

Outdoor Learning Apprenticeships

Case-study



■ Name of Apprentice - Riley Link Smith

■ What is the name of the company you work for and what is your role?



Jamie's Farm (Charity), Outdoor Instructor

■ Please give us a bit of information about the outdoor activities and services you deliver

I work with young people who have different backgrounds from different schools, areas and organisations. I work with them for a week to try and improve their confidence and team building skills for when they go back to school or within their community.

We get up to many activities during the week from farming to log chopping to a bit of cooking and gardening.

The young people stay with us, in the farmhouse, for the whole week and help to feed animals, clean the barn and prepare their own food for everyone.

■ Why did you decide to undertake an apprenticeship?

I thought it would help me as I find it easier to work outside and could still work on my Functional Skills alongside the apprenticeship. I especially came forward to complete the apprenticeship at Jamie's Farm, because I came to Jamie's Farm as a young person, in care, myself when I was 12. Now I would like to make a difference in young people and show them that they can get many things out of completing a week on the farm as it helped me as a young person.

■ Can you tell us about your experience as an apprentice? What were some of the highlights and challenges that you faced during your apprenticeship?

Throughout my whole apprenticeship it has been an amazing experience and I have achieved a lot. I would say one of my biggest highlights is to be able to join in and help the young people and feel like I can help and prove to them that they can achieve big goals. A challenge I have faced has been the English side of the apprenticeship, but I have been very lucky to have a lot of support and I am constantly told I can push through and complete it. I have learnt to use methods at the end of my sessions to help the young people celebrate successes. I am a lot more confident with running sessions and without the apprenticeship I wouldn't be where I am today.

■ What did you learn during your apprenticeship, and how have you been able to apply that knowledge and skills in your work since completing the programme?

I have learnt how there are many ways of speaking and communicating with people which has helped me to be able to speak to all young people, of all different backgrounds who have come to the farm. I think also having confidence in myself shows to the young people that no matter where you came from in life you can always turn it around and carry on. I make safeguarding a priority and make sure that no matter how small the concern is it is always best to tell your safeguarding lead and I am more confident ending a session and checking in with the group.

Institute for Outdoor Learning

<https://www.outdoor-learning.org/workforce/apprenticeships.html>

■ **How do you see your career progressing from here, and what are some of your long-term goals?**

My ultimate goal is to either own and run my own farm or continue to work with young people who need an extra boost in life.

It would be great to have my own Jamie's Farm site in the future where I can continue what I love the most.

■ **How would you describe your apprenticeship experience, and would you recommend it to others?**

Yes, yes, yes! I would 100% recommend it to others it is a great way to start your career, it is good to have a year long course to help you figure out what you like/don't like. It is helpful to catch up on Functional Skills that were not achieved at school.

Apprenticeships help promote outdoor work and if you are someone who prefers to be hands on it is a great way to still be able to learn while working in an area you like.

