

## Case Studies

### EY Foundation

(accredited at Gold)

#### Kierran, Manchester, Williams Hulmes Grammar School



I was raised by my mum and I am the youngest of four. If I go to university I will be the first in the family. I live in an area that has low progression into university or high paying jobs, a lot of families are hard off. When we were growing up, we didn't have a lot of money. Part of the reason I went on *Smart Futures* is because it is paid and that would help. I would still go on now if it wasn't paid, but it was a bonus to walk home and be able to say, "here you go."

My mum has seen me become my own person. It's not a strict rule to dress smartly to college, but *Smart Futures* taught me this is what makes me feel more confident. Coming from a low-income family, I had the one suit. Since *Smart Futures* I have saved up and got myself more. My mum has noticed that I carry myself higher, the programme did wonders for my confidence.

If you are doing work experience for free it feels like slave labour, you are just doing it to be able to write about it in the future. But if you get paid for it you get into the mindset that you are working there.

Before *Smart Futures* I was a bit reserved and not sure of where I was going, I wouldn't have known what to say in an interview. But since the programme I have spoken in front of my whole year group and I just didn't think about it, I knew I could do it. I couldn't have done this before *Smart Futures*. My teachers have noticed a difference as I am more willing to present, and some of them have even commented on how good they were.

*Smart Futures* has opened a lot of doors for me. I can now say I have learned a whole new range of skills and experiences. I had a chance to reflect about what I had done, whether that is managing a team or coaching someone through a problem, and to move those skills into another job.

At *Smart Futures* you are in a working environment and I felt like a grown up just being there. The programme helped close the gap between going to school and having a job, whereas in previous work experience, I was sat at a computer putting data into a spreadsheet. Here, you get integrated into the workforce and when I met some of the volunteers that were helping I kept thinking in a few years that could be me.

I now feel confident about getting a job. You are taught skills rather than knowledge. You can know everything but if you don't have the communication skills to get that knowledge across it's useless. In the future I know I want to be involved with people, I like delivering presentations. I can't explain why but I get a sense of accomplishment. I probably gave as many in *Smart Futures* as I have throughout school. To get a job you really need to be able to sell yourself in a short amount of time and be confident in doing so. You get zero practice of this at school.

My advice to someone applying would be to make the most of the experience, it goes a lot faster than you think. From the moment you click apply start trying to get into the mindset that you are applying for a job. A lot of the jobs we could be working in in 10 or 15 years might not even exist yet.