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## Student's confidence 'skyrocketed' following pro footballer interview

We spoke to Deputy Head of Blue Mountain Education, Alison Widdowson, about one student's journey to self-belief through ASDAN's Football Short Course.

Blue Mountain Homes provides residential care, education, career prospects and positive life experiences to young people aged 8 to 18. These young people exhibit complex emotional, behavioural and learning difficulties. Deputy Head, Alison Widdowson, tells us of one learner's huge achievement against all odds.

"ASDAN's Short Courses enable our young people to progress through interest-led learning," says Alison. "Toll Education is one of 13 Blue Mountain Homes located in the East Midlands and is home to 15-year-old Jack. Jack came to Toll Education's emotional behavioural home when he was in Year 7, having experienced childhood trauma and a negative experience of education.

"Jack has been diagnosed with Global Development Delay Syndrome, which is when a child takes longer to reach certain development milestones. ASDAN's Football Short Course helped to show Jack that he could achieve so much more than he believed. Jack began



Derby County FC goalkeeper, Kelle Roos

the course in January and was immediately engaged in *Module 1 Football Participation*. He began to develop a variety of skills and knowledge, not only in practical sports skills but in maths, English, and ICT through *Module 4 Football in the Community*."

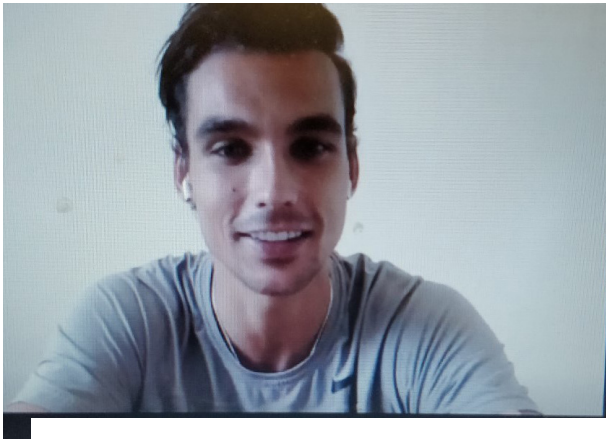




## Interest-led learning

“Jack researched costings of equipment, compiled information about the rules and regulations and gave an illustrated talk on his favourite player. ASDAN’s Football Short Course enabled Jack to finally realise his abilities and exceed his own expectations of himself.

“Jack was doing so well and then Covid-19 hit! We entered lockdown phase one and Jack still had one remaining challenge, which was to carry out an interview with someone within the football world. Jack had to find a way around carrying out an interview in lockdown.”



*Roos engaged in Jack’s interview questions*

## Overcoming self-doubt

“Jack had to think bigger now and took a chance on contacting Derby County Football Club to see if they could assist. Derby County goalkeeper, Kelle Roos, agreed! Jack had to overcome personal fears, such as speaking to a professional footballer and using Zoom to complete the ASDAN Football Short Course.

“Jack had practised how to present himself in an interview and I scribed for him so that he could focus on his eye contact. Due to nerves, Jack’s autistic

tendencies were a little accentuated, but through seeing himself afterwards in the recording, he realised the magnitude of what he had achieved and it skyrocketed his confidence.

“Jack felt amazing after the event,” says Alison. “He was elated and so proud of how he had conducted himself.”

## Confidence for further education

“ASDAN’s Football Short Course sparked the lightbulb moment where a young person realised that he could really achieve something,” says Alison. “The key outcomes from ASDAN’s Football Short Course were improved confidence, literacy and numeracy skills, which were all achieved through a passion of Jack’s. ASDAN’s Football Short Course has better equipped Jack for interview situations, while helping him to overcome personal challenges.

“Jack has shone through ASDAN’s Football Short Course and it has given him the self-belief to access a larger educational provision. When Jack first came to Toll Education we could hardly get him to put pen to paper or enter a classroom. Now, Jack is completing ASDAN’s Science and Geography Short Courses and is working towards a BTEC Level 1.

“We are all so pleased with Jack’s progress,” says Alison. “ASDAN’s Football Short Course was the stepping-stone needed to engage Jack in education and to be more of an independent learner, but most importantly, ASDAN’s Football Short Course has given him confidence in his voice.”

*\*For safeguarding reasons this person’s identity has been protected and their name has been changed.*

Contact [info@asdan.org.uk](mailto:info@asdan.org.uk) to find out more and share your centre’s success story.