

## **Groundbreaking programme for young adults with additional needs to expand across Dorset.**

**‘Open Event’ this month (January 23) will showcase its successes.**

Following its first ‘incredible’ 18 months supporting young people in BCP, Autism Unlimited’s Futures programme is seeking to expand across Dorset and is inviting young people and their families to learn how they too can grow their confidence, seek employment, and become active members of their communities.

Futures, based in Christchurch, supports young people aged 18-25, who have an Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP).

Futures is operated by the leading charity Autism Unlimited which also runs Portfield School in Parley and a Sixth Form in Christchurch.

From an initial four learners in 2021, Futures now has 28 learners, all of whom are reaching their goals through learning, practical activities, work placements, employability skills and supported independent living experiences. Money management and making decisions about where they want to live are also part of the Futures curriculum.

Futures Consultant Graham Whitehead said: “It’s not an exaggeration to say that the programme is life-changing for our learners and their families.

“Many young people have come to us having struggled in traditional education environments.

“At Futures they flourish both personally and professionally, gaining the confidence to travel independently, to form friendships, socialise and discover talents and fulfilling career pathways.”

He continued: “Parents and carers have called Futures incredible and say they never dared imagine their young people would achieve so much.

“Our learners David and Simon were offered jobs after their first work experience placements and Susan, who had struggled with her secondary education options regained her confidence and is now working part-time in Bournemouth. These are just a few of many success stories.

“We now want to take this success out to a wider audience across Dorset, and we hope young people and their families will come and find out more at our Open Event.”

**Futures staff will host parents and young people at Dorset Youth Association on Lubbecke Way, Dorchester DT1 1QL on Tuesday 23<sup>rd</sup> January from 10:00am - 8pm. Free parking and refreshments will be available.**

Simply drop in or call: 01202 485305 or email: [futures@autism-unlimited.org](mailto:futures@autism-unlimited.org) to arrange a specific meeting and time with a Futures staff member.

For more information, including video interviews with learners, their families and Futures staff visit: <https://www.autism-unlimited.org/futures-18-25/>

Ends

Picture captions: Futures, based in Christchurch, supports young people aged 18-25, who have an Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP), and enables them to reach their goals through learning, practical activities, work placements, employability skills and supported independent living experiences.

[www.autism-unlimited.org](http://www.autism-unlimited.org)

Media information on this release from Debbie Granville at:

[hello@debbiegranvillepr.co.uk](mailto:hello@debbiegranvillepr.co.uk)

