

**With a highly successful *Humber LEP Health and Social Care Group* event as a “curtain raiser”, Work Experience Month is in full swing in Lincolnshire - as *Care Plus Group’s Supported Employment Services* continue to promote work experience opportunities for people of all abilities.**

The *Humber LEP Health and Social Care Group* brings together relevant representatives from a range of education, skills and employer backgrounds. Its members and its Chair, Sharon Stead of *Care Plus Group*, work together to identify current and future skills gaps within health and social care and to create innovative local solutions to address them.

The Group recognised that a lively, content-rich and well publicised event would be the most effective way to interest, attract and recruit local residents to start a career within health and social care. And so, on 26th September, as a “curtain raiser” to also support Work Experience Month 2018, the first ever North East Lincolnshire health and social care careers event, *I Care Careers*, was held.

Approximately 400 people attended the event, including members of the public, university students and pupils from local schools and colleges, with 35 stands from a wide variety of health and social care providers showcasing the diverse range of careers available in the sector. This guidance was supplemented by delegates from universities, colleges and training providers who also offered specialist information about the many associated educational and vocational pathways that are available. The event’s guest speakers included Kishor Tailor, Chief Executive of *Humber Local Enterprise Partnership*, who also formally opened the event, and Councillor Jane Hyldon-King.

The event was undoubtedly a great success. Positive feedback from both delegates and attendees has continued well into Work Experience Month, with a resounding vote for more *I Care Careers* events to be held in the future.

Sharon Stead said *“Health and social care organisations face particular workforce challenges because of factors which are specific to the sector, like the changing and increasing health and social care needs of the population. This event has clearly not only inspired several local residents to start a career within the sector, it also provided a forum for local stakeholders to work together to support more local residents into further/higher education and employment.”*

This video shows how attendees had the opportunity to speak to health and social care professionals and to experience the interactive activities on offer.

<https://youtu.be/CCvOR1E-844>

Meanwhile it’s (highly impressive) “business as usual” as *Care Plus Group’s Care Plus Employability Services* continues to deliver two strands under one service: Employability and Supported Employment.

Most notable is its Supported Employment which specialises in supporting people with learning difficulties, physical disabilities and long-term health conditions, assisting them to remove barriers to finding and sustaining employment. This is through a variety of employability opportunities and support packages tailored to individual needs. This holistic approach enables participants to make their own choices in crucially important matters like finding employment, engaging in vocational training and support to access independent living/housing. All these

factors considerably enhance the quality of life for people with long-term conditions and ensure that people facing such challenges have a positive experience of care.

This has been exceptionally well received with one school in particular, Cambridge Park Academy, as Work Experience placements taken by SEND (Special Educational Needs and Disability) students at the school have more than doubled for this academic year: an outstanding achievement and a highlight celebration in Work Experience Month.

Students attending this programme go through two phases. The first involves him/her spending two hours a week, for seven weeks, on placement and she/he is allowed to choose from a wide range of career paths including retail, catering and horticulture for that experience. The second phase increases this weekly placement time and lasts the entire academic year, with reviews with both the student and the employer conducted throughout to track the students learning and key skills and experience, and to identify which key skills and areas need improvement.

“Care” is the key word in all these initiatives – alongside “professionalism” and “commitment” - and we congratulate Gold Level Work Experience Quality Standard **Care Plus Group** on its excellent work.