

## GET READY, GET SET, GO



Roving Reporters Mary, Alex, Danny and Michael from Belfast TILII interview all the people involved in the Getting Started Programme

'Getting Started' was a project that came about through ARC NI members talking together about the difficulties in getting more people into work, to support people with learning disabilities. It was difficult to find new support staff to help people like us live our lives to our full potential, so ARC NI developed a programme to address this issue.

ARC NI's Training Coordinator, Louise, developed the training programme to introduce participants to the minimum standards of social care as required by the Northern Ireland Social Care Council (NISCC). Ingeus, who run the 'Steps for Success' Programme for the Department of Employment offered additional support with employability skills.

Stephen Hillis from Ingeus said "I was happy to be involved in the programme and feel it has been a positive experience for all the participants, including those who had not successfully gained employment. The confidence the participants have got from completing the course is fantastic".

Positive Futures, Croft Community and Praxis Care were all involved in the planning and setting up of the training programme, as well as providing employment opportunities they had for the successful candidates.

The Northern Ireland Social Care Council were also on board and allowed us to use 'A Question of Care', an online evaluation tool that provides real life scenarios for people who are new to social care to understand more about the role they could play. NISCC also took part in the partner collaboration meetings and attended each Getting Started class to explain the role of Northern Ireland Social Care Council.

The programme consisted of 12 Sessions running over an eight-week period, and included classroom based learning, guest speaker presentations, observational work visits, and an online exam. The participants all came through the Ingeus Steps for Success Programme, and had been unemployed for more than six months. The training took place over eight weeks,

and included units called 'Principles of Care', 'Safeguarding Adults at Risk of Harm', 'Supporting people with Learning Disabilities' and 'Encouraging Positive Behaviour'. The TILII Group also provided training on how people with a learning disability like to be supported, including discussion of human rights, respect, dignity, and alternative communication skills.

On successful completion of the programme participants had the opportunity to take part in an interview for support worker posts in the learning disability sector with three organisations: Positive Futures, Croft Community, and Praxis Care. Participants who were successful at interview were offered positions on receipt of Access NI Checks and references. The jobs were based in Belfast, Newtownards, and Bangor areas.

There have been 73 participants who took part in the training programme

## RESULTS

- 53 Participants successfully completed course
- 47 Participants attended for interview
- 19 Participants completed a successful interview and were offered employment
- 10 Participants who completed course but were unsuccessful at interview secured employment in care sector
- 7 Participants have secured employment in other industries



TILII Roving Reporter Alex Parkinson asked Louise how the programme went. Louise explained “The project was really successful and introduced a lot of new people to social care and the participant’s evaluations have all shown what a positive experience they had from attending the course”.

“The organisations, along with ARC NI have worked really hard on the programme, although it was felt by all, that work placements would have really helped to give the participants real experience of the job. This would have been difficult to facilitate as the organisations could not take on so many participants in a voluntary role and this is where an Apprenticeship Framework for Social Care would really have helped.”

Alex himself said “TILII really enjoyed taking part in the course, so we were really pleased to do a roving report on the training programme since we have met and trained all the participants. They were really nice people who worked hard to complete the training.”



Pauline White, a participant who is now working as a support worker with Positive Futures said, “Getting Started has changed my life and I cannot thank the project, organisations and the TILII group enough for helping me achieve this.

Robert Boyle another participant said, “This has been a fantastic experience and I want to make a career of working to support people with learning disabilities to lead fuller lives.

TILII members, Mary Coyle and Danny Quinn really enjoyed helping the ‘Getting Started’ participants. Mary said “I really enjoyed helping with the training and the interviews to help the participants get the jobs they deserved. Danny said “I was proud to have helped the participants learn how to be good support workers, and will miss the Getting Started training now it was finished”.

The Getting Started Programme is being used in a research project which is being undertaken by the Social Care Institute for Excellence. The Institute has been commissioned by the JPMorgan Chase Foundation to undertake a research study into workforce readiness, recruitment and progression in the social care sector. ARC NI agreed to take part to ensure the positives from the programme can be taken forward so that other training initiatives around the UK can help the unemployed train and secure a career in Social Care.

**ALEX, MARY, DANNY AND MICHAEL SAID, “THIS STORY IS VERY IMPORTANT TO US BECAUSE IT IS ABOUT SOMETHING WE HAVE BEEN INVOLVED IN FOR THE WHOLE YEAR. WE HOPE YOU ENJOY OUR REPORT.”**

