

Ben Carroll is 27 years old and has just been offered 21 hours paid work at HMV in Plymouth City Centre. This is the first time that HMV have recruited someone through the Workstep scheme.

When Ben left college he was very clear that he wanted paid employment.

His enthusiasm secured him a work placement initially at Virgin Megastores, followed by a move to HMV, where he worked in the stockroom and on the shop floor interacting with customers.

Ben has always had a real passion for movies, video games and DVD's and the work placement at HMV proved to be a perfect match.

His hard work, coupled with an extensive knowledge of films and games quickly led to him gaining Permitted Work payments at the lower rate. This has now led to him securing 21 hours paid work and he has also completed a NPTC Course in retail.

Ben's new goal is to live independently and he is now being supported by Plymouth City Council Independent Living Team to learn add to his skills.

Ben is a confident, highly intelligent and articulate young Man with a winning personality. He has an amazing attention to detail and works with speed and accuracy.

Ben has Aspergers syndrome.

## Ben's words

I work in the stock room processing stock, putting prices, special offers and tags on everything. They go down to the floors in trays or boxes so it's got to be right.

Pluss approached HMV and I came here on work experience initially for 3 days a week. I'm really in to movies and video games so this is the perfect job for me.

I enjoy the challenges I take on. My colleagues are friendly, helpful and



easy to talk to. I get involved with them socially too. I have also completed an NPTC in retail and 'Skills for Working Life' qualification.

No one can say to me anymore what I can and can't have. Now I can buy everything myself. At the moment I use my wages for all my expenses, to buy DVD's or a Playstation game. I would also love to find my own flat one day soon and depending on how big my front room is, I'd like a perfect flat screen TV!

When it comes to work, I do think if there is something you are good at or qualified to do then you should go for it.

The good thing is, I am also helping to train someone else here now. I advise him on what stickers need to go on the CD's and DVD's, and give him help. ”

## **Ben's Employer** **Gary Turner, Store Manager, HMV**

“ Ben is just about to start being paid here and he does his work very well. He is considered by everyone to be a full member of the team and is involved in everything we do, nights out and so on.

I think it's really important in today's society that everyone is included and it's great for my staff to see that we employ people with disabilities. I am keen to give people an opportunity and if there's something you enjoy and are good at then I think people should be given a chance to make a contribution.

Pluss' support has been excellent. We also have another placement currently; a six week work trial. They have a job coach to work alongside and when the guy's pick it up then the job coach fades away. It's a good indicator as to whether someone can do the job – we can then give them a three month probation. Given the right candidate I wouldn't hesitate to do it again.

Since Ben has been with us you can see that he has improved; his temperament is calm and he has a good overall commitment.

Ben will go on the staff rota and pay role and it's these little things that make a big difference to him being a genuine member of the team. ”