

Insights from IEP Basecamp



Ingeus was the headline sponsor of the Institute of Employability Professionals (IEP) Basecamp for the second consecutive year.

Held at Think Tank in Birmingham on 10th October, IEP Basecamp is the annual event for frontline practitioners in the employability sector offering essential insights and guidance on the latest trends and best practices. The day of professional development was packed with topical debate, information sharing and peer recognition.

From seminars on supporting jobseekers with the most complex needs, connecting with employers, and embracing technology, to expert Q&A panel sessions, and celebrations of IEP learning achievements. Ingeus also sponsored the Member of the Year Award, recognising exceptional performance and supportive attitudes towards participants and colleagues.

Julie Graham, CEO of Employment Services said: "I have always loved work and am intrinsically motivated to help others find work they enjoy and are fulfilled by. Basecamp was a double-blessing for me: seeing the energy and enthusiasm of everyone I met there – and knowing that in-turn would be invested in the people whose lives they're changing."

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Redefining ADHD

Daniel, who was diagnosed with attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) the condition aged 26, is the epitome of calm, considered professionalism – on the outside at least.



He studied hard and did well at school, has a wide circle of friends and interests, and loves nothing more than talking to people; a key component of his role as an Ingeus employment advisor in NHS Talking Therapies in Derbyshire.

In his view, ADHD is negatively misnamed: "I don't lack attention, it's just different in its focus, I find my own ways of working," explains Daniel, who joined the Talking Therapies team five years ago. Responsible for supporting people to navigate their way through working life alongside professional NHS mental health therapy, he spends his days talking to others in

turmoil, helping them plan a way forward. He receives glowing feedback from those he helps and regularly tops the team's table for the most face-to-face appointment bookings.

"Nor am I hyperactive," he adds, "I can sit still, the chaos is on the inside. I trained as a paramedic, attracted by the unpredictability of a role like that, but I realised I most enjoyed the mental health side, sitting down and talking to people. There's nothing more rewarding than helping someone who doesn't know what to do, being able to talk through and find the threads in jumbled situations, then put a meaningful plan of action together. That's what I do, and I have what feels like hundreds of signposting ideas documented. I work at my participants' pace but tend to do my admin in flurries; I find it easier to run at things all at once.

"While I'm working, being 'hyperactive' and inattentive don't feel like good qualities, yet in many ways my ADHD is a benefit. I can balance lots of different things quickly,

and now I have a better understanding of myself, I can share experiences and connect with the participants I speak to who also have neurodiverse conditions. I love to try new things, have met friends from all around the world, and throw myself wholeheartedly into initiatives at work."

A mental health first aider and Ingeus D&I Champion representing both disability and LGBTQIA+, Daniel says his diagnosis 18 months ago helped his past life click into place: "Friends had suggested I had ADHD traits and it suddenly made sense of how I work, and many of the decisions I've made in the past," he continues. "The support I get at Ingeus is quietly but firmly there. I'm not always the best at asking for help but know that anything I need would be given. My manager proactively checks in on me when she can see I have a busy day ahead and I'm given additional admin time if needed.

"I think it's really important that colleagues understand that people with ADHD

really are trying, probably sometimes a bit too hard. Outwardly we may seem a bit all over the place but it's not laziness or lack of want; we're just figuring out the right way of approaching things. It's like having all your ingredients

laid out to make a meal, then turning to the cooker and finding that all the buttons are gone. When it comes to support and understanding, it's not about the recipe, it's about finding ways to put the buttons back.

"It's nice to be part of a company that embraces diversity and understands the intersectionality of the differences many of us share."

Service users share their stories through film

Ingeus employees from our Commissioned Rehabilitative Services (CRS) were delighted to attend the inaugural Trauma-Informed Film Festival in Leeds, celebrating the debut of a film created by some of our CRS volunteer peer mentors.



The Trauma-Informed Film Festival is a powerful tribute to the incredible work of local services and the inspiring journeys of those they support, who are faced with challenges such as homelessness, substance use abuse and struggles with mental health. Held in Leeds, this festival uses the medium of film to raise awareness about trauma, resilience, and growth within the community.

In collaboration with Odd Arts, one of Ingeus' partners, CRS volunteer peer mentors took part in a film titled 'First Steps', which showcased the perspectives of lived experience of the criminal justice system. The project

captures the challenges they experience upon leaving custody and the anxiety around building trust and beginning to engage with the services that are available to them.

Sarah Rycraft, Regional Manager Yorkshire and Humber, Commissioned Rehabilitative Services, said: "The beauty of the project was the fact that the peer mentors were given autonomy to shape this and build their confidence. Although there were trained actors on hand, our volunteers decided to put themselves forward to be filmed and I am super proud of them and what they achieved."

Ingeus' Justice services help people in the criminal justice system successfully transition back into the community through specialist rehabilitative support services. Adopting a holistic approach to address personal wellbeing, accommodation, health, education and training, employment, and other essential needs.

Paralympian Jason's medal-winning ambition to champion diversity

Having the lower part of his right leg amputated when he was just a child was not, says Jason Diederich, as devastating as most of us would imagine.

"When you are 10 you don't catastrophise things as much as you might when you are an adult," says Jason, Ingeus' Clinical Operations Director.

A muscle condition in one leg led to it becoming 10cms shorter than the other, affecting his movement and causing pain.

"I decided to go ahead with the amputation so I could have a prosthesis which evened up my legs and I instantly felt better.

"In terms of my career, my schooling, my social life, it hasn't impacted that much.

"I can do pretty much what anybody else can do. I play tennis, I go for long walks, I can climb ladders, anything except, as a mate points out, do the high jump!"

Fortunately, Australia-born Jason did not opt for the high

jump as his favoured sport. Instead, he chose swimming and won silver medals at the Seoul Paralympics in 1988 and Barcelona four years later, representing his country at the World Disability Championships between those two events.

While being an amputee has not affected his life functionally, it has "shaped who I've become in terms of how I see the world as a person with a disability as well as how I see disability in the world," he says.

He became an occupational therapist and then grew his career at Ingeus' parent company APM in Australia, working in the return-to-work sector and progressing through managerial roles.

Last year, he joined Ingeus where he oversees clinical teams delivering a functional assessments service.



Moving halfway across the world has not lessened his drive to champion the rights of people with a disability.

He joined Ingeus' Diversity & Inclusions employee representative groups and now leads their Disability Network. Jason says: "We have an active commitment to diversity and are a Disability Confident Leader, supporting other organisations to become disability aware.

"Colleagues with a disability that managers might need to know about are offered a 'passport' that details any workplace adjustments, from workstations to time off, so they don't need to have the same conversation about their

needs every time they move to new roles.

“From the start of our recruitment process we encourage people to share if they have a disability. People sometimes fear a negative response but if we know, we can support them. If they don't feel comfortable to share, then that's OK as well.

“My advice to jobseekers is to be upfront about any disability. It is who you are, it is part of your identity. If an employer doesn't want to take

you on because of that, then you don't want to work there.

“We recognise we can deliver a better service to our customers when our teams reflect the communities we serve. That's not just disability, it's LGBTQ, race and ethnicity, culture, gender. This is why diversity is so important to us.”

Jason's mantra is to make disability ordinary. He says: “I was watching the Paralympics in Paris this summer and we see these top sports people,

but they come home and can't reach the sauce on the top shelf of the supermarket. They can't get on the underground to go to work. They can't get a job because the employer doesn't think they are capable.

“We need to create more opportunities for people with disabilities to be seen as ordinary – not superhumans or people who deserve our pity.”

Ingeus shortlisted for ERSA 2024 Employability Awards

The Employment Related Services Association (ERSA) has announced the finalists for its 2024 Employability Awards. Now in their 12th year, the awards recognise outstanding achievements and innovation across the employability sector.

The ERSA Awards spotlight the diverse and holistic support given to employers, communities, and disadvantaged learners and jobseekers across the UK.

Ingeus are delighted to be shortlisted for 'Driving Compliance, Quality and Performance' in collaboration with Cowry Consultants, 'Progression in Work' for Career Coaching, and the Health, Independence and

Progression (HIP) initiative which was shortlisted under the Health Solutions for Work category.

In individual categories, our Business Manager, Simone Langley, is recognised as a finalist for 'Frontline Manager of the Year', recognising her dedication and attitude to go above and beyond. We are also pleased to see remarkable Kateryana Rybchenko as a finalist for

'Outstanding Participant'. Kateryana came to the UK with little more than a laptop and suffering from PTSD when she fled the war in Ukraine. Through hard-work and determination she is rebuilding her life and following her passion for helping others by pursuing a career in healthcare.

Best of luck to all the finalists!

Helping Aga to find hope and happiness

Single mother Agnieszka, known as Aga, was in the grip of long-term depression when she was referred to Ingeus for help.

The 44-year-old, who moved to the UK from Poland, had worked in catering for 10 years but found it exacerbated her mental health problems. She was also going through a family bereavement, struggling to cope so far away from home.

Aga was referred by Oldham Jobcentre Plus to the Ingeus Working Well (Work and Health Programme). Commissioned by Greater Manchester Combined Authority, the programme provides tailored support to long-term unemployed jobseekers with disabilities and health conditions. At the time of her referral, Aga was volunteering for a local discount food provider, supporting families in financial strife. This gave her a sense of purpose and eagerness to find a new career path to combat her depression.

Aga was introduced to the Ingeus health team; she joined confidence-building workshops, a mindfulness session, and was given wellbeing advice. Aga's keyworker also assisted her in updating her CV, while a Better Off calculation demonstrated how much better off she would be in paid employment.

Utilising local employer connections, Ingeus was then able to match Aga up with the perfect vacancy: a volunteering officer at local charity Action Together. After tailoring her job application to perfectly match the job description, Aga was given interview preparation guidance and was referred to Oldham Working Wardrobe for support with

new work clothes. After starting her job, Ingeus kept in touch to ensure everything was going smoothly.

Supporting jobseekers in Oldham to access volunteering opportunities, Aga is now loving her new role, which was created and funded via the Oldham Poverty Action Network. It has given her a new-found confidence and reduced her depression:

"Working Well turned out to be the best possible place to go," she says.

"I had plenty of support from many people. It changed my life."

"It was a place where people believed in me more than I did. Sometimes it is still hard for me to believe where I am now. I could not ask for a better change. I am a happy person who lives a better, healthier and happier life."



Menopause: Making informed choices

World Menopause Day highlights the challenges women face during the menopause.

As a fact of life which everyone will encounter, be it first-hand, or via their families, friends, and colleagues, it's an opportunity to educate and support, while normalising the conversation around this historically taboo topic.

For most women, the thought of condensing menopause into a single day would be bliss. Instead, it can present years of ongoing mental and physical health changes that can have potentially life-long impacts if not properly understood and managed.

Ingeus colleagues Mish, age 50, and Maria, 56, have both lived with their menopause symptoms for well over a decade. For them, the massive increase in GPs', employers', and public awareness has been welcome.

"Ten years ago, it was so difficult to share what I was going through, especially as I didn't fully understand it myself," says Maria. "Menopause isn't a visible ailment and there was just no understanding of it back then."

As an accredited Menopause Friendly employer, we encourage colleagues across the business to join regular 'Let's Talk About Menopause' panel sessions. We have menopause training for managers and have recruited and trained menopause wellbeing champions. The Peppy menopause App is offered as part of our colleague healthcare



package and flexible working arrangements or citing menopause symptoms as an absence reason are available to women who feel they need to.

Maria and Mish also recommend several avenues of self-help. "Understanding that menopause is a process is important. There's no quick fix but there's much we can do to help ourselves," Maria believes. "Celebrities like Davina McCall and Davinia Taylor share lots of useful information, and there's so much more support and understanding now at work and home."

Mish agrees: "There's all sorts of help and information out there now. I downloaded a symptom checker which I took to my medical appointment, and I specifically asked to see someone who specialised in menopause. Just don't take no for an answer, get the knowledge and keep making the choices that are right for you."

Getting to know you...



**Alistair
Armit**

This month we're getting to know Alistair Armit, Head of Digital Strategy and Solutions.

"I have been with Ingeus about 3 years having moved from a large software company. My role is to run the Technology Office which manages the applications people are using. We have a library of these applications allowing us to reuse them when other people are looking for something similar and ensuring the Cyber and Compliance teams keep them safe and secure.

The Technology Office listen to business problems and needs across all the pillars and find technological solutions and automation to ensure these are met, we reuse existing applications where possible and make sure we are always innovating and looking to the future.

Personally, my background is in theatre, having been on stage as an opera singer

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

Day or night?

Day, it's an age thing used to be night!

Board games or video games?

Board games, more personal.

Tea or coffee?

Coffee, fuel for the day.

Singing or dancing?

Singing

Book or movie?

Book, much more relaxing.

Cats or dogs?

Dogs.

City or countryside?

City, country lanes are a nightmare.

Sweet or savoury?

Both, sorry you can't make me choose!

Text or call?

Text, but really calling is better.

Tattoos or piercings?

None, but I do think they look good.

for 10 years and then moving into Theatre Management. The move into technology and IT was an interesting one but it is a rewarding and exciting area in which I find myself now."



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