

PROJECT POSITIVE

Supporting Hertfordshire's care experienced young people to access employment through apprenticeships.

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THE CHALLENGE

Government statistics show that nationally there are more than **80,000** children and young people in the care system. Approximately 1,092 of these are Hertfordshire young people between the ages of 16-25.

We know that young people with care experience are **three times more likely** not to be in education, employment or training (NEET) than other young people. The latest Department for Education figures released in November 2020 showed that **39% of care leavers** aged 19-21 are not in employment, education or training, compared to 13% of those in the same age group and it is anticipated that post-pandemic, this figure could become worse.

We know that care experienced young people are already disadvantaged. Being out of education, employment or training is associated with negative long-term consequences, including higher rates of homelessness, mental health problems and imprisonment.

Around 12% of care experienced young people attend university. However, the number of care experienced individuals progressing into apprenticeships is extremely low. **The reasons for this include:**

- **Lack of awareness of the opportunities.**
- **The impact of low salaries on the ability to live independently.**
- **Low availability of suitable apprenticeship opportunities.**
- **Employers feeling nervous of the challenges of employing a care experienced young people.**
- **The flexibility of programmes to meet individual's needs.**

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For many care experienced individuals, overcoming the barriers to accessing employment through apprenticeships will require a multi-partner approach with the employer, training provider and apprentice each working together to bring creativity and flexibility to the programme.

We have established a unique programme for Hertfordshire that will establish a collaborative framework.

Through Project Positive, we will:

- **Ensure that care experienced young people are inspired to explore apprenticeships, and are well prepared and supported to apply for and access these opportunities.**
- **Encourage employers to create high-quality opportunities for care experienced young people, working with experts and professionals within a support network to address the challenges that may arise when hiring people with personal barriers.**
- **Support training providers to work creatively and flexibly with employers, removing barriers to achievement and maximising additional learning support funding.**



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WHAT ARE THE EXPECTATIONS OF THE EMPLOYER?

Project Positive works with organisations who are committed to supporting a diverse workforce and improving the outlook of Hertfordshire's care experienced young people.

Project Positive will provide long-term support to all parties involved in the programme, whilst focusing on the provision of high-quality opportunities.

Employers will be asked to agree to the following:

- 1 To commit to attending pre-placement and on-programme training and support provided by Hertfordshire County Council (see outline below)**
- 2 To pay a fair salary that supports the young person towards independence (ideally this should be in line with the National Living Wage)**
- 3 To agree to participate in the programme research, capturing case studies and feedback about 'what works' so that the programme can be scaled in the future.**



WHAT SUPPORT WILL EMPLOYERS RECEIVE?

Employers will benefit from:

- ✓ Lowered overall costs of recruitment.
- ✓ Support to identify a training provider.
- ✓ Support to access government apprenticeship incentives.
- ✓ Full pre and on-programme expert support.
- ✓ Public recognition of your involvement in the programme (press and PR).
- ✓ Evidence of compliance with Corporate Social Responsibility and Social Value Act.
- ✓ Volunteering opportunities for staff.



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WHAT WILL THE SUPPORT AND TRAINING INCLUDE?

Many care experienced individuals may also have experienced trauma and possibly a number of adverse childhood experiences (ACEs). Children in care are four times more likely to have special educational needs and are ten times more likely to have an Education Health & Care Plan. Some young people will also require will require additional support for Social, Emotional and Mental Health needs.

However, it is also important to remember that each young person is an individual and they cannot be categorised quite as simply as this. They will have their own personal journey and this will be filled with both positive and negative experiences which may, or may not, affect how well they engage in an apprenticeship programme.

With this in mind, we feel that it is important that those who will be working most closely with their apprentices receive both pre-programme and on-programme support from professionals who will be able to offer advice, training and expertise.

All employers participating in the programme will be asked to nominate a lead person in their organisation who will be responsible for overseeing their involvement in Project Positive. They will commit to attending the following training to support them in the design and development of their apprenticeship programme.

PRE-PROGRAMME

WORKSHOP 1: GETTING STARTED (ONLINE)

- An introduction to Project Positive and meet the team.
- How the Hertfordshire care system works.
- Understanding trauma and attachment.
- Safeguarding awareness.
- Support available.

PRE-PROGRAMME

WORKSHOP 2: RECRUITMENT (ONLINE)

- Creative ways to approach inclusive recruitment.
- Engaging and building rapport.
- Building resilience.
- Additional needs and vulnerabilities awareness.
- Matching individuals to vacancies.

ON-PROGRAMME

6 WEEKLY 'POSITIVE PROGRAMME' MEETINGS (ONLINE / IN-PERSON)

Through action-learning, employer staff and mentors involved in the programme will join monthly meetings in a confidential, safe and supported environment to share experiences and seek advice and feedback from experts from Hertfordshire County Council who will also provide training on specific topics relevant to those working with care experienced young people including:

- Establishing boundaries.
- Assessing and managing risk.
- Agreeing expectations and values.
- Anger management.
- Supporting mental health and wellbeing.
- Anti-discriminatory practice.



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HOW WILL THE RECRUITMENT PROCESS WORK?

The recruitment process will be flexible to the needs of the employer and the individuals hoping to apply. Each employer will be invited to host a workshop (online or in person if conditions allow) where they will be able to showcase the opportunities that their company can offer. Care experienced individuals will be invited to participate by the Hertfordshire County Council team. The employer will then be able to explain the application and recruitment process.

HOW IS THE PROJECT POSITIVE FUNDED?

The project is fully funded for the first two years by Hertfordshire County Council.

The funding enables the programme to employ a project manager and project administrator. It also funds the expert training and support provided.

A discretionary fund will also be established to support any exceptional costs to enable all individuals to participate fully.

HOW CAN I FIND OUT MORE?

If you are interested in being part of this programme, please email Hello@AmazingApprenticeships.com

This programme is supported by:

