

Volunteering as part of an **Activity Agreement**



James* has been participating in an Activity Agreement with Argyll and Bute Youth Services for just over 4 months. He had disengaged from school in the middle of 6th year and was diagnosed with clinical stress and anxiety. James became socially isolated and rarely left his home.

James was referred for an Activity Agreement by Skills Development Scotland who explained to him how the tailored support would help him overcome his barriers and re-engage with learning. James' Trusted Professional worked flexibly, meeting James where he felt comfortable and building a trusting relationship.

With support from his Trusted Professional James identified an interest in IT and computing, and a desire to go to college. An individualised Activity Agreement plan was created for James. This included activities to develop his skills and experience, alongside support to remove his barriers to participation - all forming a clear pathway towards his goal of participation through further education.

James undertook CBT sessions with a counsellor to help him manage his stress and anxiety and took part in activities through the Youth Services summer programme, to meet and socialise with other young people his age. This also helped him develop a network of peer support.

James' Trusted Professional helped him to explore opportunities at college and arranged visits to build his confidence in this new environment. James was supported to apply for an NQ level course at Glasgow Clyde College, for which he has since received an unconditional offer. His Trusted Professional introduced James to the Equality and Inclusion team at the college. They explained the support available to help him sustain his participation.

As well as applying for college James wanted to undertake volunteering, to develop his skills and experience. He was supported to meet with his local branch of the Third Sector Interface (TSI) which links voluntary organisations with volunteers. Through discussion about his existing

skills and his interest in IT and computing, it was decided that he would hold an IT ‘surgery’ for older people in the local area - James would help them with basic computing skills such as sending emails, setting up and using social media, producing word documents, using smartphones and tablets etc. Volunteering helped James to develop his confidence and self-esteem and gave him experience of using his skills and interest in IT in a work environment. James now has a waiting list of potential clients to help with their IT queries, and hopes to continue volunteering with the TSI once he starts college.

Gillian Simpson, from the TSI said *‘Myself and my other TSI colleagues have noticed how good James is at dealing with the clients, who tend to be older and not confident in their IT skills. He is always well prepared and talks very calmly and patiently through their issues. All 5 clients he has worked with so far said the session had been useful to them.*

James is polite and exceptionally reliable and as a result of seeing James working with the clients the TSI has asked if he would do some volunteering for us in the office during the holidays.’

Working in partnership with the TSI has allowed Activity Agreements to set up a volunteering opportunity that is tailor made for James’ development needs. He has greatly increased his confidence, improved his social skills and gained some valuable work experience through providing the IT surgery, in addition to contributing to his local community and gaining his first Saltire volunteering award.

After commencing college his Trusted Professional has offered to continue to support James when and if he requires help and has agreed in the first instance to contact James by telephone on a weekly basis to assist his transition to college and help sustain his place.

***Not his real name**