

CASE STUDY - Clara



I started working with Social Enterprise Kent in early 2017. I am an adult with high-functioning Autism and have suffered for over 10 years with multiple anxiety disorders and depression. At the time of being referred, I was unemployed (having never been employed) and on JSA.

I lived with my mother and rarely left the house. I don't drive, and I was afraid to use public transport by myself.

I desperately wanted that “normal” aspect of life where I had a workplace and a network and a purpose, but at the same time was held back by severe social anxiety, fatigue from my anxiety medication, and lack of experience and communication difficulties brought about by Autism.

The structure of the project really appealed to me. It was extremely supportive but not suffocating. We made a set of goals to achieve by the next meeting, which we agreed on for a fortnight's time. This wasn't high pressure and that we'd absolutely go at my own pace. The project was there to support me, not throw me in the arena. I felt really happy and optimistic after our first meeting.



Employability



We met regularly every fortnight and continued to work through some goals, including practicing telephone skills, interview skills, and doing new things. Through SEK, I was also able to obtain an Entry Level 3 in Personal Development, which I found to be absolutely enlightening and invaluable to improving my inner and outer confidence.

In April, I was offered an interview with Saga in Folkestone. I was pretty ecstatic, as Folkestone was ideally where my partner and I would like to move but also terrified as this would be my first interview.

The support for this was outstanding: we worked over the preceding weeks to make sure I had as much support with my interview skills as possible and my worker arranged a meeting before my official interview with one of the panel so that we could chat a bit beforehand. My worker also came to Folkestone on the day of the interview for moral support. I found this extremely touching and it really helped me make the most of that day.

Whilst I didn't get the position, I felt that the interview went extremely well, and I received a lot of good feedback. I would absolutely attribute a lot of the confidence and skills I utilised that day to working with SEK and the support I received.

My life has completely turned around thanks to the never-ending support. I have a new home with my partner, a new job as a Business Administration Apprentice within an NHS

clinic and I have truly never been happier in my life.

