

Clare's* Story

Clare left school at 16 and has had a few jobs. She worked at a kennels looking after dogs and cats for a couple of years, as well as at a cash and carry warehouse. Now she has two paid jobs and some voluntary work. Her first job is helping to support other people with learning disabilities who work at a local café.

This is a social enterprise run by people with learning disabilities, and Clare has been working there for three years. During this time Clare has successfully completed her NVQ (National Vocational Qualification) in Customer Care and has just started work on her NVQ in Retail.

Clare's other job is working for a local learning disabilities charity. She saw a job advertised in the window for an office assistant, one morning a week. The job was specifically for a person with a disability. Clare had never done this kind of work before but was interested, and applied for the job.

What Happened Next

She was invited for an interview and was interviewed by a group of trustees and a group of participants. She also had to complete some office tasks. Six people were interviewed for the job and Clare was chosen. She now works in the office every Tuesday morning.

Her role as office assistant includes answering the phone, photocopying, and using the computer. She says she doesn't need too much support; she sometimes takes longer than other people to learn things, and she sometimes finds that although she knows the word she wants to say, the word won't come out of her mouth. But she just needs showing how to do things, and if she isn't sure she will ask someone else.

Outcomes and Impact

Clare enjoys her job. She says it helps her to pay her bills and makes her feel useful. It has given her some experience in office work that she could use to get another job in the future and she has more confidence.

Clare's boss, Wendy, says that Clare has really grown in confidence since she has been doing this job. She says that she is now asking Clare to do more difficult tasks than when she started, and that Clare has learnt how to do many more office tasks. Once Wendy was away for three Tuesdays and Clare was able to work on her own on those days. Although Clare does not have any specific support at work she says that 'working with nice understanding people helps'.

*Name has been changed.