

Appendix – MAES case studies

Selina - Level 2 English Functional Skills

I had a baby during my last year at high school and my exam results suffered because of this. I had worked as a chambermaid, postal officer and a waitress. I wasn't working and was living in temporary accommodation and felt that it was the right time to improve my English skills. The lessons were challenging but the teacher inspired us by telling us about her own experiences of education and this made us want to learn.

We helped each other, we laughed a lot and this broke down barriers. I saw the Information Advice and Guidance adviser and we discussed my options and next steps.

I'm now doing an Open University course - Access to Law and the things we learnt in class are really helping me. I'm hungry to learn and am excited by the prospect of being a barrister. Two years ago I never thought it would be possible. Find the time to invest in yourself. Once your kids have grown up you need to have another path. Going into adult education opens that path for you.

David - Boost Your Skills

David had mainly worked in sales in the past and wanted to build on that and get some new skills to give himself better opportunities for his next career move. He was really excited by the Boost your Skills course with Manchester Adult Education.

'It really has boosted my skills, especially how I communicate. I now understand much better how to look for jobs, and I can spot what employers are looking for – matching what I offer to what they need. I've also learnt really good ways to do well in interviews, like the STAR method of answering questions.

The course has opened his eyes to new career ideas. On the last day of the course he went to a jobs fair where several employers were interested in him. He's now got an interview lined up at Chill Factore.

Amelia - Families Connect (Family Learning course)

Amelia is a single parent. She worked until she had children and her youngest is starting primary school. She joined the course to gain new skills and meet people. She said, "I felt like the tutor was understanding that my confidence and self-esteem was low, and she made sure to include me in group conversations when I probably wouldn't have done so otherwise. It gave me the chance to discuss what I wanted to do next with my life.

I realised I'm more capable than I thought. The skills I learnt on the course helped me to help teach my children and to bond with them too."

Amelia feels that the course improved her communication skills as well as her confidence and sense of direction - she's now decided she wants to go to

university. She said, "I have been very isolated for a long time and the course helped me become more comfortable in that sort of environment. Having to talk to strangers made me extremely anxious before I started the courses. I feel like we have a future now. I am happier now which in turn makes me a better parent."

Dan - STEPs course

Dan has made the giant step from shy student lacking in self-belief to confident employee welcoming guests at the bustling Premier Inn Manchester Central

STEP (Steps Toward Employment and Progression) is a two-year course for young people with special educational needs and provides a pathway to more independent living, voluntary work, further training or a paid job.

Dan attended two days a week at a MAES centre and one on his work placement, organised via our partnership with Pure innovations. He also undertook two days a week of activities centred on personal well being designed to encourage students towards a more fulfilling independent lifestyle. He improved his Maths and English and gained qualifications in Skills for Employment and Health and Safety.

Dan said, "When I started on the course I was very quiet and nervous, then I became more confident. With the help of everyone on the STEP course and also Pure Innovations I got a job. I would like to thank everyone for all their help. If it wasn't for them I wouldn't be the person I am today!"

Neil -Back on Track (BOT)

Neil came to Back on Track in January 2018. He suffered from depression and anxiety and was in recovery from addiction to cannabis. Neil was a single parent to six children, one of whom was disabled, and as a result of this he had not worked for about twenty years, so the thought of coming to BOT and being in such an environment after all these years was really quite daunting for him.

At this stage, his long term goal was work but he didn't really believe that this was going to happen for him. He had very low confidence and self-esteem and struggled with his basic skills. Neil started by enrolling on the Maths and English courses and also attended the wellbeing course. His confidence improved and he enrolled on the Catering and hospitality course and achieved a Level 2 qualification in Food safety

To build on his progress he secured a placement in Swan Kitchens at BOT and was a real asset in the team. He also volunteered at The Booth Centre. Neil's next step was to secure paid work. XPO Logistics who provide work placement opportunities to BOT learners, offered Neil a full time job as a warehouse operative. He started in January 2019, successfully completed his three month probationary period and now a full time permanent role. Back on Track continued to offer Neil and his employer in work support. Neil has now been given the opportunity to become a trainer and be responsible for training

new starters. As a result of securing work Neil is financially better off and is more in control of his money than when he was in receipt of benefits. This also means that his children are better off and he now feels like a 'proper role model' to his children. His experiences have all improved his mental health and his self-worth.