

Leicester to Work

Ashley Cooper Aged 31

Ashely had been working as a shop fitter when his contract ended. In his own time he had gained a brick laying qualification but was unable to gain work because of his lack of experience.

After being out of work for a month he was referred to the Leicester to Work scheme by the Job Centre Plus. Initially Ashley spent eight weeks at college gaining certificates in food safety, first aid, CSCS card as well as a recap of health and safety courses that Ashley had previously completed. Ashely said there was team building and support for and from other applicants on the course and it helped build his confidence. At the end of the course applicants get the opportunity to complete two day's work experience with Leicester City Council in the Neighbourhood Improvement Team then attend an interview for a six month contract in the role of Neighbourhood Improvement Operative. Ashley worked hard on the work experience and was successful in his interview so secured a position for himself.

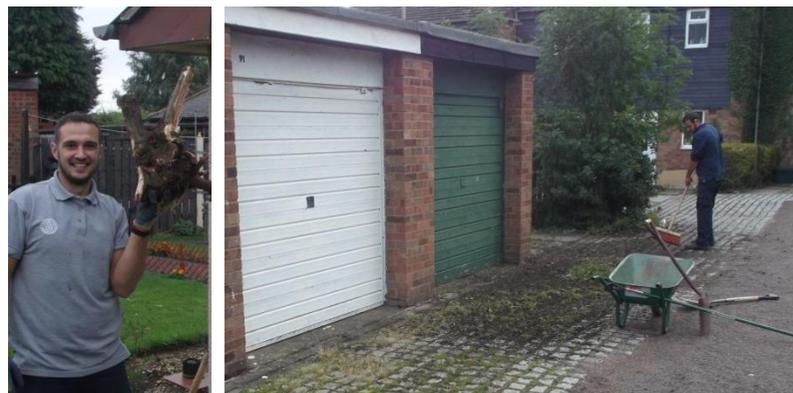
There Ashley carried out work clearing communal areas, completed small projects like creating a communal seating area and worked with various sections in the council such as the voids team clearing properties, the Sitex team securing properties and the handyman service sand walling at Victoria Park as well as instilling a good work ethic, building confidence and self-esteem and even improving on social skills while dealing with colleagues, supervisors and customers.



Before the six month contract finishes the Supervisors make efforts to secure permanent work for their operatives taking into consideration their individual skills and abilities. As Ashley had previously put himself through a brick laying qualification and had proved his ability to carry out the work he was put forward for a permanent position with Skillstone which would involve him being trained up to become a Stonemason. Ashley was successful and has now been working with them for three months.



“I would not have gained the position with Skillstone without Ian (Supervisor), he found out about the job and it was through him that I gained an interview and a week’s trial which led to me getting a permanent job. I love this job, I travel, I learn new things, I work with a brilliant team, and my life has changed for the better because of the Leicester to Work scheme. My advice to anyone who gets the chance to go on the Leicester to Work scheme is take it, it’s a once in a lifetime opportunity, put your all in to it, be keen, be willing and you will gain from it. It is a fantastic scheme”



David Barratt
Aged 22

David had been carrying out temporary work but he was struggling to find anything permanent resulting in him being in and out of work on a regular basis. After another period of unemployment David was referred to the Leicester to Work scheme by the Job Centre Plus, previous to this David was not aware of the scheme. David attended college for eight weeks and gained qualifications in Health & Safety, First Aid, Food Safety, Customer Services and CSCS card. Upon completing the college course David had the opportunity to complete two days' work experience with the Neighbourhood Improvement Team. This resulted in David being offered an interview for a six month contract as a Neighbourhood Improvement Operative for which he was successful along with nine other applicants.

David carried out work clearing overgrown communal areas, spent several weeks covering a care taker role and was part of the first team that carried out cleaning of UPVC cladding on houses. With a new found confidence David started looking for new jobs several weeks before his 6 month contract was due to end and gained an interview with Eagle Plastics who offered him an immediate permanent job of Lead Driver. David has now worked there for 6 weeks and is delighted with his new role, they are a company who like to help their employees progress their careers so continue to provide training and David has already passed his Reach Truck licence since starting there.

“So much has happened in the last year and there are so many people to thank in helping me get where I am today. College was great and the qualifications I gained there helped me get the job with Eagle Plastics as they were very impressed with them, especially the ‘customer services’ certificate. The six month contract with the Neighbourhood Improvement Team was brilliant, I gained confidence I had lost when out of work, it gave me belief that I could do it, that I could achieve. I worked with a brilliant team and gained new friendships, I felt happy again. During my contract I had a period of personal difficulties that had the potential to change my life dramatically for the worse. My colleagues, supervisor and management team were extremely understanding and supportive and made it easier to deal with the situation. I’m now in a job I love and have recently become a Dad for the first time and everything is looking bright, so different to where I was a year ago. The Leicester to Work scheme is brilliant and I’m so pleased I had the opportunity to go on it”



Jake Hill
Aged 21

Jake was out of work and gaining just the odd day or two through agencies, this was mostly warehouse work. Jake spoke to the job centre about gaining a CSCS card as he wanted to work more outside and was told about the Leicester to Work scheme.

Jake attended college and gained his CSCS card as well as other qualifications including Health & Safety, Customer Services and First Aid certificate. Jake said his CV was not very good before attending college so being able to put all the qualifications on was great.

Jake attended work experience for two days and was successful with the interview so gained a six month contract as a Neighbourhood Improvement Operative. This role involved clearing communal areas, small projects such as creating communal seating areas and working with other teams such as voids clearing properties. Towards the end of the contract an interview was secured for Jake at All Weather Windows for which he was successful and started a permanent job there within a few weeks.

“When I joined the Neighbourhood Improvement Team the work was right up my street, it was physical, it was outside, it was busy, I didn’t want my contract to end. We had an excellent gaffer who instilled a good work ethic, supported us, got us working, got us interested in working, without Ian I would not be in permanent work now. This is a brilliant scheme and I would recommend it to anyone”



Christopher Maher
Aged 22

Christopher had completed a painting and decorating course at college but was struggling to find work. Through the job centre Christopher was referred to Leicester College for the 'Leicester to Work' scheme and then had opportunity to carry out two days work experience leading to a successful interview for a six month post of Neighbourhood Improvement Operative.

Christopher carried out work cutting down trees, clearing and tidying communal areas, creating patio areas and working with the Handy Man Service learning fencing skills. At the end of the contract Christopher gained a permanent job with Charnwood Fencing where he has now been for seven months.

"I didn't know what to expect from the whole scheme when I was referred but I enjoyed the college work, the teachers were great and I found I was making new friends. I really enjoyed doing the work experience so when I was taken on for the six month contract I was really pleased. Ian, Supervisor, was like a father figure, he looked after me, after all of us. I was able to improve my skills while being supported and I would not have got my current job without the experience I gained as a Neighbourhood Improvement Operative. What would I say about the 'Leicester to Work' scheme? – keep it going because it is a great scheme and it's getting people into work"



Joshua Hodsell

Aged 20

“I had been out of work for 18 months, before that I had done a little work as a picker packer. I went to college after being referred by the Job Centre, it gave me new skills and built up my confidence. It got me out the house and I found I was making new friends.

It was such a relief to be offered a 6-month contract with the Council, I didn't think I would get it. When I got the phone call my heart was beating so fast, it was so exciting to be offered the post.

I gained further knowledge (working methods, using tools, etc.). I also built up lots of confidence through working with a team and learning to talk to members of the public. My knowledge of the local area has also improved.

“I'm currently carrying out voluntary work in Beaumont Leys but I know that even though I have finished my contract if I need any help or advise with applying for jobs I can speak to the staff in the Neighbourhood Improvement Team and they will still support me”

Stephen Howell**Aged 29**

Stephen was working through agencies but when work dried up he had to sign on. Stephen was referred to Leicester College by the Job Centre where he gained various certificates but for Stephen the main incentive for completing the course was the potential opportunity of a job with Leicester City Council at the end.

Stephen was successful in gaining a 6-month contract although only stayed with the Neighbourhood Improvement team for 3 months due to gaining other work. Stephen has since moved to another role, which is permanent with TNT Fashion.

“I really enjoyed working with the Neighbourhood Improvement Team, it was good working outside and really satisfying to see the end results of the work we had done. If I had the chance again I would not have left early for the job I did as I think I would have gained more continuing with the Neighbourhood Improvement Team. The whole set up benefitted me so much, the certificates from the college, enjoying the job and actual work, team building, confidence building. This is a brilliant opportunity for anyone, if you get the chance to go on it then do so, I would do it again.”