



## Isaiah's experiences as a volunteer coach with learning disability

### Profile

Isaiah is in his 20s and has a learning disability.

Since leaving school, he has done a variety of studying, training and volunteering, from IT and business studies, through to catering and barista training and working as a farm volunteer.

He is currently doing a drama course at college for one day a week, and on another day, he plays football with a local organisation that provides a range of weekly sessions for different ages, genders and mainstream and SEND.

As well as playing there, Isaiah volunteers at the football academy, initially in the social club but after doing this for a while, he wanted a change. He now volunteers as a multi-sports coach with the under-11s SEND group, who have physical and learning disabilities. The sessions are once a week, and Isaiah helps to set up, run the sessions and clear away afterwards. He enjoys being able to chat with the children and enable them to try out different sports.

Isaiah would like to have a paid role in sport in the future, and hopes that the experience and training he is currently gaining will help him to do this.



"I like working in sport. I would like to try [to get a paid job in sport] in the future."

### Isaiah's journey





## What enables Isaiah to deliver his coaching role

Isaiah is supported by a local charity that helps people with learning disabilities into employment, through access to training, interview skills, and matching people with employers for volunteering, work experience and employment. This organisation supported Isaiah to get into the voluntary role with the football academy, building on the connections he had already established there by taking part in the adult SEND football and volunteering at the social club.

The employment support agency also helped Isaiah to take part in a disability sport coaching course, and a safeguarding course, to build his skills and confidence for coaching young people. They provided a support worker to give extra help to anyone in the group who needed it, for example, with writing. Isaiah found this really helpful but he would have liked to have more one-to-one support during the course to help him engage better with it. Overall, the training was well tailored for people with learning disabilities, by including practical sessions, fun elements, a balance of learning and doing, group work, and time to think.



"They made the course easier, like doing some practicals so we didn't feel bored. Extra support with writing would have been good."

## Barriers

- Lack of one-to-one support for some aspects of training (written elements).
- Travel when there is no available public transport.
- Travel to unfamiliar places, for example, to get to an interview.

## Enablers

- Support from specialist employment agency for people with learning disabilities, to help facilitate volunteering opportunities.
- Volunteering with an organisation and people already familiar with.
- Training that is tailored for people with learning disabilities.
- Pragmatism around challenges (e.g. transport).



"More help from [employment support agency] would be good. Getting to know the people would make it easier. But travel would make it harder."