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**CASE STUDY:** ONE LEARNER'S EXPERIENCE OF THE THREE TOWNS' MOTOR PROJECT – GEORGE

## CASE STUDY:

### ONE LEARNER'S EXPERIENCE OF THE THREE TOWNS' MOTOR PROJECT — GEORGE

The Three Towns' Motor Project (TTMP) is a youth project run by North Ayrshire Council's Community Learning and Development Youth Services and is located in the west coast town of Ardrossan. The Three Towns' Motor Project is based in a former council vehicle maintenance garage that has been converted into a learning space to teach young people a wide variety of motor-vehicle-related skills. Currently the facilities are used by eight of the mainstream secondary schools in North Ayrshire as part of their flexible curriculum. The project has also provided tuition for pupils from Seafield School (run by Quarriers for young people with social, emotional and behavioural difficulties), and Stanecastle School (for children who require additional support needs).

The project has worked with a variety of partners to deliver a Young Drivers' Programme to young people in the context of More Choices, More Chances. The programme teaches a range of skills which are related to driving and driver-related employment skills. The learners then progress onto the local Community Employment Initiative delivered by Community Enterprise in Scotland and Careers Scotland, whose role is to support them into further training or employment.

## George's story

I first heard about the Three Towns' Motor Project when I was at school. One of my teachers approached me and asked me if I would be interested in attending the project and learning about motor mechanics and road safety. Up to that point I had not done very well in school as I have difficulties in some areas of learning relating to reading and writing, and I would often get frustrated and angry when I felt under pressure to get things right. To take attention away from my difficulties with reading and writing I would often misbehave in the classroom trying to become the class clown. This got me into even more trouble with the teachers and I was often suspended from school.

When I had the opportunity to get away from the school and learn something a bit different that didn't put pressure on me to read and write, I jumped at the chance.

I attended the Three Towns' Motor Project for six months and gained two SQA qualifications in motor vehicles and learned all about the different parts of the driving test and how to use roads safely. The two SQA qualifications taught me how to use and look after tools correctly, how to work safely in a garage environment, and all the basics of how a car works. Even if I don't end up getting a job in a garage, the things I learned will be useful when I get a car or motor bike of my own and when I start driving on the roads. These are the only qualifications that I have gained.

## Leaving school

I did not have a very good time at school so I left as soon as I had the opportunity. I didn't really know what direction to go in so I started running around with other young people who were in the same situation as me. It didn't take long before I was getting into trouble. I could see that I was heading in the wrong direction but didn't know what to do about it.

When my mum and dad sat me down and told me that unless I sorted myself out I was going to have to move out, I didn't know what to do.

I knew I was upsetting my mum and dad but found it really hard to break away from the group I was running around with. I eventually thought that joining the Army would get me away from the area and I could leave all my troubles behind.



## Joining the Army

I went to join the Army and everything was going fine until I received my medical when I discovered that I had asthma. I always thought that I had been really fit as I played football and did boxing training, so it was a real shock to find out I had something wrong with me and couldn't get into the Army because of it. The news really set me back and all my plans of getting away from trouble fell to pieces. I really felt that I was in a rut with no way out.

## Staying away from trouble through voluntary work

I didn't want to continue in the direction I was going so I started looking for other things to do with my spare time. I had attended the Ardrossan Youth Centre when I was younger and always enjoyed taking part in the different groups and activities so I asked if I could get more involved. I started by helping in the maintenance and running of the building, which eventually led me to being part of the committee. I am now the treasurer where I deal with the accounts, help apply for funding and read out the financial reports at meetings. I never thought I would ever have anything to do with reading, writing or counting, but things change.

## Young Drivers' Programme at TTMP

In February 2009 I heard about another programme that was running at the Three Towns' Motor Project in Ardrossan. I went to the job centre and filled out an application for the Young Drivers' Programme and sent it in. I didn't really rate my chances of a place on the course as I knew around 120 people had applied and most would have better qualifications than I had. I was asked to go for an interview which I thought went OK but I still didn't rate my chances.

To my surprise I was told to come back for a second interview and eventually I gained a space on the course. It was the first time I really felt that I may have some hope for the future.

The course has provided me with a lot of skills and my SQA qualifications that I would never have had the opportunity to get anywhere else. I have worked on my confidence and job-seeking skills. I feel more confident to apply for jobs and know how to sell myself better when attending interviews. As part of the course I passed my forklift licence and have been told that I am doing really well on my driving lessons. A lot of the course is about developing the right attitude to become a safe driver, this covers where aggression comes from and how best to deal with it. I feel this has also helped me understand myself better and prepared me to deal with difficult situations when travelling and driving.

By getting my driving licence and learning to navigate I will be able to travel much further to find work so I have more job opportunities open to me. I also may be able to get work as a driver once I gain some more experience.

## Hopes for the future

I really feel as if I am beginning to get somewhere in life and do not want to go back to the way I was before. I want to be able to help my mum and dad and support them, rather than bring trouble to their door. My girlfriend has just had our baby so I need to face up to my responsibilities and provide for them as well. I want to get on in life, learn some new skills and get a decent job.

I didn't do well in school and really felt I was heading for the scrap heap, unemployment or prison.

My experiences of youth work at the Ardrossan Youth Centre, voluntary work with the Salvation Army, my course at the Three Towns' Motor Project, and gaining SQA qualifications, have all helped to prepare me for the future.

