

## **Plymouth Man Wins Achievement Award**

A Plymouth man who has overcome redundancy and poor health in his determination to find work has won an achievement award.

Gordon Akrell, aged 54, of Whitleigh, Plymouth, was chosen by employment charity Tomorrow's People in its annual Awards for Achievement. The awards pay tribute to people who have overcome significant barriers in their quest to get back to work. Gordon attended the awards ceremony Tuesday evening, at Plaisterers' Hall, London, where he collected his award.

Gordon won the Award for Personal Award aged 25+, which is awarded to people who have overcome personal difficulties to go into training, education or employment.

In 1996, Gordon's life changed when he was made redundant from a job that he had held for several years as a warehouse operative. Unemployed for the first time in several years, Gordon's health began to suffer and he was diagnosed as being asthmatic, diabetic and suffering from high blood pressure. The impact of this caused the break up of his family and he found himself taking sole responsibility for his teenage daughter.

During the next few years, Gordon was sent on various Government-sponsored training courses, but no offers of work were forthcoming.

A chance meeting with a Tomorrow's People Adviser, working on outreach at a local community centre in 2002, helped Gordon back into to good health and into full-time employment. Over a period of time, the specialist Employment Adviser gave him support with confidence building, discussed individual barriers to work, provided job interview techniques and CV writing advice and help with job application forms and drew up a personal action plan. During this period, Gordon also sought help from his GP to improve his medical condition.

This support led to Gordon being offered a position as a meter reader. Since then he has been made redundant on five occasions, through circumstances beyond his control. Whilst each occasion has been traumatic for Gordon, he has maintained links with Tomorrow's People and has been able to benefit from their free guidance and support.

Gordon was last made redundant in July this year, but approached the charity to update his CV and draw up a fresh action plan. He has now secured employment, working for Plymouth City Council under the sponsorship of the Recruitment Agency; Jobs at PERTEMPS Plymouth.

Eddy Roles, Employment Co-ordinator, Plymouth City Council said: "Gordon has demonstrated, time and again, his determination to overcome personal difficulties, to



retrain and find employment. He has battled ill-health and family breakdown and never admitted defeat.”

When told of his being short-listed, Gordon said “I’m delighted to be short-listed for an award, proving that, with the right support, people can overcome barriers that stand in their way.”

Tomorrow’s People is a national charity, with a 23-year track record of success in helping people out of long-term unemployment, welfare dependency, and into jobs and self-sufficiency.

Since 1984, the charity has helped change the lives of more than 400,000 people across the UK who had been resigned to long-term, even life-long, unemployment.

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**Press enquiries:**

Sam Sheerer

Tomorrow’s People

Direct telephone: 020 7832 2771

Mobile: 07841 877 029

Email: [ssheerer@tomorrows-people.co.uk](mailto:ssheerer@tomorrows-people.co.uk)