

PRESS RELEASE

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Deaf employee turns fashion model

Modelling his employer's products was all in a day's work for Zaid Hoosein, who is profoundly deaf and communicates by lip reading and sign language.

Along with three other colleagues, Zaid (41) stars in the new advertising and promotion campaign for Pluss Personalised Corporate and Leisure Wear. The advertisements will appear in local newspapers and the photographs of staff feature on leaflets and exhibition stands too.

"I feel proud that the company asked me to model its products. I had a really good laugh doing the photo shoot and it's nice to know that I'm helping to increase business," says Zaid, who works as a store operative for Pluss in Paignton.

Working for businesses, sports teams, clubs and many other clients, Pluss embroiders, screen prints and transfers images and logos onto promotional clothing, sportswear and workwear. It offers a vast range of styles, colours and sizes.

Pluss employs and trains people with disabilities at its industrial units. Zaid is typical of its staff in not letting his disability become a barrier when it comes to working. "I've never felt my disability is a problem at work, and I really like to be busy and independent, he says".

Zaid's work is as highly valued off camera as it is on, and he is an integral member of the team. His supervisor, Mel says "Zaid is one of the best workers we have. Whatever needs doing he does it and there's always a good result. On top of that he's great model material, he just seems to have natural poise."

Zaid keeps looking good by cycling to work every morning uphill, whatever the weather. He took this new task in his stride. When asked if he was going to give it all up to become a model, he laughs and says: "maybe, but at the end of the day it's just part of a day's work".

For more information, photographs or to arrange an interview: Contact Monica Shillingford, email monica.shillingford@pluss.org.uk or ring 01752 306657

Notes to editors

Pluss provides high quality employment, development and training opportunities and equipment for disabled people in Devon.

It has three sections:

1. Working

Pluss provides employment support and training to disabled people and offers a one-stop-shop on disability issues for employers. It is the largest provider of Jobcentre Plus and local authority supported employment services in the South West.

2. Manufacturing

Offers supported employment, training and development opportunities to disabled people while producing and selling top quality products.

3. Equipping

Provides impartial expert advice and a wide range of equipment for disabled people. It supplies and installs equipment and trains individuals in its use.

Pluss (formerly Industrial Services Group) is owned by Devon County Council, Somerset County Council, Plymouth Council and Torbay Council.