

Wales first as not-for-profit earns employability support recognition

A Rhyl-based community interest company has become the first in Wales to formally meet the standards of an internationally recognised employability model.

Not-for-profit RCS Wales achieved Individual Placement and Support (IPS) Fidelity after its specialised job assistance programme, WorkWell Conwy, was independently evaluated. It achieved IPS fidelity in a formal review carried out by Centre for Mental Health, in partnership with IPS Grow.

The IPS model is proven to be highly effective in supporting people with mental health needs into employment.

The review assessed the quality and effectiveness of RCS's delivery across key areas including staffing, stakeholder engagement, and employer links.

RCS, which delivers wellbeing services to employees and employers across North, West and Southwest Wales, has seen its WorkWell Conwy scheme support hundreds of economically inactive people facing mental health challenges.

Participants receive help to conduct tailored job-search activities, enhance their CVs, guidance on communicating their needs to employers, an understanding of benefit changes following employment, and rapid access to counselling or cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT).

Since 2023, WorkWell Conwy has supported 174 people, with 90 per cent reporting improvements in their employability and skills, and 47 per cent securing paid employment or volunteering positions.

Ali Thomas, chief executive at RCS, said: "We're incredibly proud to earn IPS Fidelity and be the first organisation in Wales to achieve the status.

"Achieving IPS fidelity is an immediate sign of trust, effectiveness, and impact for potential clients and employers.

"It showcases the quality of our services, which have key IPS principles embedded throughout, including rapid and intensive job search and strong links with health services and employers.

"Good IPS fidelity leads to better outcomes for the people we support, and we've seen incredible results through taking a highly flexible, person-centred approach."

One of the beneficiaries of WorkWell Conwy, which was funded by the UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF), is Debbie Aimes, who says the scheme was "the lifeline" she needed.

After the loss of her sister and caring for her ageing parents left her feeling overwhelmed and unable to meet the demands of her previous job, Debbie secured a role in a small family business.

Ali added: “Debbie’s story is just one of many where our amazing employment specialists deliver incredible outcomes for people.

“Our employment specialists, Pete Brannan and Debbie Holmes have played a vital role in RCS becoming the first organisation in Wales to achieve IPS fidelity through IPS Grow.

“We hope to build on this achievement and will continue to seek opportunities to deliver IPS support, helping more people to build their confidence and skills to be an active part of the workforce.”

ENDS

Notes to editors:

RCS is a leading not-for-profit organisation which delivers personalised support, training, and therapies to help people and businesses across Wales improve their wellbeing for work.

Since its establishment in Rhyl in 2007, the company has supported more than 23,000 people to enter or sustain employment.

IPS Grow, hosted by Social Finance, is a team of IPS experts who provide expert assistance to support the development and delivery of evidence-based employment services across the health system.