

JOHN LEWIS PARTNERSHIP DELIVERY REPORT

2022

JANUARY



JOHN LEWIS
PARTNERSHIP

INTRODUCTION

The Upskills Project sets out to support young people between the ages of 16 to 25 years-old to take that next step in their career journey.

The project has been designed to focus on supporting young people at different stages of their journey to employment. The project aimed to increase young people's awareness of the world of work, by providing them with support/ mentoring, training and work experience. The goal of our project is to reduce unemployment by empowering young people to take control of their employment, education and training while providing support to those not currently in employment to gain meaningful employment.

JAGS aimed to support a diverse range of young people including those with significant additional barriers and experiences that may place them more at risk of being unable to gain and/or sustain employment. The programme that we developed set out to deliver a programme that took people from where they are along their employability journey and to move them into a positive pathway that included employment, work experience, work to improve soft skills and practical support around CV and Interview practice workshops.

We delivered two separate cohorts to focus on a group of unemployed young people and a further group targeted at young people with additional barriers and complex needs.

The initial plan set out to deliver face-to-face support for approximately six months (24 Weeks) with a target of 32 beneficiaries in two separate delivery cohorts. Our original project outcomes were;

- 10 Weeks Providing training for beneficiaries who have work experience but require upskilling. This will consist of three hours training, two days a week. Supporting a minimum of 20 participants.
- 14 Weeks Intensive programme for those with additional support needs and who are furthest away from the job market. Supporting a minimum of 12 participants.

RECRUITMENT OF PARTICIPANTS

The recruitment process was more difficult than usual because of Covid-19, the subsequent lockdown and the number of support services that supported young people in Croydon that closed during this time. We had hoped to deliver our programmes in person for the majority of it. Because of the consideration around working safely during the pandemic, coupled with the uncertainty that Covid-19 restrictions caused and the need to adhere to the National Youth Agencies Safe working guidance. Planning around delivery and outreach was more complicated due to the necessary restrictions.

Support workers spent time reaching out to colleagues across a diverse range of statutory and voluntary services to gain support in sharing the details of the programme as the recruitment strategy involved limited outreach. We focussed on the development of referral routes with partner agencies, for example, DWP Work Coaches, support and youth workers to share the details of our programme along with young people directly.



SUMMARY OF DELIVERY - COHORT ONE

Our first project focussed on delivering a bespoke 'One-2-One' employability support and work experience project to 12 unemployed young people. The project would provide a minimum of ten hours of holistic support to young people through 14 weeks between June to Sept 21.

The programme was delivered in a blended delivery method (mixed virtual and in-person) whilst ensuring that it was inclusive. As a consequence, we found this process to be resource heavy and compared to pre-pandemic levels of engagement/ recruitment of participants.

We recruited a diverse group of 12 participants aged between 18 and 22 to participate in our project. Each participant was allocated a support worker whose responsibility was to assist them through their journey. Participants received a needs assessment, then were supported to agree to a set of milestones/ goals.

During their regular One to One meetings, young people were furnished with information, advice and guidance around their personal goals and milestones that they had set. Participants were also supported to source opportunities and to apply for work opportunities ranging from hospitality to gym training.

Support Workers met regularly to track progress on the programme, monitoring soft skills such as their level of confidence and how they are enjoying the programme.

SUMMARY OF DELIVERY - COHORT ONE

We partnered with Talent Rise who delivered CV workshops along with LinkedIn workshops to strengthen the participants' understanding of both traditional and new ways of searching for a job. Participants also received social media training and we worked with partners to deliver workshops that would increase the young person's chances of gaining permanent employment. All of the 12 young people that we supported, received a minimum ten hours of support.

Testimonial

"I signed up for the employability programme in June and went to a session once a week for 6 weeks, these sessions included virtual workshops to help enhance my CV and cover letters. I also had 1-1 sessions every two weeks with Shenae, during these sessions she helped assist me with application forms and gave me interview tips. I successfully found employment within my current role which I am enjoying" Nishan (young person)



SUMMARY OF DELIVERY - COHORT TWO

During the recruitment of the first cohort, feedback and discussions with young people, families and professionals highlighted a lack of services for young people of 'transition age' and an increasing level of need to support young people during this stage. The transition period is the period of time between when a young person leaves one stage of their lives and moves on to another one. For example between secondary school and college, work or university. We also learned that there was also a lack of services for young people leaving care and partnered with Croydon's Virtual School to develop a programme that provided positive outcome support around employability, training and education to young people who are currently looked after, through the 'transitions period'.

Our goal was similar to our original cohort, we wanted the young people that participated in the programme to come away better informed, with improved self confidence, feeling less anxious about the future and being ready to move on to a positive pathway. The core aim being to provide one to one support along with group work and workshops that cover topics such as, leadership training, motivational activities, soft skill training and work experience.

Our delivery targeted young people who are in the upper transition years, aged 16 to 18 and young people who are aged 19 and 20 that were previously looked after and living within the social care system. We recruited 20 young people, with complex barriers currently living in social care and those with barriers outside of social care. In reality, we are unsure of the sizes of each cohort however we will work with our partners at Croydon Council and with schools and colleges in Croydon.

SUMMARY OF DELIVERY - COHORT TWO

Each participant underwent a needs assessment along with personal goal settings. Young people were supported to meet their goals through One-2-One support along with workshops and group work around soft skills, including confidence building workshops for example.

The project was delivered from Samuel Coleridge Taylor Youth club along with our main office which is based in George Street central Croydon. Each young person received a minimum of ten hours of direct delivery. 70% of all participants completed their action plans goals.

Participant feedback revealed a better understanding about their career pathways, goals setting and raised aspirations.



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Of all the young people to take part will have a needs assessment and a goal setting action plan. 14 Young people completed their action plans goals.

Young people told us that they better understood their route to the positive outcome as outlined in their plan. We also supported young people around their life skills and referred to additional support.

We had a really positive experience delivering the programme and were able to support young people to take that next step along the journey to employment.

CASE STUDY

“ E is a young woman aged 18 - Having left school with a handful of qualifications, she came to us in need of extra support around completing university personal statements as she knew she wanted to go onto higher education but shied away because of her lack of confidence in applying for university. Having been in care for all her life and now living in semi-independent accommodation, she felt unsure as to whether she was ready for university. Her biggest fear was 'making a mistake and having to drop out of uni'. She was also unsure about what course she wanted to apply for and if she wanted to apply for a university within London or outside of London.

We worked with her to brainstorm all her options and she was able to create a plan where she weighed up the pros and cons for each in order to assist with making a final decision. We also spent time with E in one-to-one sessions to complete her personal statement which she then went on to submit via UCAS.”

Shenae Tully-Sinclair (Support Worker)



OUTCOMES

We achieved an overall 34% success rate with the following targets

1. Two participants gained employment
2. Three moved onto further education/ training
3. Six recruited through the Government's Kickstart training programme.

All of these outcomes offered paid work experience and access to additional in-work support. 80% of participants reported increased confidence in their career journey, improved self-confidence and reduced anxiety when applying for jobs.

