

Conrad Skelthorn's Experience on the JET Programme

Written by Conrad Skelthorn, aged 26 from Burton

I first met Maura O'Brien when I dropped into the Connexions Centre in Burton to find out about HGV training last year. I was not on her programme but she gave me some useful information and emailed me more information a few days later. At that time I had no job, poor housing, and lots of problems with my girlfriend and family. Unfortunately, in January my housing problem got worse and I became homeless.

I came into Connexions again to ask if they offered housing advice. I saw Maura again, and she gave me information about Trent and Dove Housing and recommended that I present myself there.

In February I realised that JET would be positive for me and help move me on from joblessness, and homelessness and I joined the programme. Since joining JET I have been absolutely amazed at the level of support I received from Maura. Nothing is too much trouble for her. Maura has gone out of her way to help me pull my life back together. The lady is a Saint in my eyes. She is amazing at her job and as a person. I don't know how she did it but she has given me that spark again and a way forward in life. Thank you Maura.

When I was at my lowest in March I was sent to a Mental Health Crisis Unit In Tamworth. Maura made time to book an appointment in for me at the Tamworth Connexions Centre and came to that office to see me and ask if I was OK. She talked to me about my lifestyle and made me think more about my responsibilities as a new Dad and she understood the pressure I was under with family issues and the baby's mother. I told her I wanted to be a good Dad but needed to be back in Burton to do that.



Maura then took it upon herself to research suitable housing for me back in Burton. Maura visited a YMCA Shared Supportive Housing Scheme in Burton and spoke to the support worker Sharon about my situation. Because of this I was referred for a place in a house. I was interviewed, accepted and I have now moved in.

Also Maura has applied for funding for me to attend an Extended Reach Course (Crane Operators qualification) and to get my licence, which will really help on the jobs front. I could never have afforded the course on my own as it costs well over £500, but with Maura's help we applied for half the funding from a Burton charity and the other half was covered by the JET programme.

I now attend regular jobsearch sessions with Jayne on the JET programme and I attend learndirect to improve my literacy and numeracy and to secure my CSCS Card for access to building site work.

I am settled and happy in my new home and receive help from Sharon, the Support Worker. For now, I am happy living in supported housing, knowing that when I'm ready to move on, Trent and Dove Housing will house me in my own flat.

My new home is walking distance to my baby's home, so I can now see him regularly and this makes me really happy. I am due to start my Extended Reach Course in Leicester in June and I am really looking forward to completing it and getting my licence.

When I see Maura, she tells me that I am looking well and I tell her it is because of all the help and support I have received on the JET Programme. I honestly do not feel I could have done all this without Maura. I now really feel that I have a positive future ahead of me and I expect to be in full time work very soon. I want to say a big thanks to Maura, the JET Programme and to all the other staff who helped me get to where I am now.

