



Newsletter

Issue 03 – July 2021



In partnership with



Department for Work and Pensions



Programme update

We are pleased to update you on our Work in Progress programme. To date:

56 Referrals	5 Referrals withdrawn
6 Did not start	45 Started on programme
8 Taster Days have been attended	16 Clients been on placement
15 Interviews for paid work	1 Traineeship
5 Participating in volunteer positions	8 Job starts/offered paid work

Health and Wellbeing

We review a client's health and wellbeing at Initial Assessment, regularly throughout their time on programme and finally towards the end of provision. Of the 41 who completed here is a breakdown of how many clients felt they could feel improvement against each category:

Mental Health	29	Communication and Social Skills	34
Behaviour	28	Physical Health	29
Recreation and Leisure	26	Living Environment	17
Food and Drink	22	Wellbeing	30
Financial	12	Relationships	18

We welcome feedback. If you'd like to share any comments about this provision, please email: tracey.summerbell@azure-charitable.co.uk

All the photographs and stories used in the production of this newsletter have been obtained with the full consent and permission of each client

Philip's personal progression



Philip had held down three zero hours contract jobs at once prior to the pandemic. Unfortunately as a result of Covid-19 all jobs ground to a halt as the roles were as stewards within events venues.

Philip had been recently diagnosed with Autism which enabled him to understand why he can struggle to process information when given too much at once. Philip didn't feel confident meeting or talking to new people and so was referred to our provision for additional one to one support.

Employment Adviser, Brian Hunt met with Philip soon after his referral was received. Philip expressed that he didn't want to lose his skills and confidence and was keen to find a job.

Three specific areas of support were identified on his Development Plan; Career Advice, Confidence Building and a Supported Work Placement.

Keen to make progress, with support Philip applied for several jobs in the first few weeks on the programme. Brian also supported Philip to undertake online Manual Handling training to further enhance his skills and CV, boost his confidence and show potential employers his commitment whilst out of work.

Philip asked if he could gain some experience within Azure's own Garden Centre as a way of keeping his customer service skills active as well as gain experience within a retail setting. Brian arranged a taster day as an introductory session to a new environment.

Philip continued to submit many job applications and was invited for interview with a local employer. During the interview Philip was able to draw on all his experiences and was offered a part time position.

Brian kept in regularly contact with Philip to ensure he felt settled in his new role. Philip reported receiving additional hours within a few weeks of starting.

Clients' health and wellbeing is reviewed regularly throughout their time on the programme. On the last review, Philip felt there was improvement in a number of areas including Communication and Social Skills, Behaviour as well as Recreation and Leisure.

In total Philip attended 28 one to one appointments with Brian, a mix of face to face and via video call when in-person interactions were prevented.

“ **Friendly and polite staff and really enjoyed the interaction** ”

We all wish Philip the very best for the future and congratulate him on his achievement. All your hard work and determination paid off. Well done.

Lindsay's Lands Herself a Dream Placement

Lindsay was referred on the first day the provision commenced. Lindsay met with her Employment Adviser Brian Hunt and they identified a number of areas where they felt Lindsay would benefit from additional support: career advice, confidence Building, Job Skills Training and a supported work placement.

Lindsay has work history but feels her learning disability and anxiety is a barrier to processing information and retaining a job.

Brian and Lindsay spent some time discussing various vocational areas and what would be involved in different types of roles. Lindsay expressed that she was interested in a placement rather than work at this stage to increase her confidence.

With support, Lindsay took part in Customer Service Essentials Training which she passed at 100%. This whetted her appetite for training and she expressed her interest in a level 2 Understanding Autism course. Brian supported her to apply and she started soon after.

Due to her success in passing her course and with a renewed energy, Lindsay embarked on a level 3 Understanding Autism Course.

Due to Lindsay's previous work history along with the knowledge and skills she has developed and gained, Brian suggested he approach Azure's Education Services department for a placement to support learners accessing our Government Study Programme, all of whom have additional support needs. Lindsay was keen to explore this avenue.

Brian set up an informal introductory meeting with Azure's Educational Services Manager Helen Campbell. Lindsay was offered a placement in the role of a Support Assistant, which she was thrilled with and the placement commenced in April. This opportunity was extended to allow Lindsay to gain maximum experience in a larger variety of situations.

On Lindsay's progress whilst on placement, Helen Campbell commented "Lindsay is very enthusiastic and motivated and her confidence has definitely developed during her time with us. She has built up a good positive rapport with the learners."

“ This is the first time I have felt part of a team and not just a number. This programme and placement has really developed my confidence. The support from staff has been invaluable. ”

Azure's Education Services department has an advertised vacancy for a Teaching Assistant and Lindsay has applied for the role and been shortlisted for interview. We wish her the best of luck.

The skills and experience you have gained will be carried by you for a lifetime and it's all down to your hard work and commitment.

We all wish you the best for the future.



Robert's driving his skills forward

Robert was the second client to be referred on to this provision. Robert has Autism, Dyslexia, depression and anxiety. His Work Coach referred him to our provision for the dedicated one to one support he would receive.

During his initial assessment with Employment Adviser Brian Hunt, it was identified that Robert would need support with careers advice, job skills training and a supported work placement.

From early on Robert expressed an interest in pursuing driving as a vocational area to be explored. To support Robert's aspiration Brian supported him to undertake a number of training sessions; Driving Safely, Workplace Safety and Customer Service Essentials.

To further support Robert in his quest to achieve a driving role, Brian suggested sourcing a placement as a way of him gaining additional experience, particularly as Robert had no previous work history. Brian approached a number of host organisations including CT Furniture. After initial discussions and introductions, Robert was invited to attend a driving assessment. Following a successful assessment Robert was invited for induction with the placement starting in November in the role of driver.

Robert was working alongside someone else but drove the van to collect furniture and also to take unwanted items to be disposed of at the tip. Robert reported this placement helped his mental health so much so he decided that once his placement ended he would continue to volunteer to further develop his skills.

Robert spent several months volunteering and felt this additional time was invaluable. However felt it was time to leave this role and pursue new avenues.

In his last few sessions on the programme Robert applied for a voluntary role with the NHS as a driver within their Support Services team. Robert hopes this experience with a prestigious employer will stand him in good stead.



We regularly review 10 areas relating to health and wellbeing throughout a client's time on provision. Robert reports improvement in Communication and Social Skills, Behaviour, Recreation and Leisure, Living Environment, Wellbeing, and Finances since starting on the programme.

“ **The programme has given me a good general knowledge about work. I feel I have less uncertainty** ”

We wish you all the very best for the future Robert, we are sure with all your new skills, experience and hard work, it won't be long before you achieve your goal of a paid driving job.

Angus is at North East Ambulance Service

Angus was referred from Newcastle City in October. Angus was allocated to Employment Adviser Steve Brown. At initial Assessment Angus explained that due to his Autism he can find adapting to new people and new situations quite challenging. Together Angus and Steve identified a number of areas in which Angus needed additional support which included careers advice, confidence building, understanding workplace behaviours, supported work placement/volunteering and job skills training.

Angus has had no paid employment or work experience and had no CV. Steve felt a good starting point for Angus was some training and a placement to enable him to start building a CV since leaving university. A placement was identified and Angus was keen to get started. Unfortunately due to Covid-19 restrictions in Autumn 2020 the host organisation put this opportunity on hold. Not to be deterred Steve set up online Manual Handling training for Angus which he successfully passed.

Due to the situation with the pandemic over the winter, we moved to remote delivery of the programme and Steve continued with weekly contact. With determination Angus applied for countless vacancies in a variety of roles.

Steve became aware of a job opportunity at the North East Ambulance Service. Three clients including Angus were invited for interview. In addition to the informal interview a practical assessment was also conducted to establish how accurate the candidates were entering data; this being a key and important part of the role.

All clients felt the experience was beneficial particularly when two had never attended an interview before and one person some time ago. Angus was well prepared for the interview and was subsequently offered a potential position. As Angus had never had paid employment, it was agreed that Angus attend a two week taster placement so he could establish if he felt the role was right for him. Angus thrived whilst on placement and was given an employment start date. Angus started work in June in the position of Payroll Data Administrator.

“ We are delighted to work in partnership with Azure and give real work experience opportunities and it’s fantastic when this results in a job offer. Angus is a pleasant, adaptable, articulate and hardworking young man. We are pleased by how quickly he has picked up the variety of tasks that we have asked him to perform. We are looking forward to working with him as a valued member of the Payroll/Workforce Team ”

North East Ambulance Service



“ I am really enjoying my job at the North East Ambulance Service. ”

Congratulations on your new job Angus, what fabulous news. We all send you our best wishes for the future.

Feedback

We give our clients opportunities throughout their time on programme and specifically upon leaving the provision, to give us feedback – good or bad. This enables us to build upon the comments received to improve future provision. Here is a sample of some of the comments we have received.

“ **My confidence and communication skills are the biggest areas of improvement** ”

“ **Despite the Covid restrictions the support received on the programme has been very beneficial** ”

“ **My confidence and communication skills have improved significantly. I have had the opportunity to explore different vocational areas and feel I have a clear understanding of future career priorities.** ”

“ **Great support, knowing someone is helping me** ”

“ **I wish I could continue on programme, the support has been brilliant** ”

“ **I really enjoyed my work placement. I have gained a number of qualifications which will be good for my CV when applying for job vacancies. Maybe most importantly my confidence and communication skills are much improved.** ”

“ **Engagement with my Adviser has helped me to become more confident and improve my mental health** ”

“ **Gained more assertiveness and confidence in receiving feedback. I feel respected** ”

“ **I feel more confident in returning to paid employment. My Adviser has supported me to deal with some personal issues which could have been a significant barrier to securing paid work.** ”

“ **I have had two work placements which helped me with my communication skills** ”

“ **Azure has supported me to begin volunteering, it has got me to leave the house and start talking to people** ”

“ **I have secured a volunteering role at Ouseburn Farm linked to my interest in animal care. Attended formal interview with NHS which despite not getting the job, was a good learning experience. The programme increased my confidence.** ”