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UKSPF EXPLORING OPPORTUNITIES CONTINUES TO EXCEED TARGETS....

The HLC-led Exploring Opportunities employment programme is continuing to exceed its targets. Since it started in April 2023, the programme, delivered by 14 community-based partner organisations - Cat Zero, CHCP, Citizens Advice, Enviromail, Giroscope, Goodwin Development Trust, Hull FC Community Foundation, Hull KR Community Trust, Education Development Trust, Probe, The Warren, Tiger's Trust, Vulcan, and Unity in Community has supported 1,772 economically inactive or unemployed Hull residents (with more than 500 people enrolling in the last 5 months alone).

Participants tell us they are attracted to the programme because it's voluntary, the support is provided by local organisations and named keyworkers who they know and trust, and help is tailored to their individual needs - including where appropriate, in-house mental health support and financial/debt advice from CHCP and Citizens Advice.

The programme has been especially popular this year with young people who are NEET (not in education employment or training), with 40% of people signing up falling into the 16-24 age range. The wide range of personal development activities, volunteering opportunities, and work experience placements on offer are "hooks" for this group because they help a young person to build up their CV and increase their employability.



Exploring Opportunities' personalised approach has resulted in an impressive 7 out of 10 participants progressing into a job or further learning.

This month's edition of HLC's e-bulletin highlights five Exploring Opportunities participants' stories, showing their journey, and how the programme and delivery partners have helped them to develop and succeed.

JAMES IS THRIVING IN WASTE MANAGEMENT, THANKS TO SUPPORT FROM ENVIROMAIL..

When James Sunman was first referred to Enviromail's UKSPF project by the Job Centre, he wasn't sure what to expect. Work experience felt daunting, and like many people facing long-term unemployment, James was caught in the "no job, no experience" cycle. Despite his doubts, he committed to the opportunity, turned up on time, and quickly became an active part of the team.



James was given structured tasks in a real work environment, learning the importance of teamwork, reliability, and resilience. He was encouraged to take the next step by completing a forklift licence course. This combination of hands-on experience and accredited training gave him the confidence to begin applying for jobs in the waste and recycling sector.

James now works in waste management and is thriving. He not only has a stable income and the pride of providing for his family, (Continued...)

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JAMES' STORY CONTINUED:

but he also feels part of something bigger, contributing to the green economy and doing his bit for the environment. He is ambitious about the future and hopes to progress into a shift manager role.

Importantly, James has stayed connected to Enviromail and is part of their community. He often returns to share his story with new trainees, encouraging others who are nervous about taking their first steps into work. His journey has become a powerful example of how breaking the catch-22 of "no job, no experience" can transform lives and communities.

James reflects on his support:

"Getting constant rejection when applying for jobs was frustrating. I knew I could do it, I just needed a chance and to get my foot in the door. Enviromail believed in me when I stopped believing in myself and felt stuck. They rebuilt my confidence and gave me the skills and support I needed to find employment, they championed me to others. I feel really proud of what I've achieved, and I now have my sights on career in waste management."

Simon Bowes-Daniels, Training Officer at Enviromail, added:

"We are committed to every person who walks through our door for support. The barriers people face are complex and unique, but we build trust and friendships to tackle them together. James is an example to others and shows that opportunities are always within reach, no matter how far away they may feel at the start."



CALLUM DISCOVERS A NEW CAREER PATH IN HORTICULTURE....

Callum (25) joined the Exploring Opportunities ILM programme with Unity in Community to gain qualifications, work experience, and to get support with a health condition that had affected his previous job. He used to work in administration, but the job made his health worse. Eventually, he had to stop working and became unemployed. However, he was eager to try something new.

As part of the programme, Callum took a paid work placement at Holderness House, working in horticulture (gardening and outdoor work). He also completed a Level 1 Award in Horticulture, which gave him new skills and knowledge. This experience helped him discover a new passion. It also showed him that he could work in a way that suited his health. He now feels more confident and hopeful about his future.

Even though his paid placement has ended, Callum still volunteers at Holderness House because he enjoys it and wants to keep learning.

Callum said,

"This has helped my confidence in going back to work, as it has allowed me to work with my health issues rather than against them which has been a massive benefit. It has also taught me skills that have real world application, both at home and in a working environment. It has given me a direction in my career as I wasn't quite sure what I wanted to do, it's just nice for reducing stress and anxiety when it comes to my work life. Thank you! This has been a wonderful experience. I hope it's the start of a very rewarding and enjoyable career path in horticulture."

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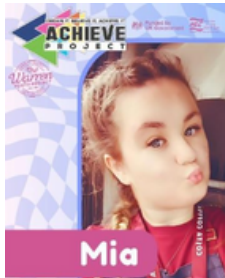
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THE WARREN'S ACHIEVE PROGRAMME HELPS MIA SECURE ROLE IN HOSPITALITY...

Mia is a long-term user of Achieve and has attended for a variety of reasons over the years. She more recently went to Achieve for some support and to find something to do to keep her busy.

After trying out a few different things such as volunteering, exploring courses and looking into her interests, they found a job she liked the look of at Costa. They applied together, practiced interview skills, and she was offered both the job and a management position!



She's now working at Costa and is really enjoying her new role. Mia makes a fabulous coffee and everyone at the Warren are very proud of her progress.

FADUMO GAINS EMPLOYMENT TO SUPPORT HER FAMILY...THANKS TO UNITY'S SUPPORT...

Alongside her studies, Fadumo volunteered two days a week at Dove House Hospice shop, which gave her the chance to further build her confidence and gain new skills in a supportive environment.



She also attended Unity's employment support sessions where they worked together on updating her CV and carrying out online job searches for roles in cleaning, care, and retail.

Her hard work quickly paid off. Within just a couple of weeks, Fadumo was offered employment with Stafforce as a Factory Operative.

Fadumo commented: "I didn't think I'd find work so soon, but the support really helped me believe in myself. Everyone at Unity in Community has helped me so much."

Fadumo's journey shows how determination, combined with tailored support, can bring real results. By focusing on building her confidence, improving her skills, and taking advantage of volunteering and employment support, she has achieved her goal of moving into paid work.

She is now excited about the future and proud of the progress she has made. She has also started a Maths Functional Skills course at Unity, which she is completing in her spare time.



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CHRIS' JOURNEY WITH GIROSCOPE SHOWCASES THE MUTUAL VALUE OF VOLUNTEERING...

Chris (55) has been a volunteer with the Gyroscope UKSPF Project since November 2024. The Computer Repair project tackles digital exclusion by refurbishing donated computers and distributing them to people, families, and organisations in need. Chris's involvement has strengthened both technical delivery and community engagement, while the project has provided him with opportunities to develop his skills, confidence, and sense of purpose.

After thirty years as a stay-at-home parent, Chris retrained in IT through college and online university courses, even building a YouTube channel to share his knowledge. Joining the project gave him a space to put this learning into practice, apply his technical expertise to real-world repairs, and collaborate with others who share his interests. In turn, his mentoring of newer volunteers has helped build capacity across the team.

Chris has also discovered new strengths through his role. Supporting learners through the Learn My Way programme, he has worked with complete beginners - some using a mouse for the first time. His patient, tailored approach has boosted learners' confidence, but it has also boosted his own. He has "discovered a love of teaching" and now runs weekly digital skills sessions at the Gyroscope Community Centre - a new position that has grown from Chris' desire to teach and



the clear need for more digital skills training in the local community.

Chris' story shows the mutual value of volunteering. His commitment has rebuilt access, skills, and opportunity for the community, while the project has supported his personal growth, giving him the platform to rediscover his abilities, confidence, and passion for teaching.



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