GIRFEC story of impact for an individual child or young person

Getting it right for Jamie

Young Person's Profile

Jamie was a 16-year-old Neurodiverse young person that had been diagnosed with Autism Spectrum and ADHD, he suffered severe anxiety, panic attacks and couldn't be in crowded places due to negative experiences in classroom settings. Jamie lived with his grandparents but felt very isolated and lonely.

Starting Point

Jamie found out about CVO East Ayrshire's employability service through a previous trainee that was supported into work though WG13 (CVO East Ayrshires Social Enterprise café and events venue) A referral was made via his work coach at the local job centre. A strengths-based assessment was completed with Jamie, our employability manager and his kinship carer. Jamie expressed a strong interest in visual design, print work, and hands-on tasks. Jamie's placement at Grafix was chosen because it matched his interests and offered a real-world work environment that could build skills and confidence while still being in a quieter environment. The placement was planned to meet Jamie's needs for structure, sensory supports, and clear communication. Regular meetings took place between Grafix staff, support staff, and Jamie's family.

From the start a shared communication plan was agreed, including, preferred methods of communication (visual schedules, text messages, face to face check-ins) and how to support Jamie if overwhelmed. Jamie felt involved in decisions about his placement and felt supported by his family and the Grafix team.

The placement began with a gradual introduction:

- 1 hour on the first day
- increasing to 4 hours over two weeks
- Sensory and transition supports were provided early to prevent overwhelm.

After 3 months, Jamie was attending his GRAFIX placement two full days.

GIRFEC Principles in Action

Jamie adjusted to the studio environment more quickly as it was quiet and he was less likely to withdraw or become distressed. The team focused on improving wellbeing with wellbeing Supports. Jamie was supported to manage sensory needs (e.g., headphones, quiet workspace, background mindfulness music). Staff used clear, calm language and visual prompts. Jamie was encouraged to take regular breaks and self-regulate. By doing this Jamie reported feeling “safer” and “more in control” and his anxiety reduced over the placement.

Turning Points

The GRAFIX Team respected Jamies views, wishes and feelings by Listening to Jamie and asking him what he liked/disliked about tasks and what support helped them. he was given choices in learning tasks such as design, machine work and finishing. Jamie felt respected and able to express preferences and developed more confidence in speaking up because the team were inclusive, the studio adapted tasks and expectations to Jamie’s strengths and needs, and they provided alternative ways to communicate or demonstrate skills. Jamie was included as part of the team, not treated as “different” and he developed a sense of belonging.

During the six-month period, the GRAFIX team took a holistic approach to learning with employability skills (timekeeping, teamwork, task completion), social skills (working with colleagues). emotional wellbeing (managing stress) and independence (travel to the studio, managing workload. Jamie’s overall confidence improved, not just his job skills.

Our employability manager supported Jamie to apply for part-time jobs, and he was successful in an interview with a local supermarket and has now been in post for 8 months but continues volunteering at Grafix to maintain his wellbeing.

In his own words:

“I can’t believe I’ve been offered a paid job but there is no way I’m leaving my volunteering job, GRAFIX feels more like my family and a SafePlace where I finally belong”

Jamies kinship carers said:

“Jamie is like a totally different boy, we cannot thank you enough for everything you have done, you have given us our boy back”

Today

Jamie is thriving, he successfully secured a role at a local supermarket and has now been in post for eight months and has a new network of friends. The structure and responsibility of paid work have helped him develop new skills, manage his time, and gain a sense of independence.

Alongside his job, Jamie continues to volunteer at Grafix, which provides a supportive space where he can pursue his interests, maintain his wellbeing and be a positive role model for other young trainees facing similar barriers. This combination of work and volunteering has created a healthy balance in his life, allowing him to grow both professionally and personally.

Jamie is noticeably more confident than when he first started his journey. He engages with others more easily, takes pride in his achievements, and demonstrates resilience when facing challenges. His progress highlights the positive impact of consistent support, flexible opportunities, and environments that nurture both skills and wellbeing.

Reflections

What worked well for Jamie:

- Jamie successfully secured paid employment at a local supermarket, which demonstrates growing independence and confidence.
- Continuing to volunteer at Grafix has provided a supportive, safe space for him to maintain his wellbeing, offering a balance between work responsibilities and personal development.
- The combination of employment and volunteering has reinforced his sense of purpose, skill-building, and social engagement.

Lessons learned:

- It was essential to provide a flexible approach that allowed Jamie to combine paid work with voluntary activities can support wellbeing and sustained engagement.
- A positive impact was the collaboration between Jamie's family and other services (employability managers, volunteering leads, and support services) was key to a smooth transition into employment and continued personal development.
- Supervisors that encourage the need for wrap around support and recognised the value of voluntary work alongside employment to enhance outcomes for young people.

Getting it Right for Every Child" (GIRFEC) supported this development by:

- GIRFEC principles ensured that Jamie's holistic needs, including emotional wellbeing, confidence and skills development, were considered alongside his employment goals.
- The staff and employability manager provided consistent guidance and support, enabling Jamie to navigate the transition into work while maintaining his wellbeing.

Advice for other members of the workforce or families:

- Encourage young people to balance paid work with activities that support their wellbeing; this can prevent burnout and maintain confidence.
- Recognise and value voluntary work as a meaningful contribution to development, not just a stepping stone to employment.
- Maintain clear consistent communication, regular check-ins and celebrate achievements, however small, to reinforce self-esteem and motivation.