

**Green Shoots Event Catering
Canton – Cardiff**



Kathy was employed by Green Shoots catering in October 2006. She is 37 and has had bouts of clinical depression since the age of 15.

Her experience of employment had up until last year consisted of a job in a bakery, and another as a care assistant working with the elderly. Both jobs lasted for a month, as soon as evidence of Kathy's mental health problems surfaced. Her depression would mean that she could become uncommunicative, sensitive and sometimes unable to face coming to work. Her employers had no understanding or acceptance of her illness, and offered no support or flexibility. This lack of understanding exacerbated the situation so that Kathy would not want to come to work if she was feeling depressed as she know there would be no allowances made or support given from her employer.

For the last 3 and a half years before starting at Green Shoots, Kathy spent two years of this time undertaking a qualification in holistic therapies. This resulted in her volunteering with Cardiff MIND, and there she set up a holistic therapy treatment scheme. Her time volunteering with MIND made her realise that she really wanted to pursue employment again. Unfortunately all the applications she submitted were unanswered. She feels strongly that this was due to her history of mental health. When MIND heard about a position coming up in Green Shoots, they encouraged her to apply. Although very nervous, she came for the interview and was successful.

She has now been working at Green Shoots for 6 months. She has had no re-occurrence of depression, and believes that this is due to the supportive work environment that Green Shoots offers. Staff gives her space if she is feeling sensitive, and support her when she is at risk of becoming ill. She feels comfortable in the workplace and with the knowledge that colleagues really understand her illness.

Her confidence has grown enormously, and she has started to use public transport which in the past she had always feared. She explains that since working she has felt that her life has properly 'started'. Socially she is more confident.

Her ambition now is to use her experience to support others who face disadvantages and to help train and mentor them to become confident and overcome the barriers they face. She also is very keen to work full-time, an opportunity which will hopefully become a reality soon as the business takes off.



Green Shoots is a Social Firm established to offer training and employment opportunities for young people who face disadvantage and barriers to employment. Green Shoots was set up in response to growing demand, Green Shoots provides buffets and sandwich deliveries to businesses and organisations across Cardiff. We believe in sourcing fair-trade and local produce, with many of our vegetables supplied by our organically certified project in the Vale of Glamorgan. We also minimise our impact on the environment by supplying recycled or reusable plates and cutlery to reduce waste to landfill from our business.