

Wealden Works

Bridging the gap between education & work

It's been a while since our last newsletter, so we have plenty to report. With the continuation of social restrictions, we are pleased to say we have continued to deliver courses albeit in a different format.

We now offer delivery by zoom but also small group work and 1:1 meets. We have in fact found these new methods to be productive in outcomes. It provides a more intense personal working relationship with our young people and in some cases achieves a more comfortable environment for those young people who struggle in larger groups.

We continue to progress young people into employment even in these difficult times. We have seen young people gain employment in Hair and Beauty, Marketing, Retail, Housekeeping and Trade apprenticeships, the great news is the local jobs are still there, we just have to change the way in which we find them.

With Schools reopened in March we started straight back into the Heathfield School Mentoring programme where we have been working with 5 of their year ten students who feel that the path of employment when they leave school is a more realistic prospect than returning to further education. We want to provide them with the tools and skills to get the employment of their choice. We do enjoy working in the local school but this year we were saddened to all have to work with masks, we do like to see these smiley cheeky faces.

We are very proud of one of our previous participants, during his time with us he established he had an interest in local politics and during his time with us shadowed the chairman of ESCC on numerous days and in addition received a great deal of insight and guidance from our local supporter and



Councillor Bob Bowdler. He also set to work volunteering in Caroline Ansells campaign for the Eastbourne seat last year. With this taste of local politics, he left our course with a clear idea of where he saw himself. We were delighted to hear that he made selection for conservative candidate in Langney. Although he did not win the seat the uplift in conservative votes was tremendous taking him to the second candidate in number of votes for the area. David assures us that he will continue on this journey.

Thank you to our local councillor Bob Bowdler for championing him and setting him up with the opportunities.

CIO

Covid has pushed us to rethink the future of the project and allowed us the time to action some crucial changes. We are delighted to confirm that following the lengthy application to the Charities Commissioner to become a standalone charity, has now been approved. We thank the members of the Heathfield Partnership Trust for letting us trade under the charity umbrella of HPT. Whilst this setup was an advantage in the early years of Wealden Works, it has caused some confusion to funders when applying for our own grants. With the organisation established in 2017, after 4 years of growth and success, we are very proud to have our very own charitable status.

I Can Qualify (ICQ status)

We have applied for an accredited status for a centre of education. Although our project is successful in delivering outcomes, it has never been recognised as an accredited centre of learning. We saw a huge opportunity in the quieter months of lockdown to set the wheels in motion. This process required staff members to achieve qualifications in specific areas of education, these are assessor awards and internal quality assurance awards, all staff had already completed an award in teaching and education. With these qualifications now achieved our application is very nearly complete. Not only will future participants be seen as not falling out of education if they attend our project, we are also responsible for writing and assessing our own set of qualifications, each one brings in its own substantial revenue stream when completed. This is a huge steppingstone for Wealden Works.

Premises

With Wealden Works renting their premises from ESCC we have encountered problems with limited access due to multiple service users in the building and the regulations ESCC have had to put in place to ensure everyone is Covid Safe. We have been unable to have our usual group numbers and have

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limited days and hours we can attend the centre. We received some amazing news from Brian Bishop at the Tunstall Jubilee Foundation, we received information that they were looking to buy a premises with the sole use for Wealden Works. With this wonderful news we hit the property market and found a perfect property with all the key features. An offer has been placed and accepted and a change of use application is in the throws... watch this space.

DWP – Kickstart mentoring

We have been in continuous communication with WDC regarding Wealden Works working as mentors for the young people of Wealden enrolled on the kickstart programme. The delay is purely down to WDC being unable to secure a premises to locate the Youth Hub. This is now moving forward, and we should receive further updates shortly.

ESTAR - Partnership

We were approached by ESTAR some months ago with regard to partnering up to support young people in Wealden in Supported and Temporary accommodation. ESTAR had heard of the work we



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do and success we have at Wealden Works and felt that this very programme could be a benefit to those they are working with in supported and temporary accommodation. ESTAR have secured funding

specifically for these participants who would be placed and look to source the candidates and place them on a Wealden Works programme with a target start date of September.

WEBCHAT

We have initiated a new webchat link to our home page of our website, this is to make the initial contact something that is easy and in no way daunting, we hope this will be successful in introducing new participants.

Some Statistics since May 2020

33% have gone into an Apprenticeship

33% have gained employment

18% have moved out of area

8% have no outcome so far due to their mental wellbeing and personal issues

8% become pregnant so could not gain employment at that time.

67% suffered with their mental wellbeing especially during lockdown

18% had involvement with the Youth offending team.