

## Ingeus welcomes MP James Frith to Bury Neighbourhub



Ingeus welcomed Bury residents to the Pathways to Work event held at the Bury Neighbourhub in Mill Gate Shopping Centre.

In partnership with Ingeus, Bury Council and Bury Works, the event was hosted by James Frith, MP for Bury North, who met with jobseekers and highlighted the importance of accessible employment services in the community.

The drop-in session brought together a range of regional service providers to offer free, accessible advice on employment, training, benefits, housing, wellbeing, and more.

Ingeus was joined by partner organisations, which included Bury Live Well, The Growth Company – IPS/Work Well, Bury Adult Learning, Citizens Advice, and Smart Works to help attendees with

a wide range of work-related issues - from job searching and career planning to returning to work after illness or navigating workplace challenges.

“It’s great to see organisations like Ingeus, Bury Council, and Bury Works coming together to support local people in such a practical and accessible way,” said Mr. Frith. “The Neighbourhub is a brilliant example of how we can bring support and opportunity right into the heart of the community.”

“Work should offer dignity, purpose, and the means to build a better life. This initiative helps ensure more people can take that vital first step towards employment, security, and a brighter, more prosperous future.”

Rebecca Kerr, Performance and Delivery Manager at Ingeus, said:

“We’re proud to run the Bury Neighbourhub where our team is on

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hand to offer tailored support to anyone looking to take the next step in their employment journey. Collaborating with Bury Council and Bury Works allows us to provide a truly joined-up service that meets the needs of our community."

Cllr Charlotte Morris, cabinet member for culture and the economy, said:

"Good work is the foundation of a happy life. Ensuring that people living

across Bury can access employment is a key priority for us. Events like this demonstrate the power of partnership working and our shared commitment to improving opportunities for people across our six towns."

The event reflects Ingeus' ongoing commitment to working with community partners to support local people, helping them build brighter futures by providing access to employment support and other services.



# GOING GREEN



When Partnership Manager, Katie Guest, set out to enhance her professional development through the Ingeus Continuous Improvement Academy, she certainly stepped up. Originally aiming to achieve her Yellow Belt in Lean Six Sigma – a process improvement methodology – Katie soon decided to raise the bar and attempt the more advanced Green Belt qualification.

Undertaking an operationally led project as part of her studies, she partnered with fellow learner and aspiring yellow belt

colleague... another Katie (featured on page 5)

The formidable duo both work for the Ingeus justice team, delivering Commissioned Rehabilitative Services to people leaving the criminal justice system in Yorkshire and Humber. Katie's wide-ranging remit sees her develop and coordinate a network of stakeholders and support services across the local region.

During her four years at Ingeus she's seized opportunities to manage teams and projects and enjoys nothing more than seeing the positive end results of her often very changeable work. When a forthcoming contract change called for a revised engagement measure with service users on Ingeus' justice programmes, Katie's project was formed.

"Knowing what elements of my role I've enjoyed most in the past, my manager encouraged me to take on the more strategic components of a Green Belt," says Katie, who has also completed an ILM Level 5 Leadership qualification during her time at Ingeus. "You really have to drill down into defining an issue, gain buy-in for change from all stakeholders, analyse and measure – which is where Katie and I worked so well together.

"It's easy to assume you know where glitches lie and how to solve them, but this approach takes away the assumptions. It's given me valuable tools I can use in other situations going forward and the fact that our project is making a tangible improvement in engagement rates already makes it so worthwhile."

Katie – and Katie – will now graduate from the Continuous Improvement Academy and join a growing team of qualified change agents working across Ingeus. Her manager, Sarah Rycraft says: "I have been so impressed with Katie's growth and development – this is another strength she has added to her skill set. Both Katies complement each other well as a team, and I have no doubt they will continue to drive improvement and efficiency at Ingeus."

Katie concludes: "I've learned so much here, certainly lots from the people within my team. I've been helped to develop in my role, so I'm better equipped to handle management situations and I'm able to focus on the areas that give me the greatest satisfaction."

"Ingeus invests in their staff, they'll look at where you want to get to. If you give, they give back."

# SOFFY MASTERS THE ART OF REINVENTION



While Soffy's artistic talents bring friends to life in vibrant textiles, her own self-image was distinctly colourless. Struggling with social anxiety after a series of major life events saw her leave her home country and single-handedly bring up four children. She feared she would never achieve the creative working future she dreamed of. Now, with new training under her belt, a part-time job, and support to launch her own business, she's painting a new picture for herself.

Soffy, who lives in Carlisle, was referred to the Work and Health Programme North West, run by Ingeus, in September 2024 after being unemployed for a year. Her past life had been steered by family bereavements and an enforced move from Kenya in 2014. Finding it overwhelming, Soffy worried about going out and trying new things. Her creative spark waned until, during lockdown, she tried a new craft, using a carpet-making turfing gun to create eye-catching, abstract wall art inspired by memories of home.

"I felt like I'd woken up," says Soffy, "I wanted to move forward but the confidence wasn't there."

Soffy joined the employability group at her local Ingeus office. Purposely kept small, the group not only provides CV, application, and interview advice, but builds confidence in group situations with many participants developing friendships and finding peer support. She also attended appointments with Jon, a key worker, who encouraged her to take a part-time job, attend an adult education digital marketing course, and referred her for self-employment advice to begin selling her artworks. They proved to be Soffy's three-steps to success:

"Ingeus really helped," Soffy adds. "There was no judgment, just the feeling that I mattered. It was so good to know I had someone rooting for me, someone to guide me. I've taken a tufting canvas into the Ingeus centre and everyone had a go. I still attend the Friday coffee mornings and have started to really enjoy talking to new people there."

Ingeus provided workwear for Soffy's part time job in a food production facility, sourced a fully funded ten-week training course with Carlisle College, and replaced her broken turfing gun. They also referred Soffy to self-employment

specialist John, at Kilcoyne Associates, for advice on making her creative business a reality.

"John gave me step by step instructions on setting up my business. We looked at business planning, legal set up, and the principles of marketing. That advice was invaluable.

"I was really unsure of the college course at first but actually I've loved it. Coding is challenging but fun and enabled me to create my own website, albeit it's still a work in progress. It's opened another new avenue for me and I'm hoping to find an apprenticeship in digital marketing and web design.

"I now have the resources to produce my designs and hope to eventually set up a studio to exhibit my work and provide lessons. I never felt settled in the UK but now I have the makings of a happy life here for me and my children."

Browse Soffy's African inspired artwork and free verse poems based on her subjects at [www.lwedoart.com](http://www.lwedoart.com)

# 'ONE REFERRAL HUB' PILOT SERVICE LAUNCHED FOR CRS IN SOUTH CENTRAL



The South Central region for Commissioned Rehabilitative Services (CRS) is the first area in the UK to deliver the One Referral Hub.

The One Referral Hub was created by the Probation Service as part of their Community Integration team and is a single point of access for probation practitioners to request a CRS referral into support services for people on probation, including the Prison Offender Manager and the Custody Offender Manager.

Ingeus delivers CRS referrals for accommodation, personal wellbeing, finance benefit and depth, and drug and dependency. The One Referral Hub service brings together the support services together in one place and

streamlines the service delivery and ensures the full information and risk are on the CRS referral forms in their prospective areas.

The team at the hub complete the referral on behalf of the probation practitioner, and act as a liaison with the probation officer, Ingeus' business support team and accommodation advisor.

The One Referral Hub in the South Central region currently covers twelve probation offices, with additional offices in Southampton, Portsmouth and Isle of Wight joining from the end of July/ August.

The pilot service has demonstrated strong early success, with CSR referrals

rising by 162% within the first few weeks of the hub's launch. Feedback from both probation practitioners and service users has been very positive, evidencing the hub's immediate impact and value.

Faye Williamson, Ingeus Contracts and Partnerships Manager, said: "The success of the One Referral Hub has not only increased the efficiency and speed of referrals, but also strengthened partnerships within the local region, enhancing the overall support services for those in need."

Following the success of the current pilot in South Central region, it will be rolled out nationwide across the UK later this year.

# INGEUS ACHIEVES ADVANCED SHINE ACCREDITATION STATUS IN THE NORTH EAST



Ingeus has been awarded the Advanced level SHINE Accreditation, recognising a commitment to creating a fair, inclusive, and empowering workplace for all.

The SHINE Accreditation, developed by the North East Combined Authority, celebrates employers who go above and beyond in the five Beams Good Practice: Health and Wellbeing, Social Responsibility, Employee Voice, Inclusive Opportunities, and Fair Work and Pay. Achieving the Advanced level places Ingeus among the region's leading organisations for workplace excellence.

Juliet Mortiss, People and Culture Director, said: "This recognition reflects the heart of our culture at Ingeus. We

believe in supporting every individual to thrive, and SHINE has helped us benchmark and build on that commitment. This recognition not only validates our internal culture but also strengthens our reputation as a socially responsible employer, helping us attract and retain people who share our values and want to make a meaningful impact."

North East Mayor Kim McGuinness said:

"Shine sends a clear and powerful message: good work matters. Well done on this achievement, it's a clear sign that your organisation is leading by example when it comes to fair and inclusive employment."

By achieving Advanced SHINE Accreditation, Ingeus reinforces its role as a people-first organisation—one that leads by example in creating inclusive, supportive, and high-quality employment across the region.

The North East Combined Authority (North East CA) was formed on 7 May 2024. It is led by Elected Mayor Kim McGuinness and the Cabinet and covers the seven local authority areas of County Durham, Gateshead, Newcastle, North Tyneside, Northumberland, South Tyneside and Sunderland. For more information visit [www.northeast-ca.gov.uk](http://www.northeast-ca.gov.uk)

# SUCCESS AT THE DOUBLE: BUSINESS BOOST AND CAREER DEVELOPMENT

**Faced with revised engagement measures for service users, Ingeus' Justice team in West Yorkshire knew how to get the job done: call for Katie... both of them!**



The duo – Quality, Audit and Custody Lead, Katie Barrass, and Partnership Manager, Katie Guest – were tasked with finding ways to boost attendance at potentially life-changing support sessions among people leaving the criminal justice system.

The project was undertaken as part of the pair's training with the company's Continuous Improvement Academy (CIA). The Academy seeks to support both business and personal development and create change agents across Ingeus.

Both are now graduating from the CIA, where Katie B learned new skills to obtain a Lean Six Sigma process improvement Yellow Belt.

Her role in the project involved speaking to front-line colleagues about ways to encourage service users to attend their first session with an Ingeus advisor within 20 days of their initial assessment.

She says: "My Yellow Belt training helped me to look at things differently. Rather

than coming to conclusions myself, and risk jumping straight into solution mode when faced with a challenge, I learned the value of enlisting colleagues in coming up with the answers."

She held one-to-one sessions with the region's teams to support them in ways to achieve the new target, including team meetings to make sure everyone understood what was expected.

While the project proved to be a major success, Katie's Academy experience also gave her a solid foundation for her own personal development ambitions.

She is due to start an Ingeus-sponsored data analysis apprenticeship and says: "Initially I was a bit nervous because I'd not done much learning-while-working before my Academy training, so achieving the Yellow Belt qualification gave me the confidence to know that I can."

"I joined Ingeus three years ago and wanted to develop more within my role and use the CIA to progress. This course

seemed the most appropriate. The mix of online classroom meetings and independent learning modules made it quite easy to fit in around my day-to-day work.

"Now I'm hoping to move up to the next level and be a project leader within the team. I'd definitely recommend undertaking Academy training, it has really adjusted the way I approach issues."

Working alongside Katie Guest (featured on page 2), who achieved the more advanced Green Belt at the CIA and undertook the strategic side of the project, was a bonus, she says, with the pair complimenting perfectly each other's roles.

"It was valuable to have her to check in with. We have regular meetings and she helped me with advice on how to liaise with staff while she was getting buy-in from stakeholders. It was great to have that kind of support."

# ANITA FINDS A HEALTHY BALANCE

Anita is a physiotherapist who works for Ingeus in London as a Work Capability Assessment (WCA) functional assessor. The purpose of these assessments is to understand how a person's health condition or disability affects their daily life.



Anita has been a WCA functional assessor since 2017 and transferred to Ingeus' Health Assessment Advisory Service (HAAS) in September 2024. She has experience as a clinical standards lead, mental function champion, auditor and trainer working at Marylebone Assessment Centre.

As a mum to a young child, Anita has found working with Ingeus to be an extremely positive experience because it gives her the flexibility she needs, as well as the opportunity to progress her career. "It's a really nice role because it is quite varied, there are lots of different aspects to it," says Anita. "I do the functional assessments over video, which accommodates hybrid working, it's been really good for a work-life balance. I have a one-year-old so it is great to have that flexibility."

She adds: "I have been very fortunate with Ingeus. When I came back from maternity leave I thought my career would come to a standstill as I had to go part-time. However, I have since been fortunate to have a lot of opportunities.

"I've recently started a new role within the customer relations team, dealing with complaints and clinical incidents, and it's really good to have a new string to my bow. I still have the opportunity for development despite going part-time and it's good that Ingeus supports that, it's really positive for working mums who want to progress with their career. I don't know many other companies who offer that, I think it's quite unique."

Anita has plenty of expertise in clinical healthcare, having worked as a musculo-skeletal physiotherapist for the NHS and privately, as well as being a research physiotherapist.

So, what does a typical day's work at Ingeus involve for Anita? She says: "Some days, I will do some assessments in the morning and complete audits in the afternoon and other days I will look at clinical incidents and complaints."

How is working for Ingeus different to a career in the NHS? "The pressures are different, as are the targets we work towards, but I think those skills we gain working in a corporate environment give a nice foundation to move into other areas," says Anita.

"I was working purely clinically with the NHS but now I am picking up transferable skills and that is a huge benefit because it allows me to progress my career. I really enjoyed my time with the NHS but I feel Ingeus has a much wider scope as it gives you the chance to develop other skills."

# RETIREMENT WASN'T FOR ME. MAYBE NOT FOR YOU, EITHER?



**Maggie retired when she was 68, thinking she wouldn't be entering the world of work ever again.**

That thought didn't last long. In fact, just two weeks later she had found another job. Not because she HAD to, but because she WANTED to.

It's four years since and Maggie is loving her role as a Personal Wellbeing Advisor in Ingeus' Justice division in the West Midlands. She is firmly committed to her unretirement.

Maggie moved to Birmingham from Kent 24 years ago to launch a project supporting sex workers to get off the street and into training or work. Then followed spells with apprenticeship providers, Border Force at Birmingham Airport and, opting to continue working beyond her official retirement age of 60, supporting young people who have been in trouble with the law.

Finally, at the age of 68 and having taken voluntary redundancy, she thought enough is enough in terms of her career. Having more freedom and the chance to spend time with her family was her goal.

She soon made a U-turn: "How much housework can you do? The dogs got sick of me because of all the walks I was taking them on!

"I thought: 'I'm not happy, I'm not doing what I think I'm best at. I still have lots to offer.'"

It came as no surprise to her partner and the rest of her family. She says: "Even

at 60, everyone always thought I would keep working."

Now she works alongside Probation Officers and visits people in prison to prepare them for life back in the community.

She says carrying on working "keeps my brain active, keeps me healthy" and believes other older people could benefit from doing the same:

"People in their 60s, 70s, even 80s have a lot to offer. You have got a wealth of experience you can bring to a business. You have empathy, common sense and a wider vision. You can pass on your experience to younger employees too.

"Maybe you don't realise the value you can bring to a company or are scared and think you won't match up to younger candidates who may have a degree or more advanced tech skills.

"Remember, you have skills other people haven't got, because they've not lived your life. A lot of companies, like Ingeus, will see that and will realise the other qualities you bring.

"My advice would be to go for it. Take the plunge. Take that leap of faith.

"I'm fortunate that I didn't need to go back for financial reasons, although many people do nowadays, but even if you do, don't settle for a mundane job if you feel you can take on more challenging roles.

"Age is just a number. Our skills are still there. We are not in it for glory, we are not in it for promotion, we are not here for anything but to do a good job."

## Maggie's top tips

- Job shares, compressed hours, working from home or going self-employed are all options for those not wanting to go back into full time work.
- Dust off your CV, emphasising the soft skills brought by experience such as communication, organisation and reliability, if you are looking for a job outside of your previous roles.
- If you are looking to learn new skills there are plenty of online courses, including IT upskilling, practical training, or even apprenticeships, which are open to any age.
- If you work past state pension age, you won't pay any National Insurance on the money you earn and can still claim your pension even if you're working full-time. You can also choose to defer it – the longer you delay, the larger weekly payments you'll get.
- The Centre for Ageing Better has lots of advice on working beyond retirement.

## Ingeus to deliver new Trailblazer employment support programme in South London



Ingeus has been commissioned by the South London Partnership to deliver the Trailblazer rapid response employment programme in the London boroughs of Wandsworth and Richmond-Upon-Thames. The programme launches on 1st September and will run for an initial period to support residents who are unemployed but not claiming work-related benefits.

Trailblazer is designed to provide fast, tailored support to help people re-enter the workforce quickly and confidently. Residents aged 18 and over can self-refer onto the programme from the first day of unemployment, accessing one-to-one guidance from employment professionals who understand the local job market and individual needs.

Working in close partnership with Work Match, colleges, housing services, charities, and community groups, Ingeus will deliver a joined-up approach to reach those who need support most. The programme offers help with job searching, applications, and building key workplace skills, as well as support to improve communication and interpersonal abilities.

Adele Holloway, Operations Director, said:

"We're proud to be delivering Trailblazer in Wandsworth and Richmond-Upon-Thames, helping to create opportunities for residents to take their next steps into employment. Our teams are ready to provide rapid, personalised support to people who may not otherwise be eligible for mainstream employment services, ensuring as many people as possible get the help they need."



## Getting to know you...



### Kira Charley

Communications Executive for the Health Assessment Advisory Service (HAAS)

### This month we stopped to take a minute to find out more about Kira Charley and her role at Ingeus.

"I'm very proud to be the Communications Executive for the Health Assessment Advisory Service (HAAS). I look after all the internal communications for our colleagues and make sure that they have all the

information that they need to do their jobs, and some fun things too!

I've worked within the benefits sector, in one way or another, for almost 6 years. I started out in the contact centre for Personal Independence Payment (PIP) back in 2019 and have progressed through to my current role within Ingeus.

I love my job and I'm incredibly proud to know that we're making a difference to people's lives."

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

#### Sunrise or sunset?

Sunset – I'm not a morning person!

#### Fruit or vegetables?

Fruit

#### Book or movie?

Book – they're almost always better

#### City or countryside?

Countryside

#### Text or call?

Text

#### Summer or winter?

Winter

#### Tea or coffee?

Tea

#### Cats or dogs?

Both!

#### Pizza or pasta?

Pasta

#### Driver or passenger?

Passenger, although I can drive I just don't like it!