



Catering Placement for Louis

Louis is a young man with a diagnosis of autistic spectrum disorder. He is currently studying at Ashley Sixth Form and follows a varied curriculum which includes qualifications in Catering, Maths and English. He also undertakes an enrichment programme to develop his independent living skills and prepare him for the world of work. This programme also includes work placements to give students a real understanding of the work place and enable students to develop their employability skills.

When it came to Louis's work experience placement Louis jumped at the chance to do a Catering Placement in Esposito's Café to demonstrate his knowledge and skills in this area. Louis started at the Café doing the washing up and clearing plates and the staff were so impressed by him that they offered him paid employment.

Louis explained "My work placement has been brilliant! It has helped me to develop my independence skills – I have money to buy things for myself. It was great to be able to buy my little sister something for her birthday. I am learning lots of skills, such as how to speak to customers and working on the tills at the checkout. My Dad and Step-Mum are really proud of me".

Louis's senior supervisor, Jennie, commented that Louis had really grown in confidence since he started at Esposito's. "At first Louis was behind the scenes in the kitchen, but now he is on the counter serving customers, "Louis's diagnosis of ASD means that he often misinterprets situations and can be quite direct when speaking to customers".

Jennie explained that with customer care training and guidance from experienced staff, Louis has really developed his interpersonal skills and is polite and friendly when serving on the counter. In fact, Louis has recently been showing a new member of staff how to carry out tasks in the kitchen.

Louis's family have also seen the change in him and feel that his independence skills have really developed since he started earning money and he loves taking responsibility for buying clothes for himself.

His Step-Mum explained that Louis has to interact with the general public and this has really boosted his confidence. She added, "We also have a good relationship with his employer and if there are any issues, the manager contacts us and we talk through the problems together".

Mike Jones, Head of Ashley Sixth Form also noticed the change in Louis. "I have known Louis for many years and over the last 12 months I've noticed a big difference in him. Not only has he become a much more confident and able young man, but he is demonstrating a real maturity in how he interacts with others and how he approaches (previously) difficult situations".

Mike added that "Louis is a good role model for some of our other Sixth Form students, by realising what is achievable through a lot of hard work and having a positive attitude. We are extremely proud of him."

