



Case Study - "They finish education and they drop off a cliff"

WHAT IS FUTURES

Futures is a 1-2 year programme with learners attending a hub from 3 days a week, depending on previous experience and existing skills. We focus on the delivery of four key outcomes, Community Inclusion, Employment, Health and Independent Living.

Using data provided by the Local Authority, Autism Unlimited recognised the demand for learning for young people and established the Futures programme.

OPPORTUNITY

Sean wants to be independent – to learn and work locally, and live near to his family. He is autistic and has associated learning difficulties which have been a barrier to his ambitions. Sean is 18; options for further education, employment, supported housing and community engagement are limited and not in line with his personal aspirations. If provision cannot be found locally, young people like Sean are educated away from their home area, causing upheaval, distress and the uncertainty of continued funding. Futures offers an opportunity for young people like Sean to stay local, learn local and live local.

SOLUTION/BENEFIT

Futures provides the opportunity for young people to achieve their aspirations, from becoming more independent, to finding a job, looking after their own mental health and wellbeing and feeling part of the community. Young people aged 18-25 with a learning disability can access this life-changing programme, which takes a holistic view of the individual and what they want out of life.

Growing confidence

Futures also offers independent living experiences, staying 1-2 nights on site at its independent learning facility in Christchurch.

Gaining skills to be more independent

Not about offering special treatment, it's about adaptations to enable every learner to enter, practise and succeed in life and the workplace.

Accessing opportunities for work

Seven of our first-year learners are now in work placements where they are learning and developing new skills and are part of the fabric of the community, representing Futures and themselves.

AT A GLANCE

Challenges

- There are limited choices for young adults 19-25 years old with SEN who need a more structured transition into adulthood than other young people.

Opportunities

- It is hoped that the programme will be expanded to engage with other young people with high support needs, so that their aspirations can also be achieved.

Funding Sources - £500,000

- Grant giving organisations
- Local authority funding
- Private donors



"I always knew Ethan would thrive when given the opportunity and this was a very proud moment"

Futures Coach - Tom

"I now have a place i can go, where i am listened to and i feel comfortable being myself"

Futures Learner - Gill



autism unlimited
futures

SUCCESS STORY

Tom – Futures Coach – said, “We work alongside young people and their families to successfully identify what they want to do in the future and Ethan is a great example of the success of this approach.”

Ethan said: “My supervisor Colin told me that most people who go in for work experience make a metal money box or something like that. I made a water separation system for a fighter jet.”

Colin Willbourne, Sheet Metal Supervisor at RHH Franks said: “From the very beginning of Ethan’s week here in the Sheet Metal department it was obvious that he had enthusiasm, drive, ability and skill and just needed an opportunity to shine and gain practical experience.” “We are looking forward to watching Ethan thrive and to helping more young people reach their future potential.”

Matt – Futures Coach – said, “Some learners can lose confidence through their previous learning experiences but within a year our learners are smiling, engaged, resilient and determined to experience the world of employment. Within twelve months Ethan had secured part-time employment at his work experience placement.”

STATISTICS



Just 21.7% of autistic people are in any form of employment.

*Source:



Researchers say about 17% of people with autism aged 21 to 25 have ever lived independently.

*Source:



In 2021 there were 1.4 million school pupils with SEN (16% of all pupils). This is the highest rate recorded since

2014

*Source:



“Some of them come in crushed by previous experiences and within a year and smiling, engaged and resilient.”

Futures Coach - Matt

