



**Hampshire**  
County Council



## Kickstart A New Career

Riley Scott, 19, left school at 16, and did a year at college. But after a year at home, he needed some more support to get into the job market. "I was in a slump. I did try looking for a job, but it just didn't work." A friend told Riley about Universal Credit and the job centre, so he went along: "It wasn't so much about the money but about support to get a job."

Riley's work coach told him about the TCS CSCS card courses, and it seemed like a good way forward. A CSCS card is a safety passport needed to work on a construction site. But after completing the paperwork in October 2021, he changed his mind. TCS project coordinator, Carolyn followed up with Riley to see if he wanted to take advantage of TCS' flexible employability support instead.

The TCS project recognises that everyone's needs are different, and offers short term, flexible employability options designed around the individual. In Riley's case, this meant several 30-minute online sessions. In the first session, Carolyn and Riley decided on goals, and came up with some actions. In the second session, Riley fed back on what action he'd taken, and they reviewed the action plan together. It was at this point that Kickstart came up as an option.



Carolyn explained that the Kickstart scheme was part of the UK government's plans for recovery from the Covid-19 pandemic. A time limited scheme, open only to 16-24-year-olds, the goal was to limit youth unemployment by offering 6-month placements for 25 hours a week. When he heard about the Kickstart post at Hampshire County Council's outdoor education centre Runway's End, Riley was immediately interested. And he's living proof that you can succeed even when things don't go to plan. "The interview went really well - even though I left my headphones in by mistake....!" Riley got positive feedback from centre manager David Norrish, and by the end of the week had got the job.

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Riley is working as a centre assistant at the Aldershot-based centre. He started in February 2021 and works Monday to Friday, 5 hours a day, plus an hour for lunch. His duties include supporting co-workers in setting up activities for the children and young people who come to experience a day of adventure - canoeing, archery, or high ropes, as well as cleaning and keeping the site neat and tidy. And Riley has taken on responsibility for a huge project - shifting 20 cubic feet of woodchip that was delivered to the car park, wheelbarrow by wheelbarrow, to the activity areas, where it protects the ground and enhances safety.

Riley said: "I had heard about Kickstart before Carolyn mentioned it, but I didn't know what it was. The employability sessions gave me more information about it, and how to get a job - they made me think a bit more. That made it easier to make a decision."

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Runways End manager, David Norrish said: "Riley is working at Runways End Outdoor Centre as a Trainee Centre Assistant as part of a 6-month Kickstart scheme between February and August 2022. Riley's main role at the Centre is to support both instructors and the facilities team in the day-to-day operations of the business. The role is giving him the skills and knowledge to understand the importance of working as a team, but also contributing to the running of the Centre by taking on some key jobs on a daily basis. This is Riley's first opportunity to hold a steady role since leaving education, and I hope he will gain lots of valuable experience to set him up with further employers."

Riley isn't sure what he'll do next. "I like staying in the moment, so I don't want to look too far into the future. I often get anxiety, but I can manage it here - being outdoors really helps." And he's gained a lot from his placement so far: "I've discovered that I don't like caving at all - I'm far too claustrophobic! I've learned what it means to come to work every day, to do a job, and go home again. The most important thing it's given me is confidence. I've gained so much in terms of being able to speak to people and work with them. My co-workers are great!" Riley's Kickstart position means he has many choices ahead of him now - who knows where he will end up next? Except, perhaps, in a cave....

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