



# ‘My life was not how I wanted to live’

City South tenant Peter Keogh had gone through some difficult times. In trouble with the law at a young age, and with some health problems, Peter missed out on a good education and the skills needed for a good job. While serving his second prison sentence he completed a plastering course, but at the age of 25 he decided to reflect on his life and, realising his behaviour was having a negative effect on his wife and children, decided to make some changes. Having been unemployed for four years, he then came to City South.

“My life was not how I wanted to live,” says Peter. “I wanted something different; a better life for me and my family – and to set a better example to them. But when I did eventually find a job in 2008 I became extremely ill and had to give up the job.

“I was tired of the illness holding me back - I had turned my life around for the better but I still couldn’t work. While I was unemployed I completed a college music course through the job centre, but I was still constantly applying for work. I found it very difficult.

“All I had on my CV was the City & Guilds plastering course, and at 43 I was worried that I might not get a job because of my age. I did get some interviews, but had no luck, probably because I didn’t have the relevant experience for the posts I was going for.

## **A beacon of light**

“There was only one beacon of light – one of the staff at the job centre told me about City South. I wanted to build some trust to countermeasure my criminal record so I

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decided to go to their open day. There was something spectacular and different about the atmosphere; everyone was very polite and very friendly. This made me feel comfortable and hopeful.

“I ended up volunteering at the job club they were running. I helped people with poor computer skills look for work and improve their CVs. I enjoyed this because I like working and I like helping people.

“I also wanted to address the knocks that my confidence had taken so enrolled onto a Confidence and Motivation Skills course at City South with The Manchester College.

“This course helped me build my confidence and motivation levels and I also gained a lot of skills and a few new friends. The teaching style, friendly staff and environment worked - we felt that we had a say in where our life was going. The refreshments were a blessing too, as I had very little money.”



## CASE STUDY: PETER KEOGH

### TRANSFORMING LIVES THROUGH TRAINING & EMPLOYMENT

#### Hope for the future

"Shortly after completing the confidence building course City South called offering me a place on a Health & Social Care course. I jumped in headfirst - at last it was something that would help my chosen career path. It was an industry recognised award and would get me started on that journey.

"A great thing was that City South brought employers in. I sat a few mock interviews, and the skills I learned on the courses gave me much more confidence. I received great feedback and advice on how to improve in future, and I'm very pleased to say after a further interview with Future Directions they offered me a full time permanent position as a personal support worker. I gladly accepted, and I'm very excited about the future.

#### "Never give up!"

I owe a great deal of gratitude to Amy and Sarah, and the team at City South - particularly Amy who has gone the extra mile. I really needed their help and I know the staff there see people as people; not a name on a check list. When I was down I felt like my goal was being pulled away from me, but I have had the encouragement to keep pushing me forward.



"You get out what you put  
in and opportunities only  
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"The after-support I am still receiving from City South is so valuable. I know behind the scenes the staff do an amazing job, liaising with other agencies to make our time easier. I've had help to gain my DBS check, travel to an interview, financial advice and much more. I am also forever grateful for the help with money to get a suit for my interview. Looking smart made me feel even more confident. I felt very proud that day.

"My advice to anyone is if you want to do something, put 110% into it. You get out what you put in. Someone can give you the tools but only you can carve out a career path, and opportunities only come when you put yourself in their way. It's a journey - sometimes a long and hard journey - but the destination becomes clearer the further you are willing to go. Small steps equal big strides and impassable mountains turn into walkable hills.

**"And most important is to never give up!"**