

Eddie's Change Of Career

A Kendal man who was made redundant and was struggling to find another job has praised the Building Better Opportunities Getting Cumbria to Work (BBO GCtW) project for changing his life.

Former chef Edward Wilkinson is now happily employed in the warehouse at Lakeland in Kendal.

Eddie, 58, was a chef for more than 40 years, working in the hospitality sector in Windermere and Ambleside, but was made redundant in January 2020.

For the next five months he applied for numerous jobs but without success. *"It was a worrying and anxious time,"* said Eddie. *"I had applied for around 30 to 40 jobs. It is soul destroying when sometimes you don't even get an email to acknowledge your application."*



Eddie's change of career

Then the Job Centre referred him to the BBO GCtW project and he met one of its key workers, Maria Appleton, who works for one of the project's partners, the community interest group Right2Work.

"BBO GCtW helped me to rewrite my curriculum vitae, in particular highlighting the skills I had that were transferrable," said Eddie.

"They also helped me write an adaptable covering letter, taught me how to apply for jobs online and helped me with interview skills, including the best way to put myself across at interviews. Hospitality, like many industries, is a small world and throughout my working life I had always been approached about job opportunities. I had never had to do formal interviews so my interview skills were non-existent."

I feel so much better in myself and so much more relaxed. Basically, it has changed my life

BBO GCtW paid for Eddie to take an online food and hygiene course to renew his certificate. Then Maria Appleton suggested he might want to look at different courses and mentioned that Lakeland, which is based at Windermere and has a chain of kitchenware stores in the United Kingdom, was looking for staff for its warehouse at Kendal.

"I did an online warehouse course over about a month and knew that passing the course guaranteed me an interview with Lakeland," said Eddie.

Building Better Opportunities

Getting Cumbria to Work



After completing the course, he was invited to an induction day at Lakeland and was told that the company had seen from his CV that he had the kind of skills it was looking for, such as reliability.

“In June Lakeland offered me a job working in the warehouse at Kendal, packing boxes for distribution to customers and to some of their stores,” said Eddie.

“I work 30 hours a week, on either a morning or afternoon shift, and am really enjoying it. There is, of course, some pressure to ensure you get items out within a certain time but it is nothing like the pressure of cooking. I don’t have the same levels of responsibility I had as a head chef, such as dealing with orders and staff rotas. I feel so much better in myself and so much more relaxed. Basically, it has changed my life.”

I was over the moon with what the BBO GCtW project did for me

Eddie said he would recommend the BBO GCtW project to anyone who was long-term unemployed.

BBO GCtW helped me to rewrite my curriculum vitae, in particular highlighting the skills I had that were transferrable

“I was over the moon with what the BBO GCtW project did for me. I could not see any light at the end of the tunnel and I thought that, potentially, I would be on Universal Credit for years.

However, as a result of the project I have a job I really like and hopefully the future is going to be bright.”

In partnership with:



This project is funded by European Social Fund and National Lottery Community Fund
BBO GCtW Project Lead Partner Cumbria CVS
Registered in England at Shaddongate Resource Centre, Shaddongate, Carlisle CA2 5TY
Registered Charity Number: 1119671 | Company Limited by Guarantee: 06178269
www.gettingcumbriatowork.org.uk