



GetSkilled

Helping young people prepare for work

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I have got into a college that 12 months ago I couldn't get into. Thanks to **GetSkilled** I will be doing the course I want.

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GetSkilled, led by National Grid, is a UK initiative designed to support 16–20 year old NEET (Not in Education, Employment or Training) young people who find it hard to progress into work. The young people start their studies in a Business Learning Centre (BLC) housed within a University and one of the pilot projects is based at the University of Warwick.

Individually tailored and lasting up to a year the young people at Warwick are gaining work-related skills and going on to work experience placements that equip them for the world of work.

The Upper House is showing keen interest in **GetSkilled** with Lord Listowel, Baroness Young of Hornsey, OBE and Baroness Warwick of Undercliffe meeting the students who are based in the Ramphal Building at the University. During their visits they met and discussed the Programme with Pro-Vice Chancellors Professor Tim Jones and Professor Pam Thomas and Strategic Partnership Coordinator Dr Sam Hardy.



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I learnt how to behave at interviews and feel more confident.”

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It's great coming to the University. It's busy and fun and when you walk around everyone is friendly and it makes you want to work like everyone else.”

Case study

Charles did not thrive in 6th form and, coinciding with the passing of a close family member, was in a sad place at the beginning of 2014. Referred by a RightStep adviser he joined Get**Skilled** in March. Charles says, *“I dropped out of sixth form as it wasn't for me, I found out about Get**Skilled** and thought it would be a beneficial thing for me to be a part of, and I was right!”*

Initially his attendance at the Business Learning Centre BLC in University of Warwick was erratic, he was often unwell, failed to communicate and lacked motivation. An individual learning plan helped him focus and he progressed to attend a work placement for part of the week. Get**Skilled** puts a strong emphasis on students having the opportunity to experience a variety of roles and his first placement was in retail – working in his grandmother's fabric shop. This gave him not only work experience, but also allowed him to support a family member during a difficult time.

Two months later he was applying for a couple of jobs. Waiting for replies though can be frustrating and Charles's attendance and punctuality started to lapse. Get**Skilled**'s support and individually targeted plan addressing teamwork and resilience pulled him through. Charles says, *“... it's a friendly environment and very supportive towards success in whatever it is you want to do. It also helped me understand that hard work really does pay off in the end.”* He began attending the gym and helped other students who were struggling with their fitness. He also studied and passed his theory driving test.

Spurred on, Charles applied for a number of apprenticeships and before his first interview he visited the Rhead Group, one of National Grid's contractors supporting Get**Skilled** and their HR team put him through his interview paces. Next day he met with a rail signalling company and was offered an engineering apprenticeship. Charles started with them in August, passed his driving test, achieved 'star employee' and represented Get**Skilled** at a presentation. Eight months into his apprenticeship though Charles faced another hurdle when he received the shattering news that his employer had ceased trading. Turning to Get**Skilled** he was supported to find an alternative engineering opportunity and Charles commented, *“I am now looking forward to a great future! So all I have to say is thank you for the support and everything you've done for me to achieve this!”*



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It is important for the University of Warwick to be of benefit to the whole community – our widening participation and community focused activities target people of all ages and backgrounds. Warwick and National Grid's Get**Skilled** programme is already proving to be a great success and we look forward to continuing this work.”

Professor Tim Jones,
Pro-Vice-Chancellor
(Science, Engineering & Medicine)