Leeds Health and Care Academy

BECKIE PERKIN

APPRENTICESHIP ASSESSOR AT LEEDS CITY COLLEGE

Beckie Perkin, Apprenticeship Assessor at Leeds City College, shares her experience of the Connecting Communities with Health and Care Careers project.

Beckie delivers the Customer Service Level 1 qualification and supports learners to develop skills and behaviours ready for a role in health and care, as well as motivating participants to develop the knowledge to progress further in their chosen career.

"The Connecting Communities project gives people who would not normally have the opportunity to, the chance to build a career within the health and care sector.

The benefits of participants' involvement in this project have resulted in vast improvements to the learner's confidence and self-esteem. I have seen how quickly shyness can disappear and confidence build, so that they are able to contribute positively to group discussions, and support others in the group who may be struggling.

I have seen the biggest success in relation to this project in learners who have made a major change in their career. Either due to the pandemic forcing a change of job role, or due to their own desire to try something different, these learners have moved away from their previous roles and are now building very successful administrative careers within health and care. One particular learner was working as a waiter prior to joining the Connecting Communities project; he is now approaching the end of his apprenticeship and has been offered a permanent role as an IT Support Officer within health and care.

The Connecting Communities project is giving opportunities to people who feel that they had very little options in terms of their career progression, whether this is due to their lack of previous experience, their age, their family commitments or their nationality. I have worked to support a number of learners who have English as a second language and they are progressing well in their job roles alongside additional support from the Leeds City College Apprenticeship Coaches and our Functional Skills Tutor. By continuing to offer these opportunities, we are creating a diverse workforce which I think is particularly vital in health and care, as it is important for patients who are treated in Leeds to see themselves represented in the staff they meet.

It is the success of those people that have made career changes that has surprised and pleased me most within this project. One learner has described the experience as 'life changing.' He is in his 50s and had been working in retail for many years, but felt that he could offer more. He is now working in the fast-track team for Oncology referrals and the work that he does each day really does change the lives of patients. That for me is the greatest thing about this project; we are tapping into the potential of a previously unknown workforce and supporting them, not just to get a job but to develop a career."

To **find out more** about the Connecting Communities with Health and Care Careers programme **please scan the QR Code**