

## Winner // MENTAL HEALTH UK - INTO WORK

This category recognises a vendor that demonstrates outstanding product benefits and client service – this could be an EAP, app, online resource, trainer, strategist or more

Into Work is Mental Health UK's new holistic employment service. Employment Specialists work alongside individuals and organisations to provide employment support for people living with mental health conditions, developing a personalised plan and exploring their aspirations. This unique approach is based on the belief that considering the whole person's needs and circumstances and tackling issues in other areas of life will make them feel more secure, supported, and able to stay in work long-term

### Trust and training

Into Work had the opportunity to support a woman who had been trafficked to the UK from South Asia, almost a decade ago. She was still suffering from PTSD and depression.

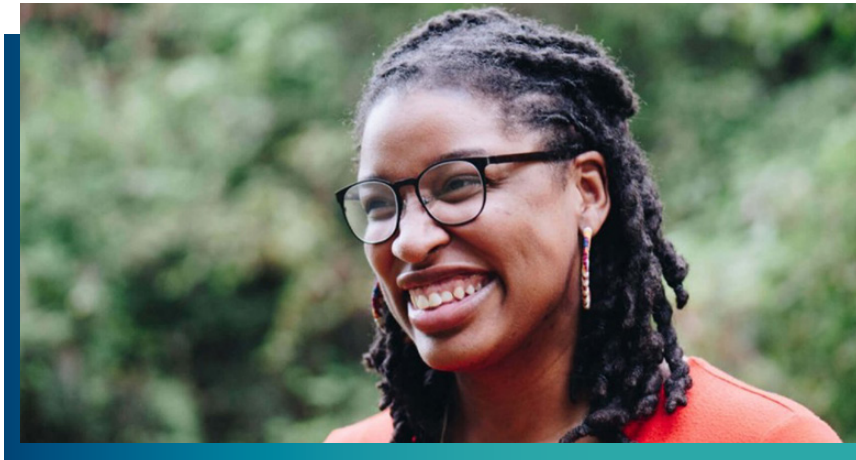
She had a caring social worker, who was helping her to restart her life including living independently. She was excited about the possibility of a new start and earning a living to support herself, though she found job searching confusing and worried about coping with a new job. The

Salvation Army encouraged her to engage with Into Work to support her on her employment journey.

She quickly established a trusting relationship with her mental health employment specialist, and together they created her support plan. She identified computing as an area of interest and was provided with online courses including coding and cyber security. She had help to create her CV and started to apply for positions. The result of all of this was a part-time job in a warehouse. Before engaging with Into Work, "life was pitch dark," she said. "Now it is different colours like a butterfly."

### Finding their niche

Teenage years were defined by living with anxiety and a clinical personality disorder for this man. He experienced fear and danger on an ongoing basis. His mental illness meant he particularly struggled in social situations and being in busy environments full of people and noise. It was hard to prioritise his own mental health.



Into Work offer a safe space for clients to grow by building sustainable relationships through trust, control over their appointments and venues

He lives with his family and found some comfort in playing football on Wednesday nights with a mental health peer-support football club. But mental illness continued to take a toll. He wanted to once again feel a sense of self-worth and accomplishment. Most importantly, he wanted to work. But having tried a number of jobs, he'd found it hard to adjust and his mental health was negatively impacted. He started to wonder whether he'd ever reach his goal.

That was when he found Into Work. After the man was referred to the service, the team immediately saw his amazing potential. Helping him to focus on his strengths, his Into Work employment specialist empowered him to find roles where he could not only cope but thrive.

He came to realise that what he wanted was a job where he could be outdoors, getting his hands dirty as part of a small team. Thanks to Into Work, he is flourishing and now has a part-time position as a gardener at a local community project. He hasn't just found work, he's found pride and purpose once again. What's more, his employers have recognised how much of an asset he is and are in the process of extending his working hours and opportunities. ■

## Judges' comments

- + People with mental health issues are often discounted and made to feel valueless. Great to see a service that is targeted towards rebuilding confidence, and providing personalised support. What a shame it needs a charity to do this vital work.
- + Providing truly life changing support as getting people into work is key to them being able to live independent, productive lives.

### SHORTLISTED

- ApiaryLife
- Fertility Matters at Work (CIC)
- MIST Workshops Ltd.
- YuLife