

Case Study: Jess' Journey – Unlocking potential



Jess had been part of the Yellow Submarine community for years; joining activity days, social clubs, the Reach Project, and residential holidays, but when it came to joining the traineeship, she was understandably anxious. Mum, having seen how Yellow Submarine had nurtured Jess to feel safe, secure, and valued, believed she would “thrive”. The challenge for Jess was not just about finding employment but increasing her confidence.

Mum describes Jess' journey through the traineeship as “nothing short of transformative. She began with supported tasks like stock-taking using visual aids and gradually progressed to more complex responsibilities, like taking orders on the till, serving customers, and clearing tables. These tasks were challenging due to her communication, mobility, and learning barriers, but with consistent support, she flourished.” Jess' confidence didn't just grow in the café, it blossomed in every area of her life. She became more comfortable interacting with unfamiliar people, and her independence at home and in social settings improved dramatically. Adult Programme Manager Rachael, remembers “Jess used to arrive to our social club and finding it hard to walk through the door, she would spend most of her time in the corner of the room or asking when Mum would be collecting her, but when she joined the Traineeship things changed and we gradually saw small signs of her confidence growing, starting with her coming into the club and taking off her coat, something we had not seen before. She now comes straight in and even helps new people to settle!”

Alongside her work experience in the Yellow Submarine Café, Jess gained essential life skills in classroom such as food hygiene, personal hygiene, first aid, workplace safety, and an understanding of different job opportunities. What stood out to Jessica's family was “the professionalism and high expectations of the programme”. Mum says “Jess was treated as an employee, held accountable for timekeeping, presentation, and commitment. This structure, combined with the kindness and support of the Yellow Submarine team, helped her rise to the challenge”.

One of Jessica's proudest achievements was helping new trainees settle in. She took joy in showing them the ropes, becoming a mentor and role model—something she never imagined she could be. “We've realised what Jessica is truly capable of with the right support and the right environment” her family shared.

Rachael describes seeing Jess on her first day in Millet's Farm kitchen and how she quickly transferred what she had learnt at Yellow Submarine. “As soon as we arrived Jess knew to wash her hands, tie her apron and smile at customers, she made herself immediately useful. The traineeship is not just about employment, it's about, growth, and unlocking potential. With the right support, young people like Jess can have meaningful lives where they can continue to progress”.



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