



Bridget McNally's Story

Bridget McNally used to spend her days at the Adult Centre; now she is an active and fully integrated member of her community, thanks to the Day Opportunities Programme.

The Day Opportunities Programme, was set up following the recommendations of the Equal Lives Report. The Day Opportunities programme provides four areas of opportunity - recreational, vocational, volunteering and further education. The team then work with each individual to tailor the programme to their particular needs.

Anne Marie O'Kane from the Day Opportunities Team in Cookstown said, "We looked at what Bridget's needs were and agreed these with her, her family and her social worker. From this we developed the right mix of activities for her. One of the first things Bridget wanted to do was get a job."

Alternative Angles (Triangle) provided Bridget with the vocational opportunity she wanted. Alternative Angles is an emerging Social Enterprise that provides support to people with learning disabilities to develop new skills and build confidence to improve their chances of getting a job, and to fulfil their potential.

Bridget spent two years at Alternative Angles. She said, "I learnt about being into work on time and the time I could take for tea and lunch breaks, I was given information about health and safety and booking annual leave and the importance of getting on with people even when you do not like them."

At the end of the two years Bridget moved on to Triangles Supported Employment service. From this Bridget got a job in Asda supermarket.

Bridget said, "I work in the canteen from 10.00am to 2.00pm, two days a week. It's nice to be the same as my nieces and nephews, to go out to work and earn my own money, I really enjoy it.

"I have made friends in work; one lent me a handbag for a wedding I was going to."

When Bridget is not at work she spends a few hours each week as a volunteer with Cookstown Rural Community Transport and is a registered member of Cookstown and Magherafelt Volunteer Centre. Bridget also spends time at The Base in Cookstown. The Base is somewhere for Bridget to take part in recreational and social activities around Cookstown.



Day Opportunities

Anne-Marie said, “Bridget tried further education, but the course she was doing wasn’t right for her. She now has a good balance of recreational, vocational and volunteer opportunities and perhaps in the future she may try education again.”

The day opportunities programme has allowed Bridget to become a fully integrated member of the Cookstown community. She has a job, meets her friends for lunch and does volunteering work. As Anne-Marie put it, “Bridget now has an active social and working life. Bridget was one of the first people to take part in the Day Opportunities programme back in 2004 and she is testament to the success of the programme.”