

Back on track and feeling good



Photo: Carl Weldon

“When I was a kid, I just followed the rest of the lads from school into construction. It was what people did. I remember though that I’d always wanted to work in a bank. I’d done some work experience in a bank at school and then again later at college; I liked numbers and I liked finance - I should have done it then. It has taken me 20-odd years, but finally, I’m on my way to doing it now.”

41 year old Carl has been working with heavy machinery and at heights on construction sites for the majority of his life. Over the years, the cartilage in his ankle has deteriorated, and in October 2016 it became impossible for him to continue working in this way.

“I remember it was nightmare having to stop working because of my ankle. I’d been on a job down in London at the time and I was earning good money. I was used to a certain type of lifestyle. To lose all of that was a big deal.”

After a series of investigations into the pain Carl was experiencing, the doctors discovered that his ankle cartilage had worn away and needed replacing. This involved an operation and months of physiotherapy. The medical professionals couldn’t tell him how long it would take to heal, but they did say it could take up to a year before he was mobile again, and even then, he needed to find a new career path, as he wouldn’t be able to work in construction as he once had.

“It was pretty devastating. The biggest problem was just not knowing how long I was going to be out of action. I started to get depressed. I just felt like there was never any improvement to my mobility no matter what I did. Then the bills started coming in and I had no way of working to earn extra cash to pay them off. It just all felt too much.”

Whilst still working through his physical rehabilitation, Carl has taken huge steps to pick himself up and reinvent his career. He’s been talking through some of the darker times that had affected him whilst immobilised and out of work, and has begun to think positively about what his skills and strengths are, and the many doors that these could open up for him.

"I'm attending some finance and administration courses. It has been funded for me and I'm learning how to use SAGE and getting some basic bookkeeping skills. It feels like I'm finally doing what I always wanted to do. Being out of work was horrible. I missed the banter you get when you work with a group of pals. I missed getting out of the house. I missed the money! Right now, I feel like I have a new lease of life. Finally my ankle is feeling better - it's been a long time coming but it is improving every day. I think the big game changer for me has been talking through how I've been feeling. This cleared the decks, so to speak, and has meant that I can now focus on getting the skills I need to start a new career."

20 years ago Carl sent 16 CVs off to banks around South Yorkshire, asking for an internship. He only got two replies at the time and these were just to let him know that they would put his name on file. After two decades in construction and a life changing operation, Carl is now back on track to a career in finance.

Carl signed up to Working Win earlier this year. Supported by NHS England, the Department of Health and Social Care, and the Department for Work and Pensions; Working Win is a free trial testing a new type of support for people with mental or physical health conditions that are affecting their work or their ability to find a job. If you live in South Yorkshire or Bassetlaw, you can learn more and refer yourself to the trial today by contacting www.workingwin.com