

THE PROVIDER INSIDER

INSIGHTS INTO FURTHER EDUCATION

AN INTERVIEW WITH HALIFAX OPPORTUNITIES TRUST APPRENTICE

My name is Alex Mitchell I am working in a school in Leeds, towards my Supporting teaching & learning in schools level 2. Supporting SEN child.

SO HOW IS IT GOING?

It's a really strange time, especially when working in schools. But in general I've been trying to strain as many positives out of the situation as possible. I've started trying loads of different things, both work and non-work related, and I'm probably eating better and exercising more now we're in lockdown.

WHAT IS YOUR CURRENT SITUATION? – HAVE YOU BEEN FURLOUGHED, STILL WORKING OR WORKING FROM HOME?

I'm working from home, researching, completing and revisiting my assignments for the apprenticeship and training in areas that interest me, in particular pastoral care, as well as still staying in contact with pupils remotely.

WHAT LEARNING ARE YOU DOING AS PART OF YOUR APPRENTICESHIP DURING THIS TIME?

I'm using the time to research well into the childcare subjects and complete my assignment, and my learning is progressing well. I am finding the time to revisit subjects and consolidate my learning and knowledge so when I go back into school I will be able to use the knowledge gained. I've also completed the ERR workbook, again revisiting knowledge previously learnt and researching/learning new subjects, so things are going really well at the minute.

HOW IS YOUR APPRENTICESHIP BEING DELIVERED REMOTELY – ARE YOU DOING ACTIVITIES, TUTORIALS, ASSIGNMENTS OR SOMETHING DIFFERENT?

I'm researching and completing assignments, along with having conversations with my tutor over email, phone and video call which is really helping me understand the subject.

WITH WHAT YOU HAVE LEARNT DURING THIS SITUATION SO FAR, DO YOU THINK YOU WILL BE ABLE TO PUT IT INTO PRACTICE ONCE YOU GET BACK TO THE WORKPLACE?

For me, one of the most striking images I keep seeing is the mass pressure on food banks as many families' incomes are reducing through no fault of their own. What I've taken from this is that we at schools don't just have a responsibility to protect our pupils but also their families. And because of the current situation and the pressure we are under we have, often, simply been unable to deliver this protection as well as we'd like to. So the main piece of learning I'll take with me when we get back to normal is that we need to be more vigilant of both our pupils' and their families' personal situations, and often the right amount of help when it is needed.

WHEN THINGS GO BACK TO NORMAL WOULD YOU STILL LIKE TO SEE A BLENDED APPROACH TO YOUR APPRENTICESHIP (PART REMOTE/PART FACE TO FACE)?

Face to face conversations are great, and I probably end up taking more in. However I know I'm still able to email my tutor and she'll get back to me as soon as she can, so a partial blend is probably best. But if the current situation has taught me anything, it is that I can do this and complete my apprenticeship at a good level.

DO YOU ENJOY LEARNING THIS REMOTE WAY? - WERE YOU SET UP ADEQUATELY FOR WORK OR DID YOUR COMPANY HAVE TO SUPPLY EQUIPMENT?

My laptop's a bit old and rubbish, but apart from that learning remotely has loads of benefits. I'm able to keep in touch with my tutor and work colleagues without putting myself at risk, and I'm learning and completing work. Don't get me wrong, I'd love to be back at work, that's why we do the job, but for me the situation really isn't as bad as it could be.

ANY IMPROVEMENT TO YOUR PROGRAMME FOR WHEN YOU ARE WORKING FROM HOME

I really wouldn't say that there has been any improvement or deterioration in my programme, everyone's working as hard as they can, and those results are showing.

DURING THIS TIME HAVE YOU MAINTAINED SAME TUTOR/ASSESSOR, OR HAVE YOU BEEN ALLOCATED A NEW TUTOR/ASSESSOR?

I have maintained the same tutor which is really useful.

