



## Ricky Winton's Story

Ricky Winton used to spend his days at Broadway Workshop, but after several years he decided he was ready for a change. Ricky has now started to progress towards paid employment and has a varied and active social life, thanks to the Northern Health and Social Care Trust's Day Opportunities Programme.

The Day Opportunities Programme was set up for adults with learning disabilities following recommendations in the Equal Lives Report and the Northern Trust's "Widening Choice and Day Opportunities Strategy" for the modernisation and reform of day services. The programme covers four areas of opportunity: recreational, vocational, volunteering and further education. The Day Opportunities coordinator works with individuals and their families to tailor the programme to individual needs and aspirations.

Lynn McAllister, Day Opportunities Coordinator for the Ballyclare area said, "When Ricky first joined the Day Opportunities programme two years ago, his particular needs were looked at with himself; his family and social worker and the right mix of activities developed for him. Ricky has always had a good work ethic, so he was particularly interested in progressing towards paid employment."

To help Ricky with the transition into the work environment he has been placed with Triangle's Progression to Employment Services at "Alternative Angles Newtownabbey". Alternative Angles is a Social Enterprise that provides support to people, helping them to gain experience and to develop new vocational skills. It helps build participant's confidence to improve individual employment opportunities, prepare for work and thereby fulfil potential.

Ricky spends two days a week at Alternative Angles. Ricky said, "I make candles and pack. I have not decided what I want to do yet when I get a job, but I enjoy the independence of travelling to work training on my own and work experience."

Once Ricky is ready to take on paid work Triangle's Progression To Employment Service will place him with an employer in keeping with his needs and recruitment opportunities. The Progression To Employment Service is a European Social Funded partnership with the Northern Trust; the Department of Employment and Learning.

When not at Alternative Angles Ricky attends "The Base" in Ballyclare. As part



of the modernisation and reform of day services, The Northern Trust has developed 10 such “Bases” across the Trust. Their purpose is to facilitate recreation and friendship through social inclusion for adults with a learning disability. He watches TV and plays the Wii, plays snooker in a local snooker club and visits a variety of places on social/recreational trips. Ricky represents “service users” on the Ballyclare Base Steering Group. The group is made up of service users; parents/carers of service users; representatives from the Trust and Volunteers They meet once a month and review what has happened in the past month and ensure the needs and aspirations of the members are being fulfilled. Lynn said, “The Ballyclare Base is very involved in local community initiatives. Earlier this year they revamped the gardens at Larne Adult Centre and they also cleaned up around the local youth centre. At present Ricky and his friends are organising their Christmas dinner.”

The Day Opportunities programme has given Ricky the opportunity to become a fully integrated member of the Ballyclare community. He now attends the Base and is working towards getting paid employment. As Day Opportunities Coordinator Lynn said, “Ricky has both an active social and working life. He enjoys getting out and meeting new people. He has learnt many new skills and is now a more confident, independent person with a lot to offer the community and through the Day Opportunities Programme he has been given the chance to do so.”



***Ricky Winton, Ballyclare***