



Case Study - "Enabling young adults with autism to lead independent, fulfilled lives"

WHAT IS FUTURES

Autism Unlimited's Futures programme is our ground-breaking centre for young autistic adults between the ages of 18 – 25. It's a specialist centre that provides our young adults with the individual guidance and skills they need to live fulfilled and independent lives while developing resilience, self-advocacy and confidence.

OPPORTUNITY

If you ask any young adult between 18 and 25 what their aspirations are most, if not all, will say, they want a job they love, their own home and to travel – young adults with autism in this age group are no different.

Removing barriers to tasks such as using public transport, shopping for food, managing day-to-day finances, or just following a regular work structure means young people develop their own career ambitions and live as independently as possible. We have already seen great success with one young person learning to travel independently and work as a park ranger within the first 4 months of the programme!

Currently, we receive the minimum funding from the local authority to support these young adults with autism and we do as much as we can with this contribution to change their outcomes, but we'd like to do so much more and here's an idea of the projects we'd like to launch that will significantly enhance the lives of those we support:

- A complete career guidance service - personal branding, cv writing and interview techniques.
- Build a garden centre that is run by our young adults - giving them first hand experience of running a business and growing produce.
- An independent living centre split into individual flats.
- A bursary scheme to help Learners with expenses when they first start work.
- An extension of our services to others who have different additional needs.

AT A GLANCE

Challenges

There are limited choices for young adults 18-25 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

- Grant giving organisations
- Local authority funding
- Private donors



"I believe that no-one should be denied the opportunity to achieve their dreams."

Tom our Futures Coach

SUCCESS STORY

Tom was one of the very first Learners who joined Futures and we're thrilled at the way he has blossomed. We recently sat down with Tom, his parents and his coach, Matt to find out what they thought.

Tom's parents

We looked at alternative places, but Tom was adamant that he wanted to go to Futures and I'm so glad he did. The team have really got a handle on what makes Tom tick and giving him practical ways to overcome any problems. They are showing him how to live, something I don't think he's had before, and he's really come out of himself. Tom has always had dreams but I think his time at Futures has shown him the ways they can become a reality.

Tom

Futures is one of the best things that has happened to me, it's helping me to progress personally and supporting me in getting a job. My favourite things are going to the gym and living independently as I get to know what it's like to live like a normal adult, every day is different and I love that.

Matt, Tom's coach

I've been working with Tom now for a year and a half and the progression I've seen in him is outstanding. Originally it was very difficult to get any conversation flowing but now you can sit with Tom and have a great conversation – he'll tell you some very interesting facts. Also witnessing his interaction with other Learners is amazing. One of the things that Tom loves is his work placement at Hengistbury Head which fulfils his passion for conservation and the environment. Tom is now in control of getting himself up, ready for work and travelling, Tom does this all by himself.

STATISTICS



Just 22% of autistic adults are in paid employment.

Source: National Autistic Society



Only one in five autistic adults live alone and independently.

Source: Living Autism



Autistic adults are 4 times more likely to be lonely than their peers.

Source: National Autistic Society



"Without Futures I don't know where Cieran would be. It has literally transformed his life"

Cierans parents

