



Jonathon Rudkin

Background

Having spent some time travelling in the third world, Jonathon wanted to try and 'give something back' to the local community and after returning Jonathon decided that he wanted to pursue a different type of career. By coincidence he came across an advert in the local newspaper.

The advert had been published by Rotherham Borough Council's Young Persons and Families Department. The department was looking for individuals to help support vulnerable young people within the borough.

Becoming a volunteer

Jonathon replied to the advert and felt the experiences would help him to explore a number of potential careers. Interested in working with young people, he felt the programme would give him a chance to understand the issues he would face.

Having spent a number of years working in industry, Jonathon was unsure whether he would be able to relate to young people. He saw volunteering as being a chance to gain hands-on experience of youth work and used the opportunity to find out whether he had the skills to become a social worker or teacher.



PROFILE IN BRIEF

Jonathon Rudkin

"I would recommend getting involved in volunteering to anyone who has an interest in the sector; you get a real buzz from the work you do and it can be very rewarding. For me, it even led to a career change!"

Engaging with the voluntary sector

Before starting work with the Council, Jonathon undertook a series of training sessions. After completing the training and attending a formal interview, he received his first case.

Each case Jonathon worked on lasted for approximately three months. During that time, he worked closely with a number of young people encouraging them to try new activities and introduced the young people to new experiences.

During his time working on the programme, each case introduced him to a variety of challenges and helped him to understand the problems that young people face in their everyday lives.

In one instance, after discovering that a teenager had never visited Sheffield, he took him on a site-seeing visit of the city. For Jonathon, it was about making small but big differences:

"I was genuinely surprised by some of the cases that I was involved with. Some of the teenagers didn't know how to use public transport, for example. By helping to show them how to read a timetable it meant that they were no longer confined by their immediate surroundings."

Amazing achievements

From his time volunteering, Jonathan developed a genuine interest in trying to help young people and as a result, he decided to pursue a career in teaching. After successfully completing a PGCE, he not only provides help and support in the classroom, but his experiences as a volunteer have encouraged him to get involved in a variety of extra-curriculum activities. He added:

"My experiences as a volunteer with Rotherham Council were life-changing. It helped to give me confidence to pursue a career in teaching. When I started the programme I didn't really know what to expect, but it was a very valuable and worthwhile experience."

"It has helped me to gain a better understanding of how young people think, and perhaps more importantly the day-to-day pressures and challenges they face. Working as a volunteer also helped to give me an insight into the important role played by agencies like the police, social services and carers and how they often work together to assist young people."

"As a teacher, this can sometimes impact upon the classroom, and my experiences on the volunteer programme has really helped to give me an understanding into the daily pressures facing many children."

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