George Haverhand was born and raised in Sheffield and studied music technology at the University of Hull. Upon finishing university at 21, George had plans to find work in the music and arts industry. He was involved in the local music scene doing odd jobs for venues and band nights and looking forward to the summer, where he had a job lined up to start working as a sound engineer on a cruise ship – an exciting new step for him personally as well as his career. However, the coronavirus pandemic changed everything for George, and as the country went into lockdown his job on the cruise fell through. He was stuck at home and found it hard to adjust to a new job market where his sector was severely hit, and opportunities were almost non-existent.

In May 2020, George started working with the Job Centre and was applying for jobs working in factories but hearing nothing back. Despite these difficulties, George kept his chin up and broadened his search criteria, deciding to start looking for jobs that were classified as essential work. His work coach put him in contact with The Prince’s Trust, where he learnt about the Get Started with Health and Social Care programme, a one-week virtual pre-employment programme, in partnership with The Department of Health and Social Care and Health Education England, that supports unemployed young people into roles in health and social care work.

When George started the programme, he didn’t really know anything about the social care sector, and worried that his lack of experience might be a barrier to him finding work there. But he engaged well with the online delivery and learnt on the course more about care work, the values of the social care sector, and the importance of his own transferable skills. Get Started with Health and Social Care runs in collaboration with local employer partners who offer live job opportunities to participants, so George spent the week developing his skills ahead of an interview for a job on the final day. George had this to say about the programme:

 “I was interested in care work because I’ve always wanted to help people. I definitely needed the knowledge that I learnt on the course about care work, like information on safeguarding, because it was all brand new for me. The course gave me a lot of confidence as well. The Prince’s Trust staff gave us mock interviews in preparation for the real ones at the end. I was nervous for the mock interview and getting through that really helped me deal with the real interview. If it weren’t for that practice, I wouldn’t have got it.”

At the end of the week, after acing his final interview, George was offered a role as a support worker in domiciliary care at ‘Abbeycare and Nursing’. In this role, he supports individuals with additional health needs and disabilities to manage practical tasks such as personal hygiene and household chores, as well as supporting them to engage in activities and events such as craft sessions, movie nights and trips out.

When George finished the Prince’s Trust programme, he was matched up with a Prince’s Trust progression mentor named Barry. As he started in his new job – a daunting thing for anyone – George met Barry every two weeks for virtual mentoring sessions to chat through his experiences at work and talk through any problems he was facing. With Barry’s guiding hand and his own natural skills for care work, George was able to thrive and was quickly given additional responsibility at work, including taking on night shifts and covering for other staff members at late notice. Mentor Barry had this to say about George:

“George impressed me from the outset with his willingness and enthusiasm for his role as a care worker with Abbey Care. He accepted his new duties without question, including the challenge of personal care and hygiene of those in his charge. He revelled in the new responsibility he was given at work and also managed to keep a balance in his life with love of music, reading and computer gaming with friends.”

George started work at Abbey Care in September 2020. Flash forward one year and he is still employed by the company and continues to enjoy his role. He plans to keep working there in the long term and is enjoying the security of stable work after the challenges that he faced through the pandemic.