

**AUTISM FORWARD
OUTCOMES
FOR 2019-20:
80% IN PAID OR
VOLUNTARY
EMPLOYMENT**

**AUTISM FORWARD
MENTORS PROVIDE
REMOTE SUPPORT
DURING COVID-19
LOCKDOWN**

**BBC RADIO 3
INTERVIEW WITH
AUTISM FORWARD
BENEFICIARY
JAMES MONTAGUE**

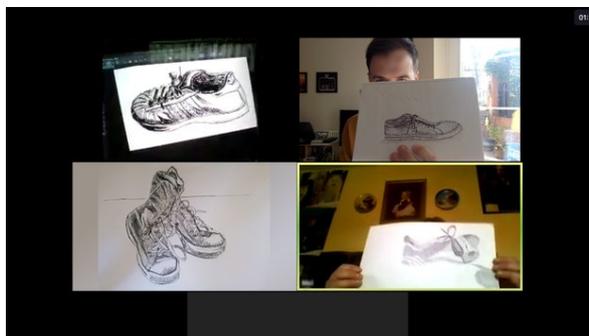
**IMMERSIVE LABS
CYBER SECURITY
TRAINING PROGRAMME
FOR AUTISTIC JOB
SEEKERS**

AUTISM FORWARD NEWS

Remote Support, Online Social Groups & Training

Our mentor partners reacted swiftly to the Covid-19 crisis and lockdown by offering remote support to our autistic job seekers via Skype, Zoom, phone or email. It is clear from the feedback we have already received from our grant holders that this support is incredibly valuable at this challenging time. We are grateful to our donors who enable us to continue funding this support.

Our mentors are also encouraging our beneficiaries to use this time effectively and improve their employability by accessing online training, including remote interview training, cyber security training and other courses to improve employability. Matthew's Hub, our mentor partner in Hull, have been running online drop-in and arts and crafts sessions via Zoom (run by a former Autism Forward grant holder), with Hub members producing this fantastic artwork last week.



Even amid the current crisis, we are seeing successful outcomes for some of our job seekers with two grant holders in Hull securing jobs as key workers in their local supermarket, a grant holder in London commencing a graduate role in the Civil Service and a beneficiary in Brighton securing an accountancy role for a local bakery business.

Autism Forward Outcomes 2019-20

We have now awarded 130 grants for mentoring support to autistic job seekers. We continue to see excellent outcomes for this year's grant holders, of those who have had at least 3 months support since 1 April 2019:

- 80% made job applications
- 75% attended job interviews
- 55% joined new clubs or groups
- 50% undertook training, workshops or work placements
- 47% secured voluntary roles (24% of those have not yet secured paid roles)
- 56% secured paid employment

Total in paid or voluntary employment: 80%

Fantastic achievements from our beneficiaries and their mentors across the country.



Data IQ Podcast

David Reed of Data IQ interviewed Autism Forward trustee Jane Pierce at the Women in Data Conference in November last year, highlighting the work that Autism Forward does to support autistic people into employment and Credit Suisse's successful internship programme for autistic candidates. You can listen to the interview [here](#) (Jane is on at 26 minutes).

Case Study

We have updated the [Impact Stories](#) on our website to include a case study of one of our beneficiaries mentored by Karen-Anne Manghan, our mentor partner in Brighton.

The client had become very unwell due to the pressures of full time work in a corporate environment and the practicalities of living independently in London. His Access to Work funding ended when he was unable to return to his job and he would have been left with very little support without Autism Forward, who were able to provide him with a grant to continue his mentoring support and take some time to recover and consider his options.

He realised during this time that his love of nature and the outdoors had really helped with his recovery, that spending time gardening in particular gave him a great sense of wellbeing and that after a day working outdoors, he was able to eat and sleep better than he had in many years. He worked with his mentor to explore work and career options involving working outdoors and close to nature, eventually securing an apprenticeship at the Eden project.

He has now been working at the Eden project for several months and his Autism Forward mentoring support continues to help with managing the transition to a new career and work place. He is now happier, healthier and has found his 'niche', which is so vital for many autistic people to be successful.

Our thanks to all our donors who enable us to fund this life-changing support and our mentors who work with such dedication and commitment to enable our grant holders to fulfil their potential. If you would like to support our work so that we can continue to provide support at this challenging time, you can do so [here](#) or by contacting jane@autismforward.org.uk.

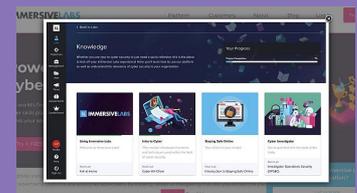
Interview with BBC Radio 3 Counties

Autism Forward beneficiary James Montague was interviewed by BBC Radio 3 Counties about his experience of being autistic. You can listen [here](#) to James explaining how he copes with sensory overload and anxiety by keeping to routines and taking long walks. James recently secured a graduate role at the University of Bedfordshire with the support of our mentor Sharna Raine at Autism Bedfordshire.

Immersive Labs

Immersive Labs has set up the world's first fully interactive, gamified and on-demand cyber skills training platform which also provides access to jobs in the sector and has been tailored to support neurodivergent learners.

Autistic job seekers, including Autism Forward clients, have been offered free access to the cybersecurity training to enable them to develop skills which are in high demand in the workplace.



Once the learner has achieved the required application levels on the programme, they can access the jobs board on the site and can apply directly for the roles advertised.

Further information on the programme can be found on the Immersive Labs website:

www.immersivelabs.com

