

Employability in Scotland



Case Study

Station House Media Unit (SMHU) Aaron – From Early Interventions to Positive Transitions and Beyond

BACKGROUND

Station House Media Unit (SHMU) is a dynamic Community Media Unit that supports residents in the seven regeneration areas of Aberdeen in radio and video production, traditional and on-line publications, music production and digital access.

shmuTRAIN is the employability & skills development strand of SHMU which supports young people across the city of Aberdeen to move on to education, employment or training, using community and digital media to increase engagement and motivation, and to develop core skills. shmuTRAIN Early Interventions programme target and engage young people (14 – 16) who exhibit an increased risk of not progressing on to further/higher education, training or employment after leaving school. Currently working in 4 local academies, the programme offers Summer & Winter Leavers programmes which use an innovative blend of community & digital media and direct employability support in order to support participants into employment, education or training. shmuTRAIN Positive Transitions programme offers a 12-week training course for those aged 16-19 who are not in education, employment or training. This programme encompasses a range of digital media modules which have been developed by SHMU, these modules are used not only to engage young people in a dynamic and different way but also to build employability skills such as communication, research, team work and confidence building. The employability module follows the SQA in Employability qualification, with evidence coming from both digital media and employability modules. Trainees completing the course will achieve their SQA.



SHMU first started working with Aaron at the beginning of 2012 on their Early Interventions programme in Torry Academy. Aaron took part in the Olympic Games Film project and helped to produce a film about Truce. His attendance was sporadic at school however and his input into the film was not great. Aaron left school in the summer of 2012 and did not progress onto a positive destination. In December 2012 shmuTRAIN sent a Facebook 'friend' request to Aaron. (After the summer SDS release details of their school leavers report to track leaver's destinations. SHMU then update their records and try to contact any young people without a positive destination. At this point we contacted Aaron (along with a few others) through Facebook)

SHMU invited Aaron to join their Positive Transitions course starting in January 2013. Aaron does not struggle with lack of confidence and easily made friends on the course, his personality helped to bring the group together quickly. He did have some problems with attendance – a pattern emerged showing that he happily attended the media modules but often had excuses for not attending the employability sessions. Aaron was taken aside and had a really good chat about what he wanted to achieve in life and how he could do that. He agreed that he needed to make some changes. Much of the issue was with the early starts for the Employability sessions, they start at 9.30am to try to help young people to get into a routine. Aaron struggled to get into a routine but once he did he was great. Aaron was always very enthusiastic; however, his attentions flitted from one career to the next with no real goal. They worked on building an action plan to get him where he wanted to go, with back up plans. He wanted to become a fire fighter but was not yet old enough to apply. He decided he would spend the time between now and being old enough just working to make himself some money to hopefully get driving lessons.

While this course was running the shmuTRAIN co-ordinator, Brian Webb, attended a local Rotary Club meeting to deliver a presentation on the employability work done at SHMU and to discuss the merits of young people and the benefits of employing them. At the end of the presentation Brian was approached by an employer, Charlie, who owned his own drain cleaning business. Charlie says; "I met Brian when he was a speaker at the Rotary Club of Dyce where the training systems and philosophy of SHMU was explained. It was left open that if and when a vacancy arose I would contact Brian to see if they could help. That moment was not far away so I made the call!! Having advertised in the local press, through the job centre and local schools the applicants from that area proved unsuitable."

SHMU approached two trainees who they thought would be suitable; Aaron was one of them. Aaron was approached about the job role and he was very interested, and it was explained to him the importance of taking this opportunity seriously.

Not only was this a great opportunity for him but SHMU as an organisation wanted to prove to Charlie that young people were worth investing in.

Charlie described his reasons for choosing Aaron and how he is getting along in work; "Aaron turned up for interview and was well presented, forthright and confident, he wanted the job! He wanted a chance in life and his personality and interests suited our style of company. We discussed the company aims and my desire for some loyalty in return for hopefully nurturing a young lad into a worthwhile career.

Aaron started on the 1st July and has progressed well, learning new skills, understanding health and safety and has worked hard. His three month probationary period is coming to an end and he is where we would expect a bright young lad to be.

For the company to thrive we need to look to the future. If Aaron continues to show initiative and interest then he will continue to learn core skills to be able ultimately to run a CCTV rig. Norman, my ops manager who has been with me for 26 years, started working with me at the age of 18 learning everything about drain maintenance and coordinating site operations safely and for the last 15 years I have been looking for the next Norman, I hope I have found him"

shmuTRAIN supported Aaron on and off for almost 3 years; through school, into Positive Transitions and for the few weeks after the course ended. Aaron did not fully engage with them at the start through Early Interventions but a relationship was started meaning that when he was approached after he left school he was keen to find out more.

If you would like further information about this Project please contact:

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The views expressed in case study are those of the participants and are not necessarily shared by their employers or the Scottish Government

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