

Building Lives Through Partnerships

Supporting Ryan into Sustainable Employment

Unemployment remains a significant challenge in the current UK labour market. Recent figures from the Office for National Statistics (ONS) show that in September–November 2025, the UK unemployment rate was around **5.1%**, with approximately **1.83 million people** unemployed. Although this figure covers the UK as a whole, it highlights ongoing labour market pressures that impact jobseekers across England and beyond. Higher unemployment and economic inactivity make returning to work more difficult for individuals who have experienced long-term work absence or barriers to employment.

RYAN'S JOURNEY

Ryan sought the support of the Individual Placement and Support (IPS) programme after a period out of work. He had faced personal and employment barriers and was determined to return to the workforce.

From the outset, Ryan demonstrated a strong motivation to build a sustainable career, especially within the construction sector, with help from his support coordinator. He set clear goals to increase his employability and practical skills.

Ryan knew that gaining his CSCS card would be a critical first step, which he gained at a local training academy. The hands-on experience gave Ryan a clear understanding of life on a construction site and strengthened his confidence in his own abilities. Armed with this knowledge, he went on to successfully pass his CSCS test.

Motivated to improve his prospects even further, Ryan committed himself to additional training. He completed courses in Asbestos Awareness, Confined Space Working, Working at Heights, and Fire Safety Awareness, significantly strengthening his employability. His commitment and growing skill set were clear, and it was time to connect him with the right employer.

Shekinah's IPS Programme has been an excellent partner for Willmott Dixon. Their caseworker shared Ryan's CV with our labour supply agency, Sphere Solutions, who are providing the workforce for the Emergency Care Building project at Derriford Hospital. They were impressed by both his qualifications and his attitude, and Ryan was offered a labouring position. While waiting for this position, Sphere placed Ryan on short assignments to build experience and demonstrate his reliability.



His first placement with a local contractor involved assisting with furniture relocation. The feedback was immediate and overwhelmingly positive, the client personally contacted Sphere to praise Ryan's work ethic and professionalism, noting they would specifically request him again in future.

Ryan then spent several weeks on a hospital site with another local contractor, where he gained experience on a larger, busier project. The role suited him well and further developed his confidence in a live construction environment.

When Willmott Dixon required a labourer in November 2025, Ryan was an easy recommendation. He initially joined on a one-week placement, but his enthusiasm, reliability, and strong work ethic quickly stood out. Ryan was asked to stay on, and discussions soon followed about upskilling him further as Willmott Dixon and Sphere recognised his ability to learn and adapt. Recognising his potential, Sphere supported Ryan in achieving his Traffic Marshall qualification, allowing him to step into a relief Traffic Marshall role and take on increased responsibility.

Throughout this journey, ongoing support remained key. Ryan continued to receive guidance, access to further training, appropriate PPE, and encouragement, ensuring he felt confident, valued, and equipped to succeed.

"From my point of view, he has been a delight to work with. He replies to calls and messages, always has a smile, and is genuinely delighted to be working. He has been well supported and managed, and it shows."

Charlotte Hannaford
Executive Consultant at Sphere Solutions

For those supporting Ryan through IPS, his progress has been equally rewarding:

"Ryan has consistently demonstrated real dedication to achieving long-term employment. He has fully committed himself to building his skills and creating a better future, and it has been fantastic to see him settle into work he genuinely enjoys."

Esme Curtis, Employment Specialist of Shekinah

Willmott Dixon recognise the value given to site:

'Ryan is a joy to work with, helpful, reliable and always willing to go above and beyond. We wish we had 10 Ryan's working on site with us, he will go further in the construction industry and we recognise his potential'

Simon Whittingham, Senior Operations Manager

Today, Ryan is thriving in employment and looking ahead with confidence. Perhaps most inspiring of all, he is now keen to support others who may be facing similar challenges. By sharing his story, he hopes to show that with the right support, strong partnerships, and personal determination, meaningful and lasting change is possible.

Ryan's journey is a powerful example of what can be achieved when employment support services, training providers, and employers work together, not just to place someone in a job, but to help them build a future.