

International Literacy Day has Special Meaning for Gateshead Man

A 22-year-old, Gateshead man has good reason to celebrate International Literacy Day (8th September), after securing a job and a training opportunity with Gateshead Warm Zone (GWZ).

Craig Mason, left school aged 16 with no qualifications. After suffering from a debilitating back condition, which required several operations, full-time employment seemed impossible for Craig.

In a bid to get a qualification which would help him get a job he enrolled on a six-month training course with a local training agency. While he was there Craig heard about the assessor jobs with Gateshead Warm Zone which were created after the Zone secured funding from the European Social Fund.

Both Gateshead and Newcastle Warm Zones help long-term unemployed people, through their European Social Fund grants, to gain valuable work experience and a vocational qualification which can lead to a permanent job.

Craig joined the team as an assessor, a vital role in the GWZ project which is working to reduce fuel poverty and improve energy ef-

iciency right across the Borough.

In addition to receiving training to help him do his job, which involves him visiting homes in Gateshead to complete door step assessments, he has enrolled on an NVQ level 2 in customer service and is also receiving literacy support that's helping him in his day-to-day job.

The support he has received has seen him make significant progress with his literacy skills as well as improving his customer service skills and boosting his self confidence

Assessment manager, John Leslie said "The management team at Gateshead Warm Zone are delighted with Craig's progress. He has exceeded our expectations and is a valued team member who meets customers on a daily basis to help them complete energy assessment forms"

Craig added "I was uncertain about accepting the job at first, but now I am so glad to have been given the opportunity. I enjoy meeting people and feel my confidence is improving with the support of my colleagues and Management. In only six months I am much better at form filling and record keeping."



Craig Mason and John Leslie