Shaw Trust teams up with Thames Water to help unemployed people from Swindon make a splash in their careers

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An unemployed man from Swindon supported by national employment, learning and skills charity, Shaw Trust, has been praised by Justin Tomlinson, MP for North Swindon, for his commitment to finding work. 32 year old Bret Tarbox was one of six Shaw Trust beneficiaries presented with certificates and awards by Mr Tomlinson at an awards ceremony hosted by Thames Water on Friday 30 January. The event was held to recognise the achievements of unemployed people from Swindon who have successfully completed the Give Someone a Start scheme.

Developed by Thames Water, Give Someone a Start aims to help unemployed people across the country to gain all-important skills and improve their employment prospects through work-experience opportunities. Having completed their placements on the programme, Bret and five other Shaw Trust clients were invited to celebrate their successes at Friday's awards ceremony. Thames Water staff share their experience and expertise with Shaw Trust beneficiaries as volunteers, helping people like Bret to find work. Thanks to this partnership and the mentoring he received on Give Someone a Start, Bret is now closer than ever to the world of work.

Bret was referred to Shaw Trust to get extra help to find employment. Bret had been out of work for many years, having lost the use of his right arm in a motorcycle accident. Supported by Shaw Trust, Bret was helped to improve his CV, apply for jobs and gain experience working as a volunteer. Crucially, the charity also enrolled him on the Give Someone a Start scheme, setting him up for a long and rewarding career in the future.

Bret Tarbox says: "I have accomplished so much in such a short space of time through Give Someone a Start. The placement, along with the on-going support of Shaw Trust, has helped me to develop personally, while boosting my employment prospects. The practical knowledge and experience I have gained will help open doors to an exciting career, offering me a real chance to fulfil my dreams. The placement has given me so much: confidence, new skills and a steer in the right direction. It has given me all that I had ever hoped for: a fresh start."

Justin Tomlinson, MP for North Swindon, says: "The considerable benefits of Give Someone a Start were there for all to see at Friday's awards ceremony. The progress Bret and his fellow Shaw Trust participants have made shows that Give Someone a Start is not only helping to change lives; it is transforming communities. The scheme has helped to uplift vulnerable people in need, encouraging them to reach higher and overcome their barriers to work. I urge more organisations to follow the example of Thames Water and Shaw Trust to support more people from my constituency into work."

Shaw Trust is keen to offer more volunteering opportunities to organisations across Swindon to help even more people like Bret in the local community find work. To find out more about how you or your organisation can volunteer with Shaw Trust, please call 0300 247 2222 or email volunteers@shaw-trust.org.uk.

Notes to editors:

Please find some photographs attached with the following captions:

1)"Justin Tomlinson congratulates Bret on his success". From left to right: Helen Bailey, Thames Water Senior Manager; Bret Tarbox; Justin Tomlinson

2)"Shaw Trust clients happy to be mentored by Thames Water". From left to right: Sam Lea; Bret Tarbox; Olivia Bolling; Jayne Millington; Kyle Leith; Jenny Gourlay; Sally Ann-Harvey; Renato Vitale

3)"Thames Water puts a smile on Shaw Trust clients' faces".

The full list of Shaw Trust clients presented with certificates during the awards ceremony: Bret Tarbox; Olivia Boling; Jenny Gourlay; Sam Lea; Renato Vitale; and Ricardo Russan.

Thames Water and Shaw Trust enjoy a productive partnership, with Thames Water staff providing extra employment support to the charity's beneficiaries through Shaw Trust's volunteer programme. Shaw

Trust Volunteers offers organisations like Thames Water the chance to share their staff time with the charity as part of their Corporate Social Responsibility programme. Thames Water staff mentor Shaw Trust clients, helping them to hone their skills and improve their employability.

Shaw Trust also has employment centres and retail outlets across the country that welcome volunteer support from individuals who can help clients gain the skills they need in the workplace. You can contact 0300 247 2222 or email volunteers@shaw-trust.org.uk to apply as a volunteer.

For media enquiries please contact Leke Sanusi on 07825 512 264 or pressoffice@shaw-trust.org.uk

About Shaw Trust:

Shaw Trust is a national employment, learning and skills charity that helps people facing disadvantage into work, gain skills and take control of their futures. Over the past thirty years, the Trust has striven to combine its charitable heart with its commercial brain to provide the very best support to the people it was set up to serve.

Shaw Trust is the largest third sector contractor for Department for Work and Pensions. We deliver both mainstream (Work Programme) and specialist (Work Choice) employment support schemes across Britain and help over 50,000 people per year. As well as being a subcontractor in six contract package areas, Shaw Trust, through its merger with Careers Development Group (CDG) is a prime provider in London East has now supported 11,150 people into long-term jobs since the Work Programme began, ranking 12th out of 40 contracts nationally in Year 4 so far.

With regards to Work Choice, Shaw Trust is a prime provider of 16 Work Choice contracts, and a subcontractor in seven Work Choice contract package areas. The latest official statistics from August 2014 show that nationally 74,440 people have started the programme since it started in 2010, with 26,660 of these having found a job. Shaw Trust has supported 16,410 people into work, representing 37% of the people starting on the programme.

The Trust also helps people gain skills and into work via a wide range of other activities including education and skills contracts, 50 shops and a national volunteering programme as well as health and social enterprise projects.

Shaw Trust, an approved academy sponsor, created Shaw Education Trust, a multi-academy trust, to manage and run the academies - serving young people with special educational needs or those in disadvantaged communities.

Shaw Trust has a turnover of over £107m a year and employs over 1,438 people across over 200-plus locations. We are supported by over 600 volunteers and deliver contracts for eight major funding agencies including the European Social Fund, the Department of Work and Pensions and the Big Lottery Fund. It has a range of international partners in Australia (Interwork), Poland (Intergracja Foundation) and Romania (Motivation Romania).

Watch the latest Shaw Trust corporate video showcasing who we are and what we do here: http://www.shaw-trust.org.uk/about-us/corporate-video/. For more information, please visit the Shaw Trust website: http://www.shaw-trust.org.uk

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