



Rebuilding Confidence and Wellbeing Through Work Well Calderdale

Summary

- **Delivery Area: Employment**
- **Partner:** Healthy Working Life, Unmasked Mental Health
- **Values:** We are Committed, We Care, We Collaborate.

Work Well Calderdale, delivered locally by Halifax Opportunities Trust, is part of the West Yorkshire Healthy Working Lives Accelerator programme.

The initiative supports people who are off work with a Fit Note due to mental health or musculoskeletal (MSK) conditions, offering personalised, wraparound support that helps them regain confidence, navigate health challenges, and plan a sustainable return to work.

This case study explores Tom's journey—from severe burnout and long-term sick leave to renewed confidence, clarity, and purpose—made possible through coordinated support from Work Well Calderdale and specialist partner Unmasked Mental Health.

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Tom's Story

Tom was referred to Work Well Calderdale by his GP after experiencing a significant deterioration in his mental health. He had been on long-term sick leave due to severe burnout and felt anxious, unsure about the future, and convinced he might never work again.

From the moment he entered the programme, Tom received:

- One-to-one, personalised support from an Employment Support Key Worker
- Wellbeing-focused coaching
- Practical guidance tailored to his needs
- A consented referral to Unmasked Mental Health for specialist counselling
- Flexible engagement options including face-to-face, email, and telephone sessions

This flexible and compassionate approach ensured the service remained accessible even when Tom's health fluctuated.



Taking Action

Tom reported major improvements in his confidence, wellbeing, and overall sense of control. He began to understand his strengths, connect the dots between his skills and potential career paths, and remain engaged with work rather than withdrawing entirely.

Through support from Work Well Calderdale and Unmasked, Tom has:

- **Regained confidence after a period of severe burnout**
- **Recognised his strengths and transferable skills**
- **Explored new career opportunities**
- **Maintained a connection to work during recovery**
- **Significantly improved his mental wellbeing**
- **Developed new resilience and purpose through counselling**

His counselling sessions have been described as “incredibly empowering”, giving him tools to rebuild stability and look ahead.

Testimonial

Tom says:

*“After being on long-term sick leave from work, my GP referred me to **Halifax Opportunities Trust**, and it has genuinely been one of the most supportive services I’ve ever engaged with. From my very first appointment, I felt comfortable, welcomed, and able to speak openly and honestly about the issues that had led to my time away from work.*”

The flexibility of the service—being able to check in by phone, email, or face-to-face—has been incredibly valuable, making the whole process feel accessible and personalised to my needs.

At the beginning, my mental health and confidence had taken a significant knock. Being off work due to severe burnout was a scary situation to be in. I honestly thought I would never be able to work again.

With my consent, I was also referred by Nicola to Unmasked, a local mental health counselling charity. I am currently partway through my counselling sessions, and the experience has been incredibly empowering.

The combination of support from Halifax Opportunities Trust and Unmasked has helped me stay in work, rebuild my confidence, recognise my skills and inner strength, and regain a real sense of purpose.

Without the help I have received, I can only imagine that I wouldn't be in such a positive place today. I am truly grateful for the support, understanding, and encouragement I've been given along the way."

Next Steps

Work Well Calderdale will continue to support Tom as he navigates his return-to-work journey.

This includes:

- **Career exploration**
- **Job retention guidance**
- **Strategies for managing health in the workplace**
- **Support at a pace that aligns with his recovery**

On a wider level, the programme aims to strengthen referral pathways, build deeper partnerships, and expand understanding around what people need to stay well in work. Insights from Tom's experience will inform broader workforce health initiatives across West Yorkshire

Conclusion

Tom's journey demonstrates the power of early intervention, personalised wellbeing support, and coordinated health-and-employment pathways. The relationship between HOT, clinical teams, and local voluntary sector partners was vital in helping him recover, stay connected to work, and rebuild his confidence.

A key factor in his success was rapid access to counselling—avoiding lengthy NHS waiting times and ensuring support arrived at the moment he needed it most.

By providing integrated, community-based support, Work Well Calderdale continues to help individuals recover, reconnect with work, and regain a sense of purpose.

