

Upskill Shropshire

Kickstart Case Study

Matthew Weaver

A previous **Kickstart Housing Options Administration Assistant** in our Housing Services team



Matthew was 21 when he was under the Kickstart scheme, and now has a job as a **Triage Support Officer** at Shropshire Council.

What attracted you to that Kickstart position and one within Shropshire Council?

I thought the Kickstart Scheme was a really good opportunity. I'd just come out of university, so I thought it was a good way to sort of get my foot in the door with an office-based position.

This role, which focused on housing and homelessness, was something I was really interested in and wanted to get involved and help with.

Do you still recommend the Kickstart Scheme?

Yeah, I think it was a really good opportunity. It helped me out with a lot of things. It gave me that initial opportunity to start something and start a career. Obviously, I've now moved forward into a permanent position.

It was definitely a helpful way to start.

Do you have any advice for future Kickstarters or those in similar schemes?

Get the most out of the opportunity and enjoy it. Get involved as much as possible in all the activities, and get as much experience as possible for yourself and to add to your CV. Hopefully, you'll find a permanent position out of it, if it's something that you enjoy.

Whatever happens after your Kickstart role ends, you will have gained lots of experience which will help you out in your future roles and career.

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Where are you now?

Shropshire Council is a great organisation to work for; it feels like somewhere you can progress in. I enjoyed my Kickstart role and I saw my current job was the next step which is why I was attracted to it. I did an interview for my current role fairly early on into my Kickstart position. I was really hoping it would bring a job opportunity for me. And it did.

I am really enjoying it. My main role is to take housing applications from people who are either already homeless or they're threatened with homelessness. I monitor our phones and emails, and I take a caseload each day to help these groups. I can offer housing advice and ways to look for alternative accommodation. When we accept a homelessness application, we work with them to find permanent housing and we can also sometimes offer them some kind of temporary accommodation. So, I've gone from the initial contact of my Kickstart role to my current role where I have caseloads myself. Helping them from start to finish is a lot more rewarding.

At university, I studied history where I did my dissertation on poverty and homelessness. It's always been an issue I've been interested in. So, it's great to find a job in this area.

How is the work environment?

It's very good. We're still home-based most of the time but we have weekly team meetings (I'm also getting some office-based experience through some face-to-face meetings) and I have catch-up meetings with my manager. My team and managers are great; we're always communicating and very supportive. So, I do get all the support I need.

I have access to very good ways of expanding my knowledge - my team and I training very regularly on different subjects to do with housing and homelessness. I'm also learning a lot from the people I work with.

Has the Kickstart Scheme helped you develop?

It's definitely given me a lot more confidence than I had to begin with. This was my first kind of office-based job. It's given me that experience to find a job like this.

I did the Digital Champions training which was really helpful for learning new skills which I hope to use with my team going forward. We also learned about how to write a CV and other things like that. It was a useful and really interesting experience which has given me the opportunity to move forward.