

Future Leaders

2025

In partnership with Lucy Group, The Future Leaders programme offers 18-25 year olds in Oxfordshire Youth's Young People's Supported Accommodation Service (YPSA) opportunities to gain essential skills in communication, leadership and teamwork. Working with Talent Development Partner, Matt Bryant, the team at Lucy Electric offered work experience to provide young people with an insight into a local business group in Oxfordshire and the range of employment opportunities available.

13

Young people took part in the Future Leaders Programme across the employability and leadership workshops and work experience.

41

hours of support was delivered across workshops and work experience.

8

Young people achieved a combined total of

47

AQA Unit Awards Scheme Certificates.

Due to some changes to the accommodation service, this year's programme faced some challenges. We sustained high-quality engagement for four young people, and offered an adapted, flexible programme tailored to individual's needs, with concentrated, bespoke support.

“ To someone thinking about it but isn't sure, I would just say do it. It's probably one of the best things I've done this year and it's really pushed me to try things, to talk to people, to learn, and also to just apply all of this to everyday life. ”

[Future Leaders Participant]

“ It gave me more confidence going into something else, now I have a rough idea of what to expect, how to handle the work, and the people. It's still daunting, but definitely less daunting now. ”

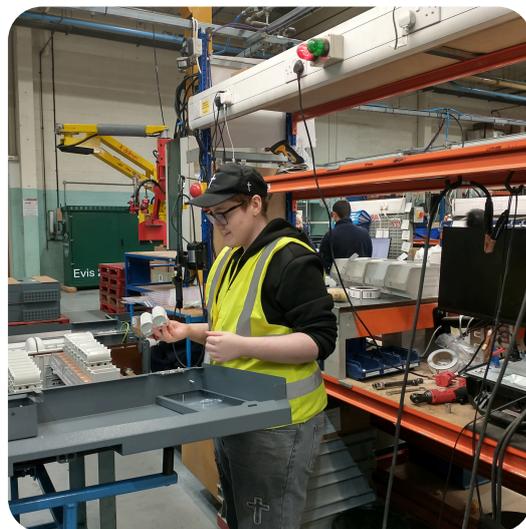
[Future Leaders Participant]

Before taking part...

we asked young people what they thought employers were looking for, and they said things like 'I didn't know what they were looking for' or 'years of experience'. We also asked young people what they thought it meant to be a leader. They said things like 'this needs many skills' and 'being considerate but firm'.

After taking part...

young people answered the question about employers with things like 'motivated and keen wanting to learn', 'passion, potential, good attitude to work', or 'a dependable and trustworthy employee that works well with his team'. They said that being a leader meant, 'confident and smart and considerate to others', 'make everyone feel comfortable and help everyone to get tasks done', being able to 'guide a team respectfully to gain the best environment possible'.



What did you gain?

- "A bit more to my cv and a better idea of what I can handle"
- "I got closer with the others and learned more things"
- "I have a better understanding of different areas as well as ideas for a career path in factory work"
- "Team building", "New experiences"
- "Learning new skills"
- "Confidence going into something else"
- "I enjoyed it more than I was expecting to, it got me out and mixing with others"

“There's not many times in life that you'll get an experience where you're going to be doing things, learning from it, meeting people and pushing yourself.”

[Future Leaders Participant]



Spotlight Story

Sophia joined the YPSA in 2024 after some difficulties at home reached a breaking point. After some problems at home, and having to move county, Sophia was able to join the service at 18, and a year later is in independent housing.

“After moving closer to some family in Oxfordshire, I was able to get referred into the YPSA. It wasn’t the best situation, I’d already had to move 3 times away from family and friends and I didn’t really have anywhere else to go. I really struggled with the moves, things were really inconsistent, and I felt like I was just overthinking all of it, and it was a huge adjustment for me. This was the easiest move though by far, I went from having no idea what was going on, to having someone support me through every step.

It took me a couple of months to settle in. It was really strange because I’m someone that always had to be independent and just do my own thing, but now I had support to go to different meetings and try new activities. I didn’t know anyone in Oxfordshire, but my support worker would help me get out and build a new routine and build a life around that.

My coach mentioned to me about the Future Leaders sessions, and I wasn’t really sure but I just thought ‘you know what, this gets me out, this gets me doing something and I’ll just try it.’ From the first session I really enjoyed it, I loved speaking to different people and learning how other people see things. I’m a pretty hands on person, so it was really cool talking to different people, and learning about them and their roles. In the different sessions we did different team work and problem solving activities which was fun, and fun to see how you can apply this stuff in different ways. Throughout we heard from lots of different people, so it was nice speaking and learning from everyone, and I was really proud of myself meeting everyone and making friends.

At the work experience, the best bit for me was using the machinery and actually making a part that would be used. I was joking that it would need to be double checked, but it was actually really cool to see my contribution build an actual part that would actually get used. Everyone was really patient and really just helped us figure it out together. It was good seeing how to apply the team skills and communication in those settings, like you can’t just leave it down to one person, we have to put our heads together and figure things out.

From the start, I really felt like the people in the YPSA made all the difference. The biggest thing for me was having the support and not being thrown into the deep end. I had people around me and I was so happy with my support worker, she always explained everything to me and gave me the support I needed. It’s the most positive experience I’ve had with support. And it’s honestly the people. Everyone was always there to help you make the best of something, to find some positivity, and be there for you with a massive smile.

I’m really focused on looking after myself and getting myself a routine and feeling settled in my new place, and then am excited to think about what’s next. I really feel like I’ve taken everything I’ve learned and applied it to my life, I’m able to set boundaries now and know when to focus on looking after myself. I’m thinking about maybe going back to college but I just know that I’ve gained so much confidence during this time and it’s made so much difference.”

Reflections and Learnings

Support to Access the Programme:

- Young people really valued the support from progression coaches and support workers from partner organisations like Aspire to attend and to maintain engagement. Contract changes to the YPSA during this period contributed to sustained engagement, however for one young person, it remained a 'constant during a time of change' and was their 'longest commitment'.
- This extended to practical support: transport and logistical support was essential for sustained attendance, motivation and positive outcomes for young people facing additional barriers.

Authenticity and Connection:

- Young people who took part really valued the connections, meeting new people and opportunity to try something new, particularly in understanding a workplace environment and 'knowing what to expect' in the future.
- Young people reported feeling anxious and wary, but curious when beginning the programme. Throughout, they valued the programme as something they are a part of, and 'not just watching', most evidenced in the creation of the prototype as something that is actually used in production.

Work Experience:

- Throughout the feedback and conversations with young people, the work experience is continually the highlight. It is reported as giving confidence for future planning and opportunities, and understanding how they would feel/manage work places.
- There is room to develop the programme to include some more personalised stories from professionals, 'day in the life' style content, increased work experience or job - shadowing days, which could be more explicitly connected to **how** to access specific areas of work.

Thank you!

Thank you to Lucy Group for investing in young people and being so determined to improve the reach of opportunities in Oxfordshire. Together we are proud to deliver programmes that provide opportunities for young people's futures.

Since the programme's first delivery in 2024, we have delivered:

- 93 hours of support to
- 31 unique young people
- with a total of 170 AQA Unit Award Scheme Certificates awarded.



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