



Homeless man hailed for getting into work

Back on his feet with job thanks to course

by Melissa York

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As government statistics revealed this week that unemployment has risen by 129,000 people in the past three months, stories of job success seem few and far between.

But one man from Newham has made a remarkable journey from living in a homeless hostel to being employed full time in a trade he learned from scratch.

Mussie Kahsay worked night shifts in the catering industry while he lived at Anchor House, Canning Town, a charity for homeless and vulnerable adults in Barking Road.

Knowing he needed a higher income to be able to support himself, Mussie decided to pursue a job in construction, an industry he had no experience or expertise in.

Mussie, 29, found he needed the right qualifications to even get his foot in the door so he made the difficult decision to embark on a training course during the day while still living in the hostel.

The 16-week course, called Construct Your Career, is



■ Sean Staines, John Bryson of East Thames and Mussie Kahsay at the Houses of Parliament

run by social landlord and regeneration charity East Thames to help unemployed residents back to work.

Mussie toiled away acquiring skills in carpentry, plumbing, decorating, painting and electrical wiring, as well as health and safety training, leading to a Construction Skills Certification Scheme (CSCS) card and a job as a plumber's mate.

He said: "I have learnt so much and am more confident. I would not have been able to get my qualification or CSCS card without Construct Your Career."

Mussie joined ex-serviceman Sean Staines, from Tower Hamlets, on a guided tour of the Houses of Parliament as guests of Iain Duncan Smith, Secretary of Work and Pensions, after he heard of their achievement.

Sean was living in homeless hostel New Belvedere House before completing the same course and a City and Guilds qualification.

Currently studying carpentry at the Building Crafts College, Sean said: "It was fantastic to be given the great opportunity of getting involved with the construction training.

"Ex-servicemen can find it very difficult to get back into civilian life and I found it hard."

John Bryson, employment programmes manager at East Thames, chose the visit to Parliament to praise Mussie and Sean.

He said: "Both Sean and Mussie have achieved so much since starting the Construct your Career course, so it was great to have the opportunity to bring them along on this tour in recognition of their hard work, commitment and achievement."