

# Outdoor Learning Apprenticeships Employer Case-study



Jamie's Farm



## ■ 1. Please give a brief overview of your company and the types of services or products you provide.

Jamie's Farm offers residential visits for vulnerable young people from across the UK, who spend a week on our farms taking part in a programme of farming, family, therapy and legacy. We work with young people who are challenged within mainstream education whether because of behaviour, mental health, social and emotional wellbeing, SEND needs, or other reasons, and offer a week to reflect and work hard in a calm and nurturing environment as well as a programme of follow-up support.

## ■ 2. What were the main reasons that lead you to introducing apprenticeships to your workforce?

We work with young people every week, and wanted our workforce to reflect the young people that we work with, both in terms of age and of life experience. We recognise the value that having younger colleagues can bring to our team, and an apprentice's ability to act as a role model to visiting groups. We are keen to build a diverse and inclusive workforce across Jamie's Farm, and apprentices are a key ingredient towards this goal.

## ■ 3. What were primary goals and objectives you hoped to achieve through this apprenticeship programme?

- To recruit, train, and support apprentices to become important members of our team and support the Jamie's Farm programme
- To enable young people who may not yet be work-ready to experience work in a supportive environment and to leave the apprenticeship ready to enter the workforce
- To diversify our team and ensure that the Jamie's Farm team more closely reflects the young people we work with.

## ■ 4. What have been the most significant benefits to your organisation as a result of implementing this apprenticeship programme?

Our apprenticeship programme has given us enormous benefits, with the ability to train up new colleagues to help deliver our programme and support our visiting groups. Most importantly, though, it has been a wonderful way of ensuring that we stay connected to the experiences of the young people we are working with, and that the young people themselves can see a pathway that may inspire them. Many of the young people we work with find the Jamie's Farm experience initially daunting, and we are often told that seeing our apprentice working alongside us really reassures them and makes them feel more at ease.

## ■ 5. How has the apprenticeship programme impacted the skill level and productivity of your workforce?

Hugely – in supporting and upskilling our apprentices, many of our team have developed people management skills.

■ **6. How has the apprenticeship programme contributed to the career development and progression of the apprentices within your organisation?**

Many of the apprentices that have come through Jamie’s Farm began their experience not being ‘work ready’, but we have seen huge development from all of them through their time with us. This can be in things as simple as time-management and independent travel, as well as understanding of their specific roles within the team.

Our past apprentices have gone on to a variety of job roles after their time with Jamie’s Farm and have also been involved in local and national press advocating for our work.

■ **7. What feedback have you received from the apprentices regarding their experience with the programme, and how have you acted on this feedback?**

Our feedback from apprentices has been broadly positive, but one key piece of feedback we have received from apprentices is an appreciation of clarity of communication and expectations, both during the working day and around our expectations of what they do beyond the farm. We have tried to put in place clear structures to support apprentices to know when they can expect support, and where they need to do something independently.

■ **8. Based on your experience, would you recommend apprenticeship programmes to other organisations? Why or why not?**

I think that every organisation should have an apprentice. While it is not easy at times, it is a wonderful way of growing and developing the workforce while also supporting young people to develop themselves. Apprentices can quickly become key members of a team and can offer unexpected benefits that you don’t even know about yet!

■ **9. What are your future plans for the apprenticeship programme?**

We plan to recruit an apprentice for every team across Jamie’s Farm, and for this to continue long in to the future.

