



Young mum supported to re-take her 1st step to employment

Background

Amy left school at 16 with a positive outlook and a full-time place on a college course in Sports Coaching. However, a few months into her course Amy had to leave as she was pregnant.

Amy was excited about the arrival of her baby, but began to lose confidence and at times felt overwhelmed by her situation. She watched as her friends continued studying or entered into employment and, although she had the support of her family, Amy had started to lose belief in her abilities.

She was contacted by her Careers Advisor for support and guidance. Amy said she wanted to return to studying but felt lost and confused about what she wanted to do and how she would manage it now she was a parent. Her Careers Advisor referred Amy for an Activity Agreement.

Activity Agreement Support

Amy needed someone to support her back into learning and to help her identify options that would fit in with her priority as a mum. As part of her Activity Agreement, Amy was allocated a Trusted Professional. When they first met Amy's baby was only 6 weeks old. Despite this recent change in her life Amy was keen to undertake an Activity Agreement and said that she was willing to try a few different things. Amy and her Trusted Professional met regularly for support and planned her Activity Agreement together. The Activity Agreement was built round Amy. Amy needed this flexible and supportive approach to help rebuild her confidence and believe in herself again.

Amy was interested in working with children, and had also spoken to friends and family about careers such as hairdressing. Amy and her Trusted Professional identified local taster courses in Customer Service, Care and Hairdressing. Amy started with the Customer Service taster, attending once a week for 12 weeks. This allowed Amy to restart her learning gradually, to fit in with caring for her baby. She achieved a personal development qualification - SQA Intermediate 1 (Self Awareness, Self in Society, Self and Work) and improved her confidence. After this Amy secured a place on the Care taster and felt able to increase her participation, adding the Hairdressing taster to her programme. After a few weeks Amy decided that hairdressing was not where her interests lay. Her Trusted Professional gave Amy reassurance at this point to focus on her interests. Amy completed the Care course with a realisation that she still had the ability to succeed.

At this point, Amy and her Trusted Professional discussed focusing in on her original interest in sport. Amy's Trusted Professional identified a Sports Taster and Amy was keen to undertake it. The sports coach quickly noticed her enthusiasm and natural ability and felt Amy would be ready to re-apply to college, if she felt she was ready and prepared to do so. Amy's coach and Trusted Professional supported her through her decision to reapply for the original college course. Amy's coach was so impressed that he wrote her a positive reference for the college. Amy was accepted onto the course when her baby was 6 months old.

Progression

By the end of her Activity Agreement Amy was back where she wanted to be, studying Sports Coaching full-time at college. Amy had needed support to take that first step again. The Activity Agreement had enabled her to explore options at her own pace and her Trusted Professional gave her the guidance and encouragement to make decisions. In the process she rebuilt her confidence and began to believe in herself again.

Quotes

Amy said the Activity Agreement helped her to *“feel more confident...the Activity Agreement has given me the motivation to go back to college”*.

Susie Byrne, Activity Agreement Co-ordinator, West Dunbartonshire Council, said *“It was fantastic working with Amy, as she was a young Mum who just needed the opportunity to realise her potential. Her Activity Agreement allowed her to challenge herself to try different opportunities and gain confidence to make choices about her future.”*

For more information about Activity Agreements in West Dunbartonshire please contact Susie Byrne, on 0141 562 2498 or email susie.byrne@westdunbarton.gov.uk.