



r, by making six-month job placements available for 16 to 24-year-olds,

More than 30 six-month work placements were made available by Lichfield Cathedral for 16 to 24-year-olds in the region. The roles available were in the Cathedral, churches, and organisations across the Diocese – providing valuable work experience for those impacted by the pandemic.

For some young people, like Gabriella, this opportunity proved to be life changing.

“In 2019, I began the year homeless” she explained.

“All the stress caused me to end up in hospital, which meant I missed my exams.

“Finding work was difficult to say the least.”

But then Gabriella heard about the Kickstart Scheme through Universal Credit and was given a placement by Lichfield Cathedral, to work as a children’s and youth assistant at St Matthew's Church in Walsall.

“Everyone welcomed me with open arms, it was the most fun that I had in a very long time”, Gabriella laughed.

“The children were amazing, I got to be creative and make up new games, go on trips with the children and I even gained office-based skills, like with risk assessments and writing letters.

“St Matthews Church looks like such a domineering building but the people who go there and work there are the kindest people you’ll ever meet.

“Everyone is so nice that you feel like you are family as soon as you walk through the doors.

“I also got to find out more about Christianity, even though I am not a Christian myself, it was a very enriching experience.”

Today, Gabriella works as a Mental Health Support Worker. Reflecting on the scheme, she said:

“Taking part gave me back my hope and ambition, that I thought I had lost.

“Thank you, Lichfield Cathedral, for giving me the chance to become who I wanted to be.”

More information:

- ‘Kickstart’ was a government funded employment initiative that helped 16–24-year-olds gain work experience and employability training during the peak of the Covid pandemic.
- Several Church of England Cathedrals and other organisations took the opportunity to create these six-month job ‘Kickstart’ placements, just like Lichfield Cathedral did.
- The [Church of England's Vision and Strategy for the 2020s](#) is helping us to be a Church which proclaims and lives out the Good News of Jesus Christ afresh in every generation.

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