

EmployAbility2u

September 2021

Welcome to the EmployAbility2u Newsletter, providing useful information for trainee's and keeping you all connected during this time.



September is an exciting time! It is usually a time for starting something new, like a new term or a new work placement. We have packed this Newsletter with stories about our brave trainees who have set themselves a challenge and tried something new.

We hope you enjoy reading!



NEW BEGINNINGS

Edel came onto the Mencap Employment service a few months ago and recently started a new voluntary work placement in The Drop Inn Charity Shop in Armagh. Edel is really enjoying her placement and looks forward to going out to placement each week.

Edel's employer is full of praise and told us, "Edel is working well and is able to do the tasks at hand, Edel is always on time and very hardworking. It is a pleasure to have her here at The Drop Inn Charity Shop."



Kim returned to her voluntary work placement in Rainbow Community Childcare in March. She is really enjoying placement and is very happy to be back.

Supervisor Jade said, "Kim has settled back in to her placement very well, she has been interacting very well with all staff and children, including those who have recently joined Rainbow Community Childcare."

Kim has completed a Level 1 qualification in childcare and hopes to continue her childcare studies at her local College in the near future.

Best of luck Edel and Kim from everyone at Mencap.

If you need help reading this newsletter or help accessing the web pages please ask a member of your family or a friend, or get in touch with your Mencap Employment Officer for support.



MENCAP'S DISABILITY EQUALITY OFFICER JOANNE

Sometimes in life we have to be brave and learn new things if we are to develop our skills. Over the past year and a half, I have had to learn to work from home due to covid-19 guidelines.

As part of my job, I deliver Learning Disability Awareness Training to a wide range of employers and organisations. Not being able to deliver the training face-to-face meant I had to change the way I facilitated it.



My Manager asked me if I would try to deliver the training online. I was not sure if this was something which I could do, I had not even heard of Zoom or Microsoft Teams. I did know it was going to be a challenge but I wanted to give it a go. I have now delivered lots of training online and so far it has been going well.

My tips for trying new things:

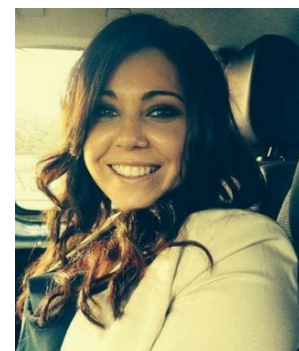
1. If you are worried about trying something new, talk it over with someone
2. Break down the job or skill bit by bit and make a list of the steps you need to do, to complete the task
3. Ask for help if you need it
4. The more you try, the better you become at what you are trying to do
5. The most important thing is to believe in yourself and not to give up



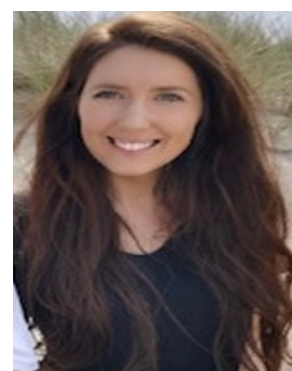
SAY HELLO TO NEW MENCAP STAFF

Hi everyone, my name is Lisa and I recently joined Mencap as an Employment Officer within the Bangor/Belfast team.

I am most looking forward to supporting my trainees in progressing and reaching their goals. I am looking forward to seeing their confidence grow and their skills and abilities develop.



Hello, my name is Rebecca and I joined Mencap in July as an Employment Officer. I am really honoured to have joined Mencap and am excited to be part of a great organisation. I have really enjoyed the role so far and getting to know the rest of the team. I have also really liked getting to know the trainees through workplace visits, home learning and walk & talks. I'm looking forward to the months ahead.



WELCOME MESSAGE FROM GRÁINNE CLOSE - NEW DIRECTOR OF MENCAP NI

Hello,

I am Gráinne Close, the new Director of Mencap NI. As the new Director I wanted to introduce myself and say hello.

I couldn't be more excited and honoured to join Mencap and get the opportunity to lead such a fantastic organisation here in Northern Ireland.



I have always aspired to work for Mencap, as they are known for putting service users' needs and their families at the centre of everything they do.

The last 18 months has been extremely difficult for everyone especially for people with a learning disability and their families. We know that for many individuals with a learning disability the pandemic posed a higher risk for COVID19 infections. Due to the closure and limited access to support services, reduced day care placements and closures of schools, some families really struggled and we know it's had a detrimental impact on people's mental health and wellbeing.

Our support services and teams in Northern Ireland have worked extremely hard to keep everyone safe in our accommodation and housing services during Covid, have engaged online and by telephone with our employment trainees, continued to support our young people and family support initiatives. Our Children's Centre has also been able to stay open and continue to provide our service to families and carers throughout COVID19 and we've just completed our summer programmes.

Mencap's new vision is to be the best place in the world for people with a learning disability to live happy and healthy lives. I am committed to this and look forward to being part of the team here in Northern Ireland who are going to make this happen.

If you have any concerns, queries or would just like to meet with me and suss me out, that's fine too.

You can contact me by email grainne.close@mencap.org.uk or telephone 028 9069 1351.

If you would like to, please share my welcome message with any family members.

Kind regards

Gráinne Close

Director Mencap NI

I have been working for Tesco for a number of years and I am continually developing my skills.

Even if you have a job, it is important to keep learning new skills that can help you do your job even better.

I work in the bakery department re-stocking the bread and cakes. In March, my Manager told me that we have a new system where we now have to count the bread by scanning it using a computer.

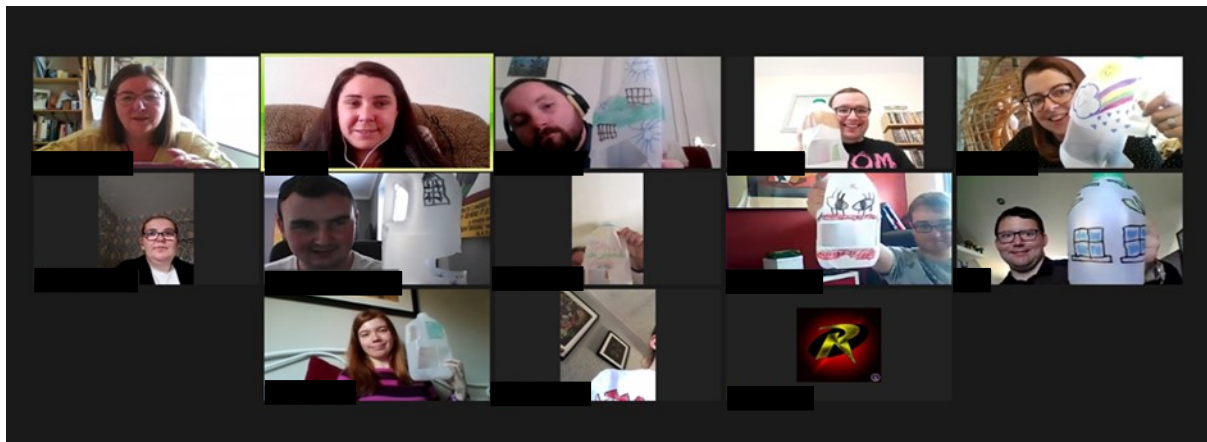


This did take me some time to learn, I got myself a book to write down my password to log in. By learning this new task, I now know how to the reduce the price of the bread.

So you can say that I have now learnt two new things!



LEARNING DISABILITY WEEK



As part of Learning Disability Week this year, the Mencap NI Employment team in Belfast/Bangor made some brilliant bird feeders with trainees. The bird feeders were created in a zoom session as part of the week. This year, Learning Disability Week highlighted all of the fantastic creative talent in the learning disability community.

For many people with a learning disability and their families, getting creative has been a way to stay connected and positive through the challenges of the past year.

One trainee who attended the zoom session said, "It was a fun experience and something different, messy but fun, really enjoyable!"



CELEBRATING SUCCESS - WHAT MATTERS MOST



The Magherafelt Employment Team hosted a celebration event in June 2021 for trainees on the Mencap Employment service. Due to covid-19, the event this year was held via Zoom video call to reflect on the trainee's achievements and goals gained during a very challenging year.

Trainees had the opportunity to talk about something they were very proud of in the last year and had also chosen one of Mencap's new values and gave examples of the value. The trainees talked about their voluntary work placements and paid work. They also shared how they kept themselves busy during lockdown with their interesting hobbies, the various Job Clubs and home learning sessions that the Mencap team and guest speakers have hosted.

The other Employment Teams throughout Northern Ireland also hosted their own celebration events this summer. Pictured below are Lee, Jamie Lee and Conor, EmployAbility2 trainees from Derry/Londonderry explaining what matters most to them.

A massive well done to all the people we support and we wish everyone success in reaching their goals in the year ahead!



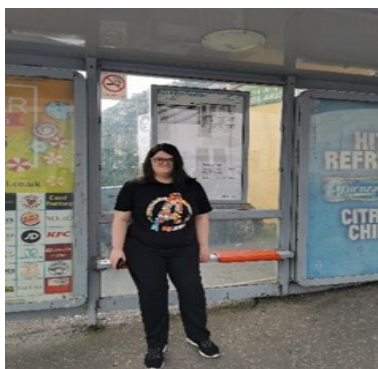


LEARNING NEW SKILLS - ROUTE TRAINING

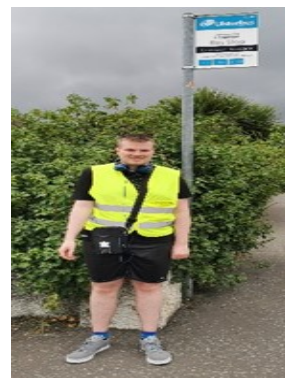
Two EmployAbility2 trainees have been supported over the summer months to complete route training from their local bus stops, to Downpatrick South Eastern Regional College (SERC), where they will both attend in September 2021.

Aimee, who is going in to her second year in SERC says, “I now have more independence and will be able to get the bus to college in September, instead of lifts from my mum like last year.”

Justin, who is starting his first year in SERC says, “I enjoyed looking at the bus timetables and doing the bus routes to get me ready to start my college course.”



**Enjoy your new
independence,
Aimee and Justin.**



NEW BUSINESS PROVIDES PLACEMENT OPPORTUNITIES

Three trainees supported on the EmployAbility2 project have recently started a voluntary work placement in a new vegan café that has opened in Ballynahinch called Harry's Place CIC.

Joey, Chloe and Michelle are all thoroughly enjoying their placements here and are being given great opportunities to develop a range of skills within a busy café environment, from 'Front of House' to helping in the kitchen.

Harry's Place Co-Manager, David said “We are thrilled to have Joey, Chloe & Michelle on board. They bring so much life and enthusiasm to Harry's Place. Harry's Place wouldn't be the same without our fantastic trainees!”



Mencap's EmployAbility2 project is part funded through the Northern Ireland European Social Fund Programme 2014 – 2020 and the Department for the Economy.

This project is also funded by the Department for Communities, all 5 Health & Social Care Trusts in NI and the North West & South Eastern Regional Colleges.



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