

# KATE'S STORY: DISCLOSING MY MENTAL HEALTH



POWERED BY



At the age of 19 I was diagnosed with Generalised Anxiety Disorder, a long term condition that causes me to feel anxious about a wide range of situations and issues. This was no surprise to the people who knew and loved me - I have experienced symptoms of anxiety for as long as I can remember.

It seemed that a lot of my anxiety was compounded in the workplace, and I had been unable to keep a role for more than six months at a time in any other organisation. I felt isolated from colleagues and overwhelmed by negative thoughts, and feared that I would never be able to work without experiencing panic attacks before entering the office. Sharing my diagnosis with managers or peers never resulted in positive discussions or support, and I often ended up leaving the roles soon after.

Then I applied for a seasonal role with NCS The Challenge. My usual symptoms started up, and I realised that I couldn't continue working this way. I reached out to my new manager, and immediately felt heard and supported. Within a week, I had a meeting with the Health, Welfare and Disability Manager, who arranged reasonable adjustments to support my return to work. Just knowing that The Challenge was happy to help me and speak openly with me about my mental health lifted a huge weight off my shoulders.

I have now been working at The Challenge for two years, and have excelled in my team. I can talk to my colleagues about my Generalised Anxiety Disorder, and know that they won't doubt my capabilities. I am now a Mental Health Champion, helping to support colleagues to have open conversations about mental health in the workplace.

Although I still experience anxiety at work, I now have channels I can access for help, and know that The Challenge will continue to support me into the future. I would urge any seasonal staff suffering from poor mental health to share their diagnosis or experience with their manager at The Challenge. The earlier you do this, the better they will be able to support you.

THIS SUMMER  
I WANT TO...

#NCSMENTALHEALTH