

# Employability News



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## Team Work Throughout Lockdown

By Gemma Hayne

Just to say a great big thank you to the team for all their hard work through lockdown. They have checked in with over 500 participants, put over 300 people onto some form of online training, and more than 60 people in to work— many in key sectors.

## SPOTLIGHT: Worried About Going Back Outside?

By Gemma Hayne



*"I hope that people will look out for the window stickers and certificates, and feel reassured that they can shop safely..."*

- Huw David, Council Leader

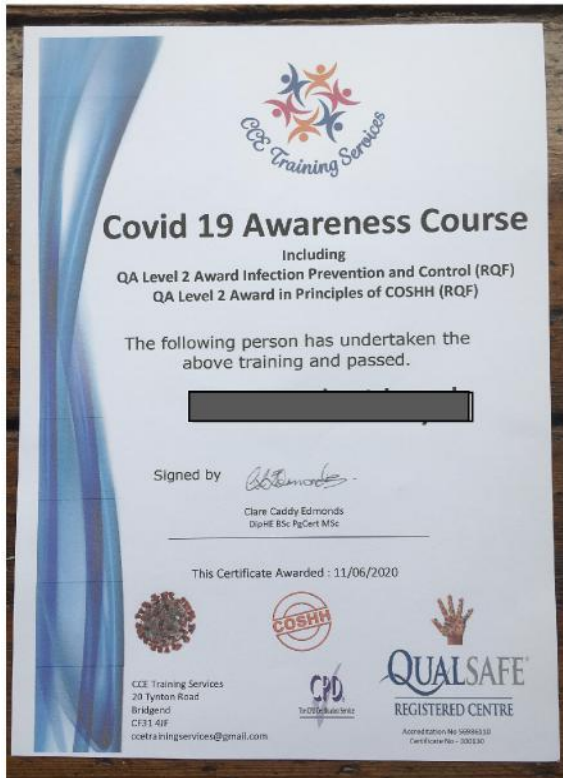
With government guidelines changing, many of us are able to travel a bit more and shops will be re-opening. It is only natural that this can cause some anxiety about going out again and how different things will be.

Employability Bridgend has been doing our part in trying to help keep people safe and re-start the local economy by organising free online training in **COVID-19 Awareness**, a specialised course that incorporates elements of 'Infection Prevention and Control' and 'Control of Substances Hazardous to Health' (COSHH) - which is a common cleaning course - to businesses planning to re-open.

This is in conjunction with Bridgend County Borough Council giving out free sneeze-guards to protect both the cashier and customer when paying. On completion of the qualification, businesses are given a sticker to display so you know that they have completed the course. (See photos above).

The feedback has been great. One participant said, "I definitely feel this training would give customers more confidence in returning to our store... The course was very informative and everyone had a chance to ask questions specific to their business."





## Virtual World - Online Courses

By Michelle Broome

The COVID- 19 Awareness course is not the only course that we have sourced during lockdown. Like every other aspect of life, we had to change how we did things here too, but managed to work together with training providers to hold 26 different courses. Our Michelle Broome explains more:

"Part of being a Skills Trainer is normally to meet an individual face-to-face to discuss their interest in training courses, and to offer them support in their employment/learning journey. The ability to meet individuals face-to-face had to come to a stop, but the communication hadn't, meaning we could continue signing people up and to support and encourage many. We found new ways of communicating with colleagues, training providers and participants. We adapted new and existing ways to train and learn, and more importantly to overcome barriers.

Technology has proved to be a useful tool; technology pre-existed but for some was, and is, a minefield. I have been extremely proud of participants who have overcome their fear of technology and the many life barriers they have had to face during COVID-19; from job losses, to childcare issues, to mental health and well-being, and have modified their lives and adapted. We have been able to signpost people in so many areas to give them that support they need which then allows them to continue with their learning journey.

We have overcome many training barriers by liaising with training providers to ensure participants can complete training through many platforms from Skype, workbooks, quizzes and many more online adaptations."



Simon James from Oxford House Menswear

*"There is a whole world of training courses out there on the World Wide Web and we've been finding them."*

- Michelle Broome, Skills Trainer



## Virtual World - Fancy a Chat?

By Gemma Hayne

Although we have all been staying home to help keep Corona at bay, we still need to do a bit of socialising, or have a chat about issues we are having to a sympathetic ear.

Our NET team have been running a virtual café on Google Meet for people to drop in - although they do have to provide their own tea and biscuits, sadly the internet isn't that good yet.

They have had some fantastic guest speakers on topics like men's mental health from Mark Williams, founder of Fathers Reaching Out.

Really friendly and informal, the café runs weekly and anyone is welcome. Each week's room code can be found on our social media.



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*"It's a great way to interact and carry on providing a quality service."*

- Dave Muckell, Café Co-ordinator

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## A New Avenue for Dafydd

By Sophie Dimmery

An excellent example of the project in action is the support provided to Dafydd Rees to help improve his work life balance and future prospects in employment.

Dafydd said: "Fed up with my lack of opportunity in the workplace and confusion about which direction to take, I sought help and was introduced to the NET project. Upon analysing my work history, skills and ambitions, my Mentor, Chris, and I were able to dissect my previous CV and identify my strengths to make myself more employable. My sessions with Chris taught ... gave me a newfound self-confidence, a positive mindset, which inspired me to pursue new avenues.

As a result, I have gained full-time employment in an industry I love with a better work/life balance, a sense of self-worth and general better well-being. Without the guidance from Chris and the NET project, I wouldn't have had the courage to take the chance and better myself.

I'd like to thank Chris and all the team at NET for their hard work and support."

## What Next?

By Gemma Hayne

As we plan for the next few months, we have to balance our desire to get out there and see people face-to-face and the need to be careful. A lot of the events we were planning on holding, such as jobs fairs, cannot happen as they used to.

We are now looking of doing several virtual jobs fairs aimed at specific sectors of work, for example care or retail, let us know if you have any suggestions.

There is also an opportunity to work more closely with other support organisations, such as Citizen 's Advice, as demand for all kin ds of support increases - it just makes sense for all the help available to be as easy to access as possible.

Depending on the British summer weather, we could organise some outdoors engagement hubs, for people to get in formation that they need in a one-stop shop safely.

Keep an eye on our webpage or social media for updates on all of these and more.

We also have some great 'Lockdown Diaries' done by members of our team to show how they have coped during lockdown - I think you will really enjoy them, so do take a look on our Facebook page.

Until however we see you next - stay safe!




*"We'll meet again. Don't know where, don't know when..."*

- Dame Vera Lynn

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