

# Naman

## Give Someone a Start Programme



Naman joined Thames Water through the Give Someone a Start Programme, a three week programme designed to help individuals gain confidence and valuable work experience within different areas of the business.

The aim is to give individuals the confidence and support required to equip them with a successful career going forward. The scheme has helped over 250 individuals in the last 7 years.

### Why did you choose to apply to the Give Someone a Start Programme?

I was diagnosed with severe autism when I was 18 months old. I went to a special school and later, with support, to a mainstream school. Although I struggled due to my autism, I went on to achieve good A levels and then got a BSc degree in Maths.

After I finished my degree I started to apply for jobs. I was invited to interviews but a successful outcome was a challenge, even in spite of my degree. I struggled to remain hopeful. I eventually came across a disability careers fair where I was introduced to Thames Water and signed up to join the GSAS Programme. It was through this that I gained invaluable work experience to support my future. I felt not only appreciated but understood, and I saw that this would be a company where different backgrounds were valued.

I now have a permanent job at Thames Water and am completing an apprenticeship.

### How did you end up on an Apprenticeship?

My mentor was very supportive and understanding, as she saw my potential and understood my needs. She suggested I apply for a Data Analysis Apprenticeship as I was already familiar with the database and it would enable me to learn and develop. A new mentor/manager from the Data Service Team agreed to take me on as an apprentice, and I'm now continually learning a variety of new data analysis skills within a very supportive team.

Naman's manager believes he has gained many fundamental skills from the Kickstart Programme, which has paved the way to his apprenticeship. She says, "I believe the confidence that was gained through these employment programmes has allowed Naman to jump into his apprenticeship with drive and enthusiasm. Naman works to continuously improve whilst still being inquisitive and adding his perceptive personality to projects."



# Summer Kickstart Candidate



Summer joined Thames Water through the Kickstart Programme, a six month programme designed to help individuals aged 16-24 gain valuable work experience.

The programme provides candidates with a dedicated mentor, weekly employability training and paid work experience. The aim is to give individuals the confidence and support required to equip them with a successful career going forward.

## Can you share a bit about your background?

From a young age, I have always been driven and motivated, even through challenging circumstances. I had a vision when I was younger that I would leave school with high grades but unfortunately, I didn't achieve the qualifications that were required to go into higher education. I became a mum at 16 which was a life-changing situation. It was hard for me to find a supportive company to work for that would be flexible towards my commitments outside of work, and I thought I'd never get into a well-paid job or be able to work for a big company.

I pushed through and decided to go to college and gain qualifications that would help me to get into university. I managed to do this, and as a parent and a full-time student, the next challenge was to find work that would be flexible and supportive alongside studying and my family. It was also important to me to work for a company where I could learn whilst working and developing new skills. I came across the Kickstart Programme and applied for a placement.

## How has the Kickstart Programme helped you?

The Kickstart Programme has helped me to develop in many different areas, but particularly with my lack of confidence. Through the programme I've grown not only in confidence but as a professional too, which has improved my ability to work within a large team, be able to communicate, and learn how to support others who may have been in a similar situation. I've now completed my time on the programme and have gained a permanent role at Thames Water.

I've also had the chance to reach out to young people and encourage them to step outside their comfort zone. I'm able to show others that no matter what background, qualifications or experience you have, anything is achievable if you put your mind to it.



# Beth

## Kickstart Hiring Mentor



Beth is one of the Hiring Mentors on the Kickstart Programme, a six month programme designed to help individuals aged 16-24 gain valuable work experience.

The programme provides candidates with paid work experience, a dedicated mentor and weekly employability training. The aim is to give individuals the confidence and support required to equip them with a successful career going forward.

### Why did you choose to take on a Kickstarter?

The Kickstart Programme is completely life changing and to have had the opportunity to be a part of that as a Hiring Mentor is incredibly special.

The interview experience with a potential Kickstarter was very eye-opening; it made me realise that being openminded enough to see past a lack of qualifications and experience can not only bring value to Thames Water, but also change the lives of these amazing young people who deserve a chance.

Personally, I knew becoming a mentor as part of the Kickstart scheme would be an extremely rewarding way in which to gain line-manager experience and that I would be able to develop my skill set, whilst helping my mentee.

### What has your Kickstarter taught you?

Being a mentor on the Kickstart scheme has strengthened my soft skills and taught me to be a better communicator, more empathetic, and flexible towards challenges in my mentee's life outside of work.

Playing an active role in my Kickstarter's development and seeing their confidence grow over such a short space of time has also made me more confident - in my ability to inspire others and help them realise that they too can inspire other young people in similar situations.

It was amazing watching our Kickstarter go from a shy young individual to someone willing to step out of her comfort zone, and I was absolutely delighted when she received an offer for a permanent position at Thames Water.

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