

13th April 2011

To Whom It May Concern

Re: Success with employment after volunteering with Framework

My name is Symanthea Johnson and I wish to express my gratitude to the team at Framework for the immense and unheralded work that they do on the whole as well as for their part in my professional development and career progression. I have been a volunteer with the Crises service and Key Support since September 2010. During this time, I have met and worked with some of the most focused and professional people who not only reserve their dedication and keen helpfulness for those they are paid to help but also for their unyielding willingness to give support to those who volunteer and work with them. Although at the time of my appointment the company was going through a difficult transition in terms of job cuts, the teams' fervent attitude made me feel welcomed and part of the team and allowed me to continue working with them – Eddie Bailey who has now left the company offered time from his busy schedule to offer training and also to prepare me for a successful interview. To all at Key Support, the Crisis Service and Phillip Bird who I started out with at the Crisis service and who continues to support and encourage me, thank you.

My journey with Framework started in the summer of 2010 when I collected a volunteer form from a stall display in Market Square, Nottingham city. At this point I was working part time as a call centre agent and so had time to spare to do something rewarding and help make that difference to those I come in contact with and the wider community; though volunteering to work with vulnerable people would take me into unfamiliar territory. Unfamiliar as I had never experienced or even considered working as a volunteer; nonetheless I was still keen to learn more about it in the hope of offering support and gaining new experiences.

My first real contact with the organisation was with Pip Barwick who invited me along for an interview where she also explained the benefits of volunteering and working as a volunteer with Framework. Her expertise and natural people skills meant that I was placed with the right team allowing me to be exposed to legal proceedings in Housing law and government agencies such as the DWP, thus a platform to utilise my qualifications held in the law, and so to Pip and the volunteer team, thank you.

My journey with Framework has been a true testament to the aphorism 'the ends justify the means'. I did not know what to expect from this or where the knowledge gained will take me, but in the end my work with both teams, albeit brief, has proven to be rewarding personally and professionally. The skills garnered coupled with hands on experiences equipped me with the confidence to take up a job offer as a case worker with the Legal Services Commission (LSC) based in Nottingham city. At the interview with the LSC, I was able to draw on several key skills gained through my tenure at Framework, mainly the regular court visits and direct contact with service users. Although my initial request was to be placed as a befriender or a mentor, being appropriately placed with the Crisis service brought new dimensions and relevance to my qualifications as up to my appointment with Framework I did not have any work experience in the legal field.

I am looking forward to my new post with the LSC, equally I am saddened to be leaving Framework not only for the experiences gained but for the lovely, talented and inspiring people I've worked with. I am thankful to Framework for the opportunities I was given and can only hope that others who are willing to achieve or do something different will also benefit from the work of your organisation and the dedicated teams behind it.

Thank you for your help and guidance and I wish for you and your teams all the best for the future.

Yours sincerely,

Symanthea Johnson