic, Spanish and French, and works as an interpreter and teacher in her spare time.

7am: I take the tube to the office and I aim to get in at about 9.00am.

10am: My first appointment is with a man who is dealing with substance misuse and depression issues. He's having great difficulties at home but believes he is ready to go back to work – he is a highly qualified engineer. I can see he needs help and I will see him again next week, meanwhile I'll try to steer him towards talking to our counsellor.

11am: Call in on the new Disability Employment Adviser at Loughton Job Centre. She knew very little about Shaw Trust, but is very impressed by the range of services and programmes we offer. We work closely alongside job centres – who often refer people to us.

12.30: Another initial interview. Maria is a qualified accountant who came over from Italy six years ago and has worked in a succession of catering jobs. Within minutes, I can see she is deeply troubled. I encourage her to attend some of our workshops to help build the confidence and self-esteem she, like many who first come to us, is lacking. You never know who will walk through the door next, that's why I like being a 'frontline' adviser.

2pm: My second interview is with Melissa, a young woman with mental ill-health. She has been out of work for a year and was hospitalised, but is keen to work again. She wants work in a shop or garden centre. After lots of probing, I discover she has a law degree. I will see her again next week, and meanwhile suggest she eases back into paid work with voluntary work. I will write her CV and discuss more work options with her at the next visit.

3pm: Nick, who has learning difficulties is back and I'm a bit firmer with him today because he hasn't picked up the job application forms we discussed. I don't know how committed he really is to finding paid work. One of our Workprep or Workstep advisers may be able to better help him. When we talk to employers it's about people who are fully ready to do the job, often experienced and qualified who just need help to find the work. I am often dealing with people who initially feel quite vulnerable, so I listen and we work out realistic training and work options together.

4pm: I receive a lovely call from Florence, a 60 year old lady I've been working with. She hasn't worked for 10 years but was determined to go back to full-time employment and now she's been offered a job in a nursing home. She's thrilled to bits. Those are the moments that make it worthwhile, the satisfaction of placing someone in a job is just superb. One service-user with an eating disorder who struggled for months to find something has changed beyond recognition since she started her full-time job.

4.30pm: There's always admin to do. I update files, make calls and log on and do some job searching, although much of this work is done by my 'job matching' colleagues.

5.30pm: I'm ready for something to eat as soon as I get home because I rarely break for lunch. I often do some interpreting in the evening, if not I work on my PhD in Socio-linguistics. I like to keep educating my mind but I'd never do language work as a full-time job. I care about people and I like to enable them to turn their lives around. That gives me real job satisfaction.

If you are looking for work or are an employer with a vacancy, please call freephone 0800 085 1001.

network

Mat Fraser

Trail blazing disabled actor speaks out

Positive thinking

A new approach to day care

Testing times

Shaw Trust's MD argues it is time to stop prolonging pilot schemes



Photography by Ashley

Issue 13
Autumn 03

Contents

02 Positive thinking
04 News
06 Testing times

08 Fraser Sharp
11 Nichola's story
14 Power on

Positive thinking

Shaw Trust a national charity that provides training and employment opportunities for disabled and disadvantaged people.

Shaw Trust believes that to ensure an inclusive society, disabled and disadvantaged people should have equal employment opportunities. Employment not only brings individuals financial reward, but contributes to greater confidence, self-esteem and improved quality of life.

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Disabled people using local authority day care services are being given new opportunities to lead fulfilling and independent lives thanks to a unique initiative.

Shaw Trust has already transformed the lives of thousands and is about to reach out to many more across the UK, with tailor-made packages of alternative day care opportunities.

“There are too many people resigned to the kind of day-care services which are going nowhere. We can offer a meaningful alternative which is more employment focused and is aimed at increasing an individual’s confidence and skills,” says the Trust’s Business Development & Marketing Director Tim Cooper.

“The Government is spending a staggering £695 million a year on day care which is seven times the amount they spend on employment programmes for the same group of people. All that money just to keep people out of work. We want to do something to change that.”

The determination to do something was what sparked Shaw Trust’s Northern Regional Director Gary Emerson to approach his Local Authority in Doncaster with a view to taking on and expanding the running of a local factory employing disabled people.

Some two years later he has transformed that loss-making factory operation into a groundbreaking business and training resource re-named Delta (Doncaster Employment Learning Training and Achievement), which last year supported 350 people and created employment for more than 90.

“This is a supreme example of a council activity being taken on by a not-for-profit agency like the Trust and being transformed into something positive and progressive. This is a beacon project in many ways,” says Gary.

“This is a supreme example of a council activity being taken on by a not-for-profit agency like the Trust and being transformed into something positive and progressive.”

The Shaw Trust Business Development experts levered in an additional £1.2 million worth of resources from funding in the UK and Europe to add to the council’s annual support for the factory.

Now Delta boasts an ICT suite and training room, a Victorian Walled Garden restored with a £50,000 cash injection which is a valuable resource for people with severe disabilities. In addition, there are field officers working out in the community assessing clients’ needs, and an efficiently run factory which is now providing employment for 34 people and training places for over 50 people each year.

“It was withering on the vine when Shaw Trust took it over and now it has grown out of all proportion,” says Shaw Trust Manager Mike Gavin.

“The Trust has invested in people and injected so much new life into it we’ve now outgrown our buildings,” said Mike, who recently hosted a VIP birthday party at the centre where for the first time training awards were handed out.

“Twenty two staff gained NVQ awards, four at management level which was a great achievement. It’s all about developing career prospects and progression for everyone.”

Any doubters about how such initiatives impact on an individual’s life need only talk to 62 year old Peter Ward, a paint sprayer at the factory for the past 20 years.

“Many people who were written off now feel valued because we’ve invested in them and their personal development. They feel they have a purpose in life, maybe have a job for the first time.”

“For the first time in my life I had the chance to go to college where I studied for a Certificate in Supervisory Management. I’ve gained so much confidence, I’ve been promoted and am enjoying taking on new challenges,” says Peter.

Tim Cooper has no doubt why the Trust’s approach is proving so popular with ever more Health Trusts and Local Authorities across the country.

“We’re the only organisation offering the full spectrum of services from access to open employment, to vocation or leisure activities for seriously disabled individuals.

News

Independent living gets a boost

Shaw Trust's Independent Living Scheme (ILS) has received funding from the European Social Fund (ESF) for a new initiative called 'Promoting Independence'.

The funding will be used to deliver a number of training courses for Personal Assistants (PAs), who, under the ILS are directly employed by disabled clients in their own homes to provide the support they require to live a full and independent life. Shaw Trust's ILS is managed by Ian Proudfoot and based at the Disability Action Centre (DAC) in Neath.

Ian explains, "Disabled people on the ILS choose when, where and how they want support, and most importantly who they want. Therefore these courses will produce a bank of qualified PA's to enable a greater choice of staff and a higher level of service. We're grateful to the Local Authorities in supporting our application for this funding, it proves that public body and voluntary sector partnerships can be successful."

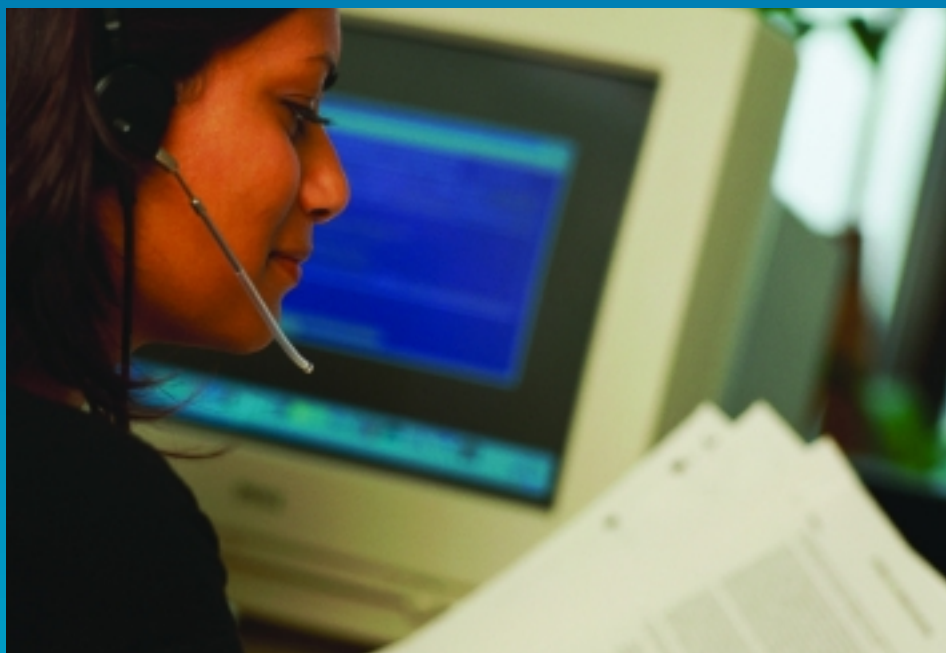
The course will be delivered for PA's in Neath Port Talbot, Bridgend and Swansea up until August 2005.



Research published on how disabled people manage in the workplace

The Joseph Rowntree Foundation, one of the largest independent social policy research and development charities in the UK, has just published a report, *Thriving and surviving at work: disabled people's employment strategies*.

It found that disabled workers use a diverse and complex range of strategies to survive and thrive in the workplace. Key strategies used included being assertive in asking for support, being open about impairments, and getting to know the organisation and environment first in order to decide the most appropriate strategies. For more information go to: <http://www.jrf.org.uk/knowledge/findings/socialcare/793.asp>



National Conference confirmed

Shaw Trust has confirmed the date of its National Conference as 25 November 2003 to be held at the Holiday Inn, Bloomsbury in central London. The conference theme will be based on work opportunities for young disabled people. Discussion will be led by speakers from the European and UK Parliaments on the current issues throughout Europe facing young disabled people who are leaving the education system in search for employment.

This conference will also used as a platform for young people to feed back findings from a number of Shaw Trust seminars held across England, Wales and Scotland this year. Delegates from the voluntary sector, major employers and central government departments will be in attendance. For more information on the national conference log on to www.shaw-trust.org.uk



MP honours success of local disability project

Fifteen trainees from Shaw Trust St Helens were joined by Shaun Woodward MP last month to celebrate their success in gaining CLAIT qualifications. Mr Woodward presented them with their certificates at the project in Century House, St Helens, where local disabled and disadvantaged jobseekers can gain training and work experience to help them move towards employment. The St Helens site has an ICT suite, part funded by the New Opportunities Fund (NOP) and the European Social Fund (ESF), and working in partnership with St Helens

College has enabled Shaw Trust to provide specialist support and accredited training for a number of people in the local area.

Mr Woodward said: "I am always pleased to hear about the excellent work being done by Shaw Trust in St Helens. This presentation event gives me an opportunity to meet some exceptional people who have clearly worked hard to overcome some significant barriers. Achievement of this accreditation will help them in their route to future employment."



Shaun Woodward MP with trainees, St. Helens

Testing times

SHAW TRUST experts are challenging the government to take the L-plates off pilot schemes that have already passed the test. While Shaw Trust welcomes the news that the New Deal for Disabled People (NDDP) pilot schemes will be extended for two years, MD Ian Charlesworth says it's time to stop testing and start progressing.

"We have to stop piloting schemes to find the Holy Grail. There isn't one," says Ian, whose organisation is investing heavily to respond to possible extension of the schemes into new areas.

"Quite clearly, there are a lot of people out there who can and want to work, and there would be substantial savings – £80 billion plus a year – to the government if they did. Our results show these pilots work, so why isn't the government putting the investment into making them real solutions?"

Shaw Trust, the country's largest voluntary sector employment services provider, is one of the three top achieving providers of the NDDP's current Job Broking programme, which is specifically targeted at offering expert help to get disabled people back to work.

"Shaw Trust has 12% of the programmes and achieves an average 25% of the outcome – 45% in some areas," explains Malcolm Goldsby, Shaw Trust's Director of Employment.

"Quite clearly, there are a lot of people out there who can and want to work, and there would be substantial savings – £80 billion plus a year – to the government if they did."

"We've proved its success, but we are aware that others have not. A constant fear of ours was that the programme's success or failure would be judged on the overall performance, when it's clear it does work if it's run properly."

The NDDP pilots, which were up for renewal in April this year, have been extended to March 2006. Importantly there is an increase in funding and improvements in the funding structure, which is vital for brokers who bear the brunt of investment and support until payment kicks in.

In addition the scope of the programmes is to be extended and Shaw Trust is one of the brokers bidding to take on new areas. The Trust, which has been urging the government to extend the programmes, is investing thousands of

pounds in advertising and interviewing to get the necessary staff in place if their bid is successful. In addition, new premises will need to be sourced and appropriate IT facilities ready so that they are ready to deliver to the government's timescale.

"It's good news that we are moving forward, but we do so with some personal risk," adds Malcolm Goldsby.

Shaw Trust says that its Job Broking success is down to four core areas:

- its knowledge of the client group and experience in working with them
- its wide range of contacts with employers
- the fact that it dedicates specific staff, premises and marketing
- its management skills in operating outcome related programmes like Job Broking.

"There has been an awful lot achieved by this government, but there needs to be a lot more input to address its stated aim of getting disabled people back in work. Remember less than one in two people with ill-health or disabilities are working."

"The government has achieved

Fraser Sharp

TRAIL-blazing actor Mat Fraser is hoping the BBC's headline-making new love story will shatter the cultural apartheid that throttles the performing arts. Is he black, gay or Martian? No, he's a thalidomide-impaired person with short arms and no thumbs and his screen lover (played by Lisa Hammond) is a small person (four foot one inch).

Their play, *'Are You Looking At Me?'* would make the news anyway, thanks to an impeccable team, including writer Lizzie Mickery (Messiah, Sinners), producer Ewan Marshall and director Alrick Riley (The Cops, Babyfather).

But the Beeb is rightfully making a song and dance about the fact that the contemporary love story features "for the first time, two disabled actors in the lead roles." And about time too.

"We've been waiting in the wings for a long time, watching people portray us badly," says Mat.

"There's plenty to complain about in terms of the representation of disabled people on television, but when something like this comes along, we can only celebrate and applaud it and hope that people take the BBC's lead."

Mat plays a deputy headship-chasing teacher, with a stunning girlfriend, whose life is turned upside down when he meets a hedonistic hairdresser (Lisa Hammond, shown with Mat on page 10).

Their mutual attraction is muted by the fact neither wants to fall in love with another disabled person.

Writer Lizzie spent hours talking to the actors to get the inside story of what it's actually like to be disabled. The result is a much welcome realistic portrayal.

"There's plenty to complain about in terms of the representation of disabled people on television, but when something like this comes along, we can only celebrate and applaud it and hope that people take the BBC's lead."

"Often when they get it wrong, it's because no disabled people were consulted, or they got an able-bodied actor to play a disabled person," says Mat.

A former drummer in a rock band, Mat is an established poet, musician and actor, recognised as Marlon in Channel 4's *Metrosexuality*, the guy in the Virgin mobile phone ad and for his hit solo show *Sealboy: Freak*. But he is also well known for his forthright criticism of attitudes to disabled people, though he balks at the unwanted 'champion' role.

"I have this second, unpaid, job as an ambassador of disability," he agrees. "Inadvertently, wherever I go or whatever I do, disabled people don't seem to have been or done before. It's the same with Lisa.

"Hopefully, in time, we'll laugh at these days. Ha! That it could have been so!"

Times are changing, but so slowly, and the cultural apartheid attitude hasn't altered one jot, he asserts, since he came into the biz.

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Photography by Ashley

“Often when they get it wrong, it’s because no disabled people were consulted, or they got an able-bodied actor to play a disabled person.”

“Black, female and openly gay actors have all had their struggles. Disabled actors are the next in the queue,” he says.

“But there are obvious differences – a white actor can’t suddenly become black after a car accident. You kind of know whether you’re a woman or a man, or gay, but everybody can become disabled.”

It’s clearly appalling that TV, especially soaps, is so unreflective of the real world. And it’s a woefully wasted opportunity.

“You never know what sort of integration would have gone on if, say, EastEnders’ Grant’s mate Nigel had been in a wheelchair,” says Mat.

“It would still have served the character’s dramatic needs – the emasculated male under Grant’s testosterone umbrella protection.

“But lads in pubs up and down the country would have thought differently about that wheelchair user on the other side of the room, and so would the wheelchair user.

“It’s not enough to disable one of your regular characters for six weeks, so you can ‘do’ MS or disability.

“That’s a rubbish way of doing it because it keeps disabled people being about disability, never citing the real problem of society’s inability to fully integrate disabled people.”

Mat is a member of Collaborate, which is working to achieve an inclusive broadcasting industry. He also plans to pen a screenplay and another stage play, which will have disabled characters, but will not be about disability.

“Black, female and openly gay actors have all had their struggles. Disabled actors are the next in the queue.”

Are You Looking At Me? – so good that it is to be shown in film festivals before its BBC2 broadcast on a screen near you soon – should open doors too.

“I’m happy and proud to be in such a well written drama about something so important. It’s also great that we will now have the ammunition to say “Look how good it can be”.”

“But it would be wonderful to have disabled people to-ing and fro-ing in dramas, sitcoms, soaps and especially children’s television. Without it being about disability,” Mat adds.

“At present there are just two courses for disabled would-be actors in the country, but that along with everything else, will get better. I think we’ll see a big change over the next ten years,” he predicts.

“And in 20 years, when I’m an old guy, hopefully there will be lots of young whippersnappers, with various bits and bobs missing, who will be successful actors. I’m just part of this first wave of change.”

For more information on Mat, visit his website at www.matfraser.com

Nichola’s story

SINGLE mum Nichola is no different to any other hard working mother juggling work responsibilities with spending time with her daughter. But this wasn’t the case six months ago, when Nichola didn’t have a job and was struggling with her health and her financial situation.

“I was very close to the end of my tether,” admits Nichola, who lives in South Wales, with her young daughter Chelsea.

“Then I saw an ad in the regional paper for Shaw Trust’s Job Broking service”

The phone call she made proved to be her salvation, and Nichola has turned her life around in just four months.

The determined young woman has always worked apart from a break late pregnancy, but she lost her job because of ill-health. After years on a hospital waiting list, Nichola finally had surgery, but the struggle took its toll both emotionally and financially.

“The illness affected my daughter too,” she says. “I’d be sick from the pain most nights and Chelsea was terrified that I’d go into hospital and never come out.”

Meanwhile problems with a rent mix up and her months out of work meant that debts were piling up. As Nichola recovered from her operation, she had to cope with clamouring creditors.

“I had people banging on my door and ringing me up, demanding money,” she recalls. “I couldn’t rush back to work, on my surgeon’s orders, and when bills are building up daily and you can’t work, it breaks you down. I felt worthless.”

Then she saw the Job Broking advert, offering advice and support for health

disadvantaged or disabled people who wanted to return to work.

“I couldn’t rush back to work, on my surgeon’s orders, and when bills are building up daily and you can’t work, it breaks you down. I felt worthless.”



It made such a big difference knowing that I wasn’t on my own. It’s not just the practical advice, it’s the little things like Janice telling me how to fill in forms, and phoning me once a month, just to check everything’s OK.”

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Photograph courtesy of the BBC



“Job Broking can support and empower an individual to overcome the barriers they face when returning to work and enable them to take advantage of available opportunities.”

Nichola’s supportive mum and dad are helping her to control her finances and now Nichola has a full-time job, working as a Passenger Agent at the local airport.

“She came to us with a number of problems and didn’t know where to start. But she has done a great job of turning her life around,” says Janice.

“Job Broking can support and empower an individual to overcome the barriers they face when returning to work and enable them to take advantage of available opportunities,” adds Shaw Trust’s Area Manager Iain Padwick.

“Nichola had specific issues she needed to address, and with advice and guidance from Janice she was able to overcome these.”

Shaw Trust’s Job Broking services provide support, advice and guidance to thousands of clients, assisting them into work through a team of Personal Advisors, recruitment consultants and an on-going support team. They also provide a vital recruitment consultancy service for employers. “We have a considerable register of people with a high range of skills, to meet the current needs of employers,” explains Iain.

“Job Broking can make such a difference, both to individuals and the employment market.”

“I love my job,” says Janice, who has a degree in Sociology and Social Policy. “I’m a qualified lecturer, but the satisfaction I get from doing this is tremendous. I know it’s a cliché, but the work really is extremely



News



Staff and Kent project members enjoy the exhibition at Canterbury college

Photograph courtesy of the Kentish Gazette

Skills showcase at Canterbury College

The achievement of a number of Shaw Trust’s Kent projects was celebrated in August at a special open day at Canterbury College. The eight projects, from Bexleyheath, Ashford, Dover, Folkstone, Herne Bay, Canterbury, Thanet and Tonbridge exhibited and demonstrated their services and talents.

These ranged from gift making and horticulture to furniture restoration and IT training. In addition, a number of service-users were awarded with certificates of qualifications by Shaw Trust Trustees Angela Wadlow and Stuart Innes. They all undertake accredited IT training with the Trust’s Kent training project in partnership with Canterbury College.

Lindsay Godley, Shaw Trust Regional Manager South East said: “This is the second year we’ve held this event, and it turned out to be even more successful than the last one. Our project members really do achieve so much.”



A FEW months ago seventy-something, former hospital sister Dilys was angry, frustrated and despairing, because she was losing her sight, and nobody seemed able to help her. But a last resort visit to Shaw Trust's Disability Action Centre (DAC) in Neath, South Wales, changed all that.

Dilys was introduced to the world of computers and, aided by a screen reader, she has successfully completed a computer course and is cramming for exams to get an IT qualification.

"She is a changed woman, and so happy," smiles Sue Berry, Training Services Manager for Wales. When newcomers arrive, Sue welcomes them with the startling words, "Come in, make some friends and change your life." And they do, in their many hundreds.

Neath is one of two specialist IT Training Centres within the Trust, the other is in Wapping, East London. Both enable disabled and disadvantaged people of all ages and from all walks of life gain confidence, qualifications, and in some cases a lifeline.

"Some of them have been stuck at home with no means of communication. Emailing and the Internet open up the world for them, and introduce a wealth of possibilities," says Sue.

Both the DAC IT centre and the London centre, based at the Trust's Southern Regional headquarters,

were set up with funding from the Ian Karten Charitable Trust.

"People come in, often feeling hopeless or depressed, and go out optimistic and with a new zest for achieving."

The Trust aims to enable disabled adults to access IT, but each Centre expands to fulfil local needs.

Both Shaw Trust Centres offer a whole range of courses, from basic IT skills, to higher level qualifications,

and in-company software support for employees. The banks of PCs are truly accessible to all comers, with adaptive technology including touch screen facilities, voice-activated programmes, large-type keyboards and hearing aid loops. Clients range from people seeking new skills, or conquering dyslexia, to those aiming to improve qualifications, or boosting their confidence. Invariably they are fuelled to go on to seize new opportunities.

London's Shafraz Nizam, IT Trainer and head of the IT Centre that has been open since February 2002, says working there has been a wholly uplifting experience.

"People come in, often feeling hopeless or depressed, and go out optimistic and with a new zest for achieving," he says.

"There are many training centres in the capital, but we are unique because of

the technology we offer and because we provide individual support for our clients."

His centre sees up to 120 clients a year, provides staff training for the Trust, and includes an Internet café.

The Neath centre was the Trust's first Karten-supported facility, and has expanded enormously since it opened two years ago. Sue's team of 15 trainers provide training across the whole of Wales. Five hundred people came through the doors in the last academic year and the aim is to double that number this year.

"We provide a unique service, with the whole range of adaptive technology, offering basic skills and personal development training, and IT courses at all levels," she explains. "It's all about developing people, and all my staff give is that vital extra attention to each client."

Like London, Neath has lots of success stories. Take Alison: she thought she may be dyslexic and when she came in to do a basic IT course, her trainer confirmed this and arranged a special software package for her.