My name is Massimo I'm one of the employment specialists for the Hounslow Borough.

An Employment Specialist is quite a multifaceted role especially within kind of IPS framework we are primarily there to support people with typical employability skills such as CV writing, interview skills, helping people search for roles and apply for jobs but there's also a lot of other elements to it.

IPS stands for individual placement and support and the main idea of the contract is that we have eight key principles that we work towards, one of those most important principles is that we are offering a personalised and tailored service to the individual.

So we are looking at that person's career goals their life circumstances what has led them to the point that they're at now and what support can we put in place whether it's well-being services or employer engagement that is not just about having that CV in front of you, that's not the only thing that's going to help someone get back into work it's about understanding their confidence levels what their motivations are what they're looking towards as a career goal.

And that's why IPS is more effective because we're using what the person needs and we're building a support plan around those needs and we're making sure that we're a helping hand along the way.

Being in the local community allows us to make them feel more comfortable and if we're having meetings where someone's looking for a particular job and that employer might be nearby we can go together this is very different from traditional employability contracts which make maybe more office based we are flexible we are out there in the community, we are able to support people with what they need when they need it and find creative ways of being able to support them.

In the beginning of the day I would be meeting my participants in the local community centre, we would sit and have a little chat about how their week's gone, are there any kind of pressing issues that are going on in their life at the moment? do they have any upcoming interviews?

Making sure that whatever the agenda for that meeting is, is in line with what their needs are on that day, and in between meetings sometimes those meetings might need to take a little bit longer depending on the subject matter.

There might be opportunities if there's breaks in those meetings or cancellations to take that person out to local employers or to go to signposting services to help them find the support that they need for mental health or physical health, and using that time as effectively as possible really.

The idea is that because we can be flexible, we go wherever the participant needs us first of all so that can be local coffee shops wherever it's close to their home, GPS and local health services are another area that we look into when it comes to co-location, spaces that we can work out of.

Sitting down in a public space within those GPS or health services for referrals and a great reason as to why we do that, is because we can coordinate better with health professionals to ensure that the jobs that we are putting participants into, are the right environment for that participant.

I mean it's just such a great role.

It's a very rewarding role, there are challenges you know like I say you are in control of your own diary, you are in control of where you work, how you work and you do have to navigate those challenges of things like where you charge your laptop?

But you know there is a great lot of support from our Senior Management teams as well to ensure that we have the right support whilst we're out on the job that we are properly safeguarded, that we have access to safeguarding Services.

If we're going through any challenging situations with our participants, but generally you know it is great fun and it's because of those real connections that you build with your participants with local community leaders as well.

Everything around IPS works so well when everything fits together.

You know it's like a whole life cycle of employer engagement, stakeholder engagement, participant engagement all rolled into one those are the best examples of IPS you're going to get.