

Igniting Mariya's interest in AI



As a busy job-seeking mum of two children running a sideline candle and gifting business, anything that saves time and makes life easier is a bonus for Mariya. Joining the Restart Scheme in late 2025 for support to return to work, she was invited to attend Ingeus' new in-house AI training: the AI Academy. It has, she says, helped her 'see the world in new colours'.

"It's like swapping from an old black and white TV to a brand new colour one," says Mariya, who is 43 and lives in London. "I'm not bad with technology but felt left behind after the few years I'd been away from work with the children. This was my first time using AI, but it was

so easy. Lots of things we used to spend hours doing before happen so quickly and simply with AI programmes. They save us a lot of time and give us many new possibilities."

Following a past career in hospitality and housekeeping, Mariya is now interested in developing her fledgling business, Flora and Flame, or finding flexible work to accommodate her young family and degenerative back condition. The Restart Scheme has helped her update her CV and work skills while the AI Academy has seen her embrace her learning, embedding AI into part of her everyday life.

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“I’m really enjoying exploring the world of AI,” adds Mariya. “I was dubious about it before I understood it, but now I see the opportunities it can bring for me.

I can design my business cards and leaflets on my own, and I’m currently working with an AI generating platform to create my website.

“I now also understand how to tailor my CV effectively to job descriptions and navigate automated recruitment systems. AI helps us a lot, but it also creates a new level of recruitment process that I wasn’t aware of. You don’t know what you don’t know – I do now!”

Over a series of five interactive sessions, the AI Academy builds jobseekers’ knowledge of AI tools. It explores the use of freely available services to enhance participants’ efforts and provides insight into navigating a world increasingly led by AI. Run at Ingeus’ Restart Scheme centres in London and Manchester, Mariya attended the Tottenham centre and says: “Having face to face training with a tutor

made such a difference. You can ask questions and delve into different areas – it really opened my eyes to new opportunities.

“It’s good to know that the Restart Scheme is backing me. They’ve given me direction for my job search and my business, but more than that, they’ve improved ME. All this support, the AI Academy classes – it’s pretty amazing.



I wish the programme could reach more people like me and help them find their way in the new world of AI technology and opportunities.”

Mariya, Restart Scheme Participant



Scan the QR code to find out more about Restart Scheme

INGEUS CELEBRATES RENEWED MENOPAUSE FRIENDLY ACCREDITATION

Ingeus has been reaccredited as a Menopause Friendly employer, a Disability Confident Leader, and retained the matrix standard.



We are celebrating a series of key reaccreditations achieved across April and May, reinforcing our commitment to inclusion, workplace wellbeing and high quality service delivery. We have successfully renewed our Menopause Friendly accreditation, retained the matrix Standard, and reaffirmed our status as a Disability Confident Leader, each for a further three years.

We have been reaccredited as a Menopause Friendly employer until May 2029, following a rigorous independent assessment by Henpicked: Menopause in the Workplace. The accreditation recognises organisations that demonstrate measurable impact across culture, policies, training, engagement and working environment.

Melisa Cunningham, Senior Employee Relations, Diversity and Wellbeing Specialist, said: "We are proud to be

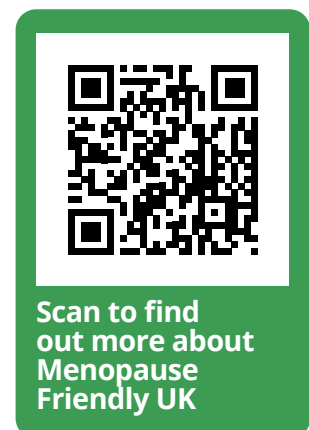
reaccredited as a Menopause Friendly employer. Supporting colleagues through menopause is an important part of building an inclusive and compassionate workplace. This recognition reflects the continued efforts across our organisation to ensure colleagues feel understood, supported and able to perform at their best."

Alongside this, we have secured reaccreditation for the matrix Standard, a nationally recognised quality mark for Information, Advice and Guidance. The standard assesses how effectively services support individuals to make informed decisions about their learning and career pathways.

We have also renewed our Disability Confident Leader status, the highest level within the UK Government's scheme. This accreditation recognises organisations that are leading the way in

inclusive recruitment and employment practices for disabled people.

Together, these achievements highlight our ongoing focus on creating a supportive, inclusive workplace and delivering meaningful, high quality services that make a lasting difference.



DISCO STU'S

PERFECT MIX

GETS HIM BACK ON TRACK

Budding DJ, Disco Stu, fell out of step with society – and his finances – as his mental health issues and battle with alcohol played loudly on.

Two criminal convictions later and determined to get back on track, Stu took all the help he was offered to turn his life around. He's now alcohol-free, working full time, and ably managing his finances.

That mix of support began with Stu's probation officer, who referred him to the Finance, Benefit and Debt (FBD) service delivered by Ingeus. Just one of the Commissioned Rehabilitative Services offered to people on

probation, it is a key driver in reducing reoffending as people get their debts, banking, and eligible benefits in order.

"Although I've worked and had my own flat most of my life, everything unravelled when personal problems, depression, and alcohol sent me off the rails," explains Stu, who is 44 and lives in Dudley. "I've been placed on probation, twice, and lost my job. Alcohol was my enemy.

"My money and bills were in a mess, but I was too scared to face it, to try and pick up the phone and talk to people."

Stu's FBD case worker stepped in. Negotiating payments with creditors, changing internet and phone service providers, and assisting Stu to apply for health-related benefits helped him realise there was light at the end of the tunnel.

“The relief, wow, I couldn’t have done it on my own,” adds Stuart, who says he feels like a new person after determinedly taking his medication and staying sober for a year.

A further referral to Ingeus also saw Stuart actively looking for work via the Restart Scheme.

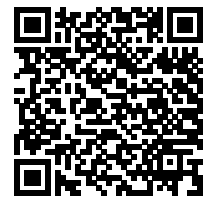
After approaching local employers with his CV, a ‘call out of the blue’ saw him start work as a cleaner at a Halesowen retail centre. After fully disclosing his past troubles, he was given the chance he needed to prove himself. Following an

interview and training day, he’s now working regular cleaning shifts.

Stuart is also keen to volunteer for the Ingeus peer mentor scheme, sharing his own experiences and supporting other men on probation to turn away from reoffending.

“In the past, I was ashamed. It took guts to admit to my drinking and the fix I’d got into with money. Ingeus gave me the confidence to speak up. I did with my new employer and they’ve given me the chance of a normal working life.

“I’d say to anyone, just take all the help that’s offered. Take it on board and get on with it. Everyone has been absolutely brilliant to me – it certainly beats community service, or worse.”



Scan to find out more about our Finance, Benefits and Debt services



“I’m just so thankful to everyone that’s helped me – from the courts, to my probation officer, and everyone at Ingeus. Getting into trouble wasn’t the right route to get help, but I’d be in such a mess otherwise.

Stu, Restart Scheme Participant



ABLE FUTURES HELPS EMPLOYERS LEAD BY EXAMPLE

Emma Henigan, Manager Director of Vocational Training Services (VTS), firmly believes that mental and physical health share an equal footing in the wellbeing of her 21-strong team.

It's an ethos she's keen to share with the hundreds of young apprentices and employer partners the company works with each year and, with Able Futures' help, she's doing just that.

VTS learnt of the Able Futures service in late 2025. Able Futures, led by Ingeus, delivers the Government's Access to Work Mental Health Support Service which provides no cost support to anyone struggling with mental health problems at work – including apprentices and self-employed people.

Able Futures' mental health coaches provide up to nine months' support to proactively tackle symptoms

of anxiety, stress, and depression, whether work related or not.

"I've always felt mental health is just as important as physical health," says Emma, who joined the Essex based training provider 19 years ago, stepping into the CEO role in 2024. "When I learnt of Able Futures, I just knew I needed to get it out there, both to my team and our employer partners."

Not just a tutor

The VTS team offers a range of work-based training programmes specialising in early years, health, and care. Delivering level two to five vocational qualifications,

the company works predominantly with young learners and a large range of employers, including care homes, nurseries, schools, and hospitals. As high-pressure sectors with a growing demand for qualified staff, Emma sees the value of mental health awareness, and the cost of not acting on it. She adds: "I came here as a tutor delivering apprenticeships 19 years ago. We're not just a tutor – we become the learner's go-to person generally.

"Our 19-to-25-year age group are those who left education during Covid. We deal a lot with our learners' mental health struggles, and I've seen

apprentices leave workplaces where those mental health needs were not met. I now spend a lot of my time researching and working with our employers to empower them, to help them support their staff, and propagate that positive culture. Having Able Futures on hand gives us the confidence to suggest something tangible and useful to them.”

Spreading the word

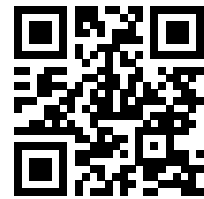
Initially, Able Futures was invited to present its services to the VTS team, explaining the practical support it provides to both workers, line managers and employer

teams. Impressed with the flexibility and quick, no cost access to online and face-to-face support, Emma promptly started spreading the word. She provided Able Futures’ literature to VTS employer partners, added the service to learner and employer newsletters, shared Able Futures material on social media, and added a bespoke Able Futures page to the VTS website. She also invited Able Futures to present at a regional providers networking group.

Business benefit

Emma concludes: “Mental health and wellbeing are

so important in a modern workplace. Our partnership with Able Futures reflects how seriously we take that. For our own team, our learners, and their employers, we are there – with Able Futures – to support them.”



Scan to find out more about Able Futures mental health support



“The quality of what you deliver comes from your team being settled and nurtured. If people work in a supportive culture, have a good work-life balance, and are given the chance to grow then staff retention, motivation, and performance speak for themselves.”

Emma, Manager Director of Vocational Training Services (VTS)



DEAF AWARENESS WEEK: BEING SEEN, HEARD, AND TRULY INCLUDED

Deaf Awareness Week (4th -10th May 2026) highlights the importance of inclusion, celebrates Deaf culture, and encourages better understanding of communication differences.

Magz is a valued Restart Scheme Advisor and part of the team in Greater Manchester. What many people don't see is the journey she has undertaken after losing her hearing suddenly and without warning.

Her experience reminds us that deafness is often an invisible disability, and that understanding, inclusion, and support, both in life and

in the workplace, can make a profound difference. In Magz's own words, alongside the perspective of her line manager, she shares what it means to navigate the world, and work, as a deaf person and why awareness truly matters.

Navigating my new reality

Becoming deaf without warning is something no one prepares you for.

For me, it happened suddenly, overnight alongside misdiagnosis of Labyrinthitis, and that made the experience even harder. It became apparent I had suffered a few mini strokes which affected my hearing. Not knowing what was really happening, or why, left me feeling frightened, isolated, and lost in a completely unfamiliar world.

Losing your hearing doesn't just affect how you listen. It affects how you connect with others, how you communicate, your balance and coordination, and how included you feel. It can be an incredibly lonely place.

At the beginning, the loneliness was very overwhelming. Conversations became exhausting. Social situations felt awkward and uncomfortable. I often felt invisible in rooms full of people, completely cut off from the world I once knew.

Learning to live differently

Now, three years on, life looks very different. I have learned how to manage life as a deaf person. I've adapted, learned to lip read, and built the confidence to ask for what I need, often with a bit of humour along the way. The challenges haven't disappeared, and they never will, but I've grown stronger through them and continue to do so.

Becoming deaf changed my life, but it didn't end it. It taught me resilience, patience, and the importance of understanding. Most importantly, it showed me that with the right support, inclusion isn't just possible, it is empowering.

Bringing my whole self to work

When I interviewed at Ingeus, I felt it went well, but I did not disclose I was profoundly deaf until the end as I did not want to be judged by my deafness and how this could affect me, I wanted to be judge for me and what I could bring to the role.

Why deaf awareness matters

Deafness is often invisible, and misunderstanding can be deeply hurtful. Awareness, empathy, and simple changes in how we communicate can make an enormous difference.

My journey and the support I receive at Ingeus shows that with understanding and the right adjustments, deafness does not define limits. Inclusion isn't just possible; it's empowering.

During Deaf Awareness Week, let's all take a moment to listen differently, communicate more thoughtfully, and ensure that everyone feels seen, heard, and truly included.

A line manager's perspective: Julie Smith - inclusion in action

As Magz's line manager, I am very aware of the support she needs and how best

to support her in her role, as well as how others can support her effectively.

Magz relies heavily on lip reading, so clear communication is essential. Over time, I've become more aware of when she may be struggling, particularly in meetings and I consciously adapt my communication style to support her understanding. From the moment Magz joined the team, it was important to fully understand her needs, including practical considerations such as where she sits in the office and positioning during meetings.

We've discussed support options like hearing loops, specialist headsets, and other reasonable adjustments.

While Magz is currently managing well without these, her needs are kept under regular review so support can change if required. In meetings, I ensure she sits close enough to see the speaker clearly, and during Teams calls I check in to make sure she's following the discussion and feels included.

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Magz also experiences tinnitus, meaning loud or repetitive background noise, such as drilling from nearby buildings can be particularly challenging. In these situations, it is important that I check in with her to see what support or adjustments may help ease any discomfort.

Magz has been open about her deafness from day one. Before sharing this information more widely, I ensured she was comfortable with that.

The team are very understanding and supportive, though in group environments they

sometimes need gentle reminders about clear communication and awareness.

From the outside, Magz's disability isn't visible but her resilience, professionalism, and the strong relationships she has built most definitely are. Regular check-ins ensure she feels heard, supported, and empowered to raise concerns or suggest improvements. Ensuring Magz feels included isn't a one-off adjustment; it's an ongoing priority.



Scan to learn more about deaf awareness from the Royal National Institute for Deaf People



Since starting with Ingeus the company have made accessibility a priority and have taken real steps to make my working environment inclusive. Simple but thoughtful adjustments have made a huge difference, allowing me to work confidently and feel valued rather than limited and judged by my deafness.

Magz, Restart Scheme Advisor



CELEBRATING SAM AT THE NATIONAL ARMED FORCES & EMERGENCY SERVICES EVENT

Congratulations to Sam Neil, Personal Wellbeing Advisor and Ingeus Armed Forces Network Group Lead, on being shortlisted at the National Armed Forces & Emergency Services Event 2026.



The event on the 13th May brought together members of the Armed Forces, Emergency Services and the wider community for a day of celebration, recognition and networking. Held at Sunderland AFC's Stadium of Light, it began with the Armed Forces and Veterans Breakfast Club, followed by the awards hosted by BBC Radio Newcastle presenter Nick Barnes. It was well attended by organisations including Stagecoach, Military vs Cancer, RAF Reserves, Army Reserves, The Royal Naval Association, Sunderland Submariners Association, Newcastle College and The Connor Brown Trust, creating valuable opportunities to build connections and partnerships.

Sam was shortlisted in the Mental Health Champion category in recognition of both her work at Ingeus and her ongoing voluntary commitments. Alongside her role with us, Sam is the Area 11 Welfare Officer for the Royal Naval Association, supporting members from North Yorkshire to the Scottish border. She is also the founding member of Shrimp Platoon, a veteran's peer support group that promotes wellbeing through connection and cold water therapy, with weekly sessions in the North Sea at Roker in Sunderland throughout the year.

Although Sam did not win the award, being shortlisted is a significant achievement and a testament to the impact of her work.

Sam said: "It's an absolute honour to have been nominated and celebrate the achievements of the fellow nominees and winners. The event created invaluable opportunities to network and collaborate with other organisations in attendance. I received an offer of support from Together For Children who run courses for young adults to help them build confidence and teach them life skills. I also spoke to the founder of the Connor Brown Trust, who has offered to deliver sessions for Ingeus service users, sharing lived experience to raise awareness around knife crime."

RIGHT

FIRST TIME

SHARADA'S TEN YEARS AT INGEUS

Fresh out of university with a maths and computing degree, Sharada stumbled on a junior developer vacancy at Ingeus. Joining Ingeus back in 2016, the last decade has seen her build not just IT systems, but a career with three very special attributes.

Now leading a team as our Head of Application and Software Engineering, she's looking to the next ten years at Ingeus, a company she says was 'right first time'.

Sharada's in-house team customises and builds bespoke IT systems to support colleagues Ingeus-

wide – sometimes deployed across international Group companies. They respond quickly as new contracts mobilise and provide ongoing maintenance and IT support. It's a responsible and varied role that Sharada clearly enjoys, yet it's the wider aspects of Ingeus life that she genuinely values.

Putting her analytical thinking skills to good use, she describes the three defining features of her job satisfaction as:

Career development

"I like to learn new things and keep pace with new technologies. Technical training and on the job

learning helped me move upwards every couple of years, to senior developer, to team lead, and now to head our function. I've had the opportunity to mentor and train colleagues and attend senior leadership training which really boosted my confidence and strategic thinking skills. Why would I go elsewhere when there are so many great opportunities to develop here at Ingeus?"

Adding value

"I'm proud of myself for contributing to work that adds such value to people's lives. It's amazing to hear the success stories of people that

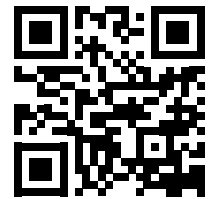
Ingeus helps – and Ingeus is great at sharing them! I may not work directly with participants, but what I do supports them nonetheless. I feel like I'm genuinely contributing to the bigger picture."

Flexibility

"We're a very close-knit team and pull out all the stops when required but my work life balance is still spot on. I live in London and work remotely but feel so connected still. We work very collaboratively and make an effort to regularly meet in person. Away from work, I recently got married and

love hiking and going to the gym. Ingeus offers Vitality health and leisure perks – the discounted cinema tickets are great."

As the last ten years passed Sharada in a flash, what do the next ten hold?



Scan to find out more about starting a career at Ingeus



"There's so much more I can achieve, even in my current role. We're looking to grow the team and further embrace AI and automation tools to support Ingeus' day to day work. Hopefully I'll fit a honeymoon in soon too!"

Sharada, Head of Application and Software Engineering



MARTIN PUTS ON HIS WALKING BOOTS FOR CROHN'S & COLITIS UK

Martin Powell, Business Manager for Restart Scheme in Greater Manchester, took part in a walking challenge with colleagues to raise awareness and donations in aid of Crohn's & Colitis UK.

Martin's wife lived with constant pain, exhaustion and uncertainty - dismissed, misdiagnosed, and left to struggle through symptoms that never truly made sense. For years, she was told she "just had IBS".

For years, she lived with constant pain and exhaustion, dismissed and misdiagnosed. On 29 August 2023, everything changed when she was rushed to hospital with severe stomach pain. Scans revealed not appendicitis, but a 50 centimetre tear in her small bowel, a life threatening rupture that put her at risk of sepsis and possible emergency surgery. Thanks to intensive treatment, including infliximab infusions and iron therapy, she has

avoided major surgery so far. Crohn's remains unpredictable, but her strength and determination continue to inspire me every day.

Between 29th April to 1st May, Martin walked across to every Ingeus centre in Greater Manchester, covering Wigan, Bolton, Bury, Rochdale, Oldham, Hyde, Stockport and St Ann's Square. Every step taken represents the daily struggles and challenges faced by those struggling with invisible illness.





Getting to know you...

This month we stopped to take a minute to find out more about our new colleague, Paul Lewis.



Paul Lewis

Operations Director
for Restart Scheme

"I joined Ingeus in April 2026 as Operations Director for Restart Scheme in Central & West London. My role is to support our operational teams to deliver high-quality services that help participants move into sustainable employment, while driving

performance and sharing best practice across the region.

Since joining, I've spent time visiting centres and meeting colleagues, and I've been hugely impressed by the passion, professionalism, and commitment shown by

the teams. What stands out most is the genuine focus on people and improving lives, which makes Ingeus such a great organisation to be part of."

Continued on next page.

We asked Paul to answer life's essential 'this or that' questions:

Coffee or tea?

Used to be coffee and I would drink 3 or 4 cups a day. Working in London 4 days a week is torture with the smell of coffee around every corner... I have been good and restricting myself to one cup to start the day. Although I love the smell and taste of coffee, I have now converted to a tea drinker

Early bird or night owl?

Early bird although that has changed since turning 40. I now find I need limited sleep and can be awoken with the slightest of noises!

Book or movie?

Movie, I am very active and would struggle to read a book from cover to cover without the need to do something active – a movie is

quicker although I have tried some audio books when I am out walking

Pizza or pasta?

Pasta, I love making homemade carbonara from scratch.

Sunrise or sunset?

Depends where you are in the world! The sunset in Olu Deniz Turkey from the top of the Babadag mountains is breathtaking whereas I have been lucky enough to see the sunrise over Byron Bay in Australia – I cannot choose which is the better.

Comedy or drama?

Comedy, I love old shows like Fawlty Towers, Porridge and Rising Damp

Singing or dancing?

Used to be dancing until my knee replacement in 2024. Although

Welshmen are supposed to be able to sing, I think I was bypassed with that talent!

Cats or dogs?

Dogs, I had dogs when I was growing up but my wife has a fear of dogs, so we have not had once whilst we have been together – to get my fix my mother has three dogs that I love to visit.

Summer holiday or winter holiday?

Summer holiday for me, I have been fortunate enough to visit some amazing places around the world and with dodgy knees I have always tried to avoid winter holidays such as skiing. I am a bit partial to winter sun though.

Chocolate or vanilla?

I prefer Vanilla, Cornish vanilla ice cream is the best.