



Learning for Life supports inclusivity for our learners by work experience initiatives

Learning for Life has really made a big difference to our learners' lives, so much so that a young man who started at the college has made fantastic progress in the 4-years he has studied here.

Starting at the college, with a history of bad attendance – due to illness, Christopher Adams had a great task ahead of him to catch up with a lot of his learning. Showing from the start a sociable nature, Christopher soon settled into college life and became so dedicated and involved in his studies. In the first two years, he showed an incredible willingness to succeed, which was nurtured by his tutor and the learning support assistants assigned to work with him.

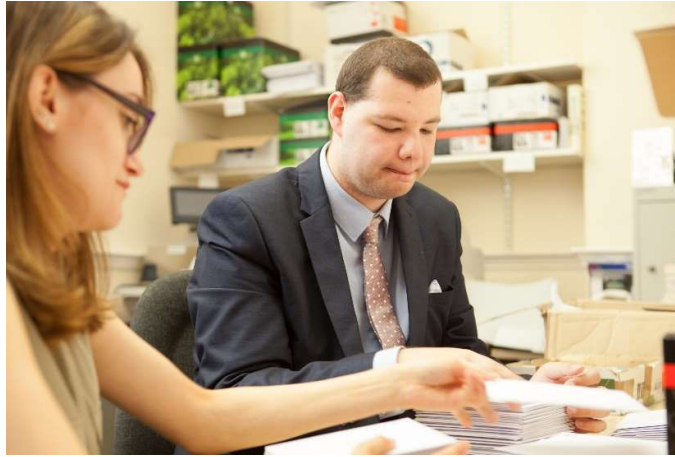
Very soon, Christopher showed himself to be on quite a high level of capability and independence and this was encouraged in the form of staff giving Christopher more high-profile jobs and allowing him to flourish in new roles, such as Makaton Learner Representative. Christopher was not only inspired to do well; he also became a great inspiration to his fellow learners, who aspired to his shining role model.

As a charity, we are keen to promote independence and job opportunities for learners and we contacted several companies in the hope of obtaining work placements for learners who were ready for the extra challenge.

Marie Matthewson, Principal and Head of Services, said, "Work experience helps with self-esteem, motivation, communication – the whole learner's demeanour. Christopher has achieved so much, in such a short time, including how to travel independently. Seeing how well he has done, has made his peers want to follow in his footsteps

In October 2018, Charles Renwick, divisional director at Lycetts, got in touch with us –after hearing about Learning for Life. They were keen to become involved in supporting one of our learners on a work placement, as part of their charity community work. Christopher was the ideal candidate.

One of Lycetts' charity's biggest challenges is providing work experience for learners, so they made a commitment to take Christopher, for a one-day-a-week work placement for that academic year. Christopher worked with the team at Lycetts for a few hours every Friday, accompanied by one of our educational learning support assistants.



Christopher doing a mail merge with Lycetts worker, Eve.

From the outset, Christopher enjoyed his experience and was delighted to have 'been at work'. His whole attitude and confidence became much more noticeable due to his new social standing and status. Additionally, this has resulted in an excellent attendance record!

Christopher's success at Lycetts was not only noticeable to his support assistant, as Charles Renwick later said in an article in their company magazine, "Christopher thrived in his general administration role, so much so that he has just embarked on a further year's placement to continue his studies. It has been an overwhelmingly positive and mutually rewarding experience, helping Christopher gain more independence and cultivating a more diverse, inclusive and empathetic environment to the office. We have first-hand experience of how beneficial these placements are, which is why we are encouraging companies in the region to consider Learning for Life on potential partnerships".



Christopher at work in Lycett's post-room

Charles went on to say about the hope he had that businesses who want to make a real difference can overcome the barriers that young disabled people so often face when trying to access the world of employment.

Marie Matthewson, said, "Our staff, directors, partners and learners have made such a lot of progress in enabling our young people to experience real life work experiences, which have proved to be of mutual benefit to ourselves and to the companies. With more funding and support our organisation can continue to help our learners' lives to be enhanced and extended, so that they can feel that are making a positive contribution to the community, both now and in the future".



Christopher with a gift from Lycetts. He is also seen with his key support worker on the banner promoting Education and Work Experience.

FOOTNOTE:

Much of this information was featured in Consett magazine, Lycetts Newsletter, 2019 and local press (see below).

Consett Pool



Some entertaining as well as the Consett Pool League at the Bath & Home Hotel as a social activity will provide a great time for all.

The well known Consett Club is a pleasure for all. The Pool League is a social activity for all. The Pool League is a social activity for all.

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Two Little Mice



My name is Margaret Burt and I am a local resident and author promoting my new book 'Two Little Mice'.

I have recently finished a manuscript for my new book 'Two Little Mice'.

The story is about a girl who finds two mice in her garden.

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Consett Bridge Club



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Learning for Life



Learning for Life is a specialist provider of education and day care for adults with high support needs, special educational needs or disabilities and has been operational on No.1 Industrial Park for a number of years.

Recently the college has been providing employment opportunities for its learners to enrich their experiences through the management of the Oasis For Life Café, based in Citizens House in Consett.

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As well as providing productive motivational experiences for its learners, the programme delivers an excellent service for customers.

I was delighted to visit the Café recently with my daughter and granddaughter and was greatly impressed with the warm welcome given to us on arrival.

There are a wide range of delicious light meals on the menu all at very reasonable prices and along with the service the ambience was excellent. I can highly recommend it and encourage visitors to support this inspirational programme.

As well as working in the popular Café, one learner Christopher Adams is gaining valuable experience on work placement at Lycetts Insurance Brokers.

Learning for Life is a registered charity and North East Specialist provider of services based in Consett, Co Durham. They pride themselves in providing a stimulating and effective learning environment for all young people, including those experiencing more profound and multiple learning and physical difficulties.

Staff at Learning for Life are highly trained, qualified and committed to their role, working together to achieve the best possible outcomes for learners. Learning For Life is place where all learners are valued and treated equally. www.learningforlife.org.uk



Charles Tennant, Director, Newcastle

Learning for Life – a mutually rewarding endeavour

Over the years we have supported many highly worthy charities and a wide range of good causes. As a wholly owned subsidiary of the Ecclesiastical Insurance Group (EIG), which is in turn owned by the Alchurches Trust, it is a key part of our corporate remit that all available profits are donated to a variety of charitable causes under the auspices of the latter organisation. Indeed, it is EIG's aim to give a total of £100 million to charity over a five year period ending in 2020, a target EIG is on track to achieve.

While this remains a driving force for our business, we are mindful that charity can be supported in a number of different ways. It is for this reason that we have chosen to enter into a partnership with a small, but brilliant charity which aims to make the lives of those young people that they support better and more meaningful. Equally, it is only fitting, given our founder, Michael Lycett, was awarded a CBE for amongst other things his services to charity, that such a cause should be supported in this manner.

Based in Consett, County Durham, Learning for Life is a specialist provider of education and care for adults from the age of 16 upwards with high support needs, special educational needs or disabilities. The charity provides care and learning through activities both on site and in the community, with learners participating in practical skills such as shopping, food preparation and home management skills.

One of their biggest challenges is securing work experience opportunities for their students so it was an easy decision for us to make a commitment to take one such student, Christopher Adams, for a work placement for the current academic year. Christopher works alongside our staff in Newcastle for a half day, one day a week, accompanied by a Learning for Life teacher, Michael Quinlan-Nixon.

Christopher is quite a character! He comes from Sunderland, is 20 years of age and has his likes as Sunderland FC, chess, wrestling and Harry Potter, while his dislikes include writing (although he understands he has to do it) and his strengths are doing the alphabet and making tea. The latter skill has been greatly appreciated by all our staff in Milburn House!



Our work placement student Christopher Adams, second left, with Michael Quinlan-Nixon pictured with Charles Tennant and Ian Wilson - Michael Lycett would have approved!

Shortly after Christopher started Marie Matthews, the principal at Learning for Life, reported back that, "Christopher really enjoyed the experience and was delighted to have been to 'work'. Thank you so much for making this experience so positive!" While it is greatly rewarding for us that this experience of work has been so positive for Christopher, equally it has been a positive experience for all our staff in Newcastle, who have enjoyed the opportunity to get to know

Christopher and Michael over the last few months. They have been a great addition to the office.

From the perspective of Learning for Life the benefits of this placement for Christopher are that he will grow in confidence, learn new skills, be proud of his achievements, have job satisfaction and experience something in his development that will truly make a difference.

While we can't pay Christopher directly, we will be making a donation at the end of

the year in line with the amount he would have earned and this will go to Learning for Life. Several of the Lycetts team support this charity through various fund raising initiatives, we even had a whip round to buy Christopher a suit, shirts and shoes to wear to work, and one member of staff, Helen Greenacre, will climb Mount Kilimanjaro in July to raise funds for them.

Christopher has become part of our team in Newcastle, as much as it may be rewarding for him, it is for us, and we hope that this will be the first of many such placements in the future.