

Achiever of the Year receives her award

EDI learner Jodie Grocott overcomes barriers to achieve vocational success

Jodie is a 28 year old single mother with two young children, living in Meir, Stoke on Trent. In July 2008, Jodie beat off stiff competition from all over the UK to reach the top three in the 'Achiever of the Year' category, created to celebrate the first ever UK National Vocational Qualifications Day. The Award Ceremony, held at the Royal Opera House, London on 23rd July, saw Jodie being presented with her certificate by celebrity Alesha Dickson.



Nominated for the award by her training assessor Janice Richardson from Protocol Skills, Jodie is a shining example of how leaving school with no qualifications does not mean a life of no career prospects. Jodie explains: "I left school with nothing and was heading in the wrong direction, with no idea of what kind of job I wanted to do. I then fell pregnant and for the next few years, spent my time drifting along, looking after my children but not making a life for myself. My children were also my turning point however - I knew that I needed to sort myself out for their sakes if not for mine. I was anxious to provide for my family without relying on state help. I live in a deprived area where there are a lot of people who don't work and I simply didn't want to be like that - I wanted job prospects, a career and above all, I wanted to give my children the best life I could possibly give them."

She continues: "When my daughter was five and my son was three months old, I went to the job centre for a lone parents interview. I saw an advertisement for courses aimed at people not currently working and immediately enrolled on a classroom-based level 1 Business NVQ. Within seven weeks I had passed with distinction which gave me a real buzz to progress further. I then found a work placement with the council which paid the minimum wage but which enabled me to break into work. I knew I wanted to develop my qualifications further so in October 2007 I enrolled with Protocol Skills to complete an EDI Level 2 Business Administration NVQ which would strengthen my ability to find a real job. In November 2007 I found a part time role with a local electrician's company which provided me not only with steady income but also excellent experience that complemented my NVQ."

By April 2008, with the help and support from her training assessor at Protocol and EDI, Jodie had completed her NVQ and already demonstrated real progress in both her skill set and her confidence.

Janice Richardson, Training Assessor at Protocol Skills commented: “Jodie is one of the most dedicated students I have known. Despite leaving school with nothing, she was determined to gain enough qualifications so that she could find a well paid job and earn enough money to come off benefits and provide for her children. She always showed real commitment to her work and backed up her learning with masses of evidence – after a while I couldn’t even keep up with her! As Jodie has progressed through the qualifications, her confidence has grown tremendously, not just in her work but also in herself.”

Jodie commented: “Before embarking upon the qualification I was really shy and didn’t feel I could apply for jobs because of my lack of education. Now I can be positive about my work and achievements and go for jobs that before I would only have dreamed of. I am now moving on to my level 3 NVQ and am also doing the EDI Key Skills qualifications, both of which will help me go further in my life. For the first time ever I feel I have real career prospects. Before, a job was just a job whereas now I see it as a stepping stone to better things. Once my children are both at school I hope to work full time and make my way up to office management – it may seem like a cliché but I really do feel that the world is now my oyster!”



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