

**AUTISM FORWARD  
HISTORIC OUTCOMES  
HIT 90% IN PAID OR  
VOLUNTARY  
EMPLOYMENT**

**AS MENTORING  
LAUNCHES  
THREE NEW  
WORKSHOP  
PROGRAMMES**

**PLACES AVAILABLE TO  
RUN THE VIRTUAL  
LONDON MARATHON  
FOR AUTISM  
FORWARD**

**FEEDBACK FROM  
AUTISM FORWARD  
GRANT HOLDERS  
ABOUT THE SUPPORT  
WE FUND**

# AUTISM FORWARD NEWS

## Autism Forward Outcomes 2020-21

This has been a difficult year for everyone, but the autistic job seekers we support are one of the most disadvantaged groups in the country, facing increased social isolation and a stagnant job market. This year, the support we fund to help them find work and access social activities has been more important than ever. With the support of our mentors around the country, the autistic job seekers awarded grants between April 2020 and January 2021 have risen to the challenge with some tremendous outcomes:

- 84% made job applications
- 63% attended job interviews
- 38% joined new clubs or groups
- 50% undertook training or workshops
- 20% secured voluntary roles
- 46% secured paid employment



Bearing in mind that these job seekers have only had between 3 and 12 months support, it is remarkable that 66% of them are now in paid or voluntary employment. This is significantly better than the Office of National Statistics figures for July to September 2020, which found that only 21.7% of autistic people were in any kind of employment, compared to 52.1% for disabled people generally and 81.3% for non-disabled people. This shows the enormous difference Autism Forward makes.

As we continue to fund support for some grant holders who were awarded grants in previous financial years, we have seen further improvements in outcomes for those cohorts, with an incredible 90% of our 2018-19 grant holders now in paid (56%) or voluntary (34%) employment and 81% of our 2019-20 grant holders in paid (59%) or voluntary (22%) employment. We anticipate that the outcomes for our 2021-20 grant holders will also continue to improve as opportunities open up.

Thank you to all our supporters and donors who have enabled us to fund this vital support and thank to all our fantastic mentors and grant holders who have worked so hard through these difficult times to achieve such admirable results. As these outcomes show, the switch to remote support has not adversely affected most of our grant holders, although many are relieved they are now able to access to face to face support when needed. We anticipate that clients will continue with a mix of remote and in person support going forward.

**AUTISM  
FORWARD**

## ASM Workshop Programmes

One of the more beneficial outcomes of the pandemic has been the increasing popularity of online workshops and training. Our mentor partner AS Mentoring has used this opportunity to expand their online workshop programme and Autism Forward offers subsidised places on the workshops to autistic job seekers, enabling us to expand our reach in a very cost effective way.

As well as their on-going programme of workshops on a variety of topics, AS Mentoring have launched a pilot peer mentoring programme aimed at Autism Forward grant holders and other autistic people who have recently secured employment or are about to start work. The aim of the programme is for participants to share their experiences and benefit from peer to peer support as well as the expert advice of the workshop facilitators.

We are also very excited to be funding a new “Steps into Work” programme aimed at improving employment outcomes for autistic students graduating this year or last year. The four month programme launches in June and will combine one to one support sessions with a series of six online workshops which will help participants identify their strengths and challenges, equip them with job search skills, give guidance on how to disclose their diagnosis, request reasonable adjustments and communicate effectively at work.

Further details of the “Steps into Work” programme, including eligibility criteria and a link to the online application form, can be found on AS Mentoring’s website [here](#). Applications for the programme must be made by 7 June 2021.

Places on AS Mentoring’s general workshop programme can be booked on their [Eventbrite page](#). The next workshop is “Understanding my Diagnosis” on 19 June 2021.

## Feedback from our Grant Holders

The feedback from grant holders this year demonstrates the depth of support our mentors provide beyond the employment outcomes:

- 96% improved their understanding of their strengths & challenges
- 80% were more confident about disclosing their diagnosis & requesting reasonable adjustments in the workplace
- 88% improved their self-confidence
- 58% had support to access benefits, healthcare or other services
- 73% had support to access training, workshops or education

You can read more about the impact of our support and feedback from our grant holders on the [Impact Stories](#) section of our website.

## Virtual London Marathon

We still have two places available for the 2021 Virtual London Marathon on Sunday 3 October 2021

If you'd like to take part in this unique challenge and raise funds for Autism Forward, please get in touch as soon as possible by email to

[jane@autismforward.org.uk](mailto:jane@autismforward.org.uk)



For this virtual event, you will record your time on a dedicated app any time and on any route on Sunday 3 October 2021 and you will receive an official time and finishing medal and T-Shirt.

Further information on the event can be found on the [Virgin Money London Marathon website](#):

[Virgin Money London Marathon](#)

