



Percy Hedley
FOUNDATION



Hedley's Beyond

Case Study



The Newcastle Eagles Community Foundation delivers a weekly inclusive basketball session for adults with learning disabilities and autism. Recognising the suitability of this inclusive and supportive environment, Susan Hunter, CEO working in partnership with Kerry Robinson, Project Manager for Percy Hedley Foundation introduced structured work experience placements for young people with disabilities.

Placements were designed to provide meaningful, real-world work experience, focusing on the development of work-ready skills. Students supported session delivery through tasks such as; setting up and preparing equipment, assisting coaches, and leading parts of sessions when they felt comfortable.

Over a two-year period, **six** students have completed placements.

“We recognised that this session could be the perfect opportunity to give a work experience placement to young people with disabilities.”

“One student extended their placement to give them additional time to develop their coaching skills further.”



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“These experiences go beyond work - they empower students in their everyday lives.”

“The students have been incredible, getting involved from day one, and it's been amazing to see their confidence grow.”

Impacts and Outcomes

The impact on students was evident from the outset, with students engaging positively and demonstrating increased confidence and independence.

Examples of individual impact include:

- A student confidently leading a small group for the first time.
- A student with social anxiety feeling proud and successful after attending an interview.
- A student teaching staff basic British Sign Language, supporting inclusive communication.

The programme also had a significant impact on staff confidence and organisational practice.

Several coaches were initially cautious about delivering inclusive sessions. Through working alongside students, staff confidence increased and inclusive practice improved.

This demonstrates that the placements supported mutual learning, benefiting both students and staff.

Students developed:

Improved communication and teamwork

Greater work-readiness skills

Increased confidence



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What's next for Newcastle Eagles?

“We hope to strengthen this partnership further and, where possible, provide paid employment opportunities in the future.”

Planned developments include; exploring paid employment opportunities, and offering two placements at the same time to support anxious students through peer support.

“We recognise how important these placements are for building confidence in a safe and fun environment.”

What advice would they give other employers?

“With only one in five people with a learning disability currently in employment, it is really important to provide real-world opportunities to help break this.”

“These placements offer students hands-on experience and make a real difference.”

Providing supported placements:

Builds confidence and transferable skills

Challenges misconceptions

Creates inclusive workplaces

“Our mission is to make basketball accessible to everyone, regardless of background or ability.”