

**On 1st July 2010, Charlotte Tillian, 26, started a modern apprenticeship as a Research and Consultation Administration Assistant with Torbay council. This is no mean feat as Charlotte is one of very few people with a learning disability living in residential care to move away from benefits and pay for her own residential care.**

When Pluss started working with Charlotte, it became apparent that she had a real flare for IT. Charlotte began searching for jobs and found a work placement in the research and consultation department at Torbay Council.

To help her settle in, Pluss provided a job coach to support her to learn new tasks. The job coach gradually faded away and came back to help if there were any issues. Charlotte also achieved an NVQ 1 and 2 in Office Administration.

She has continued to build up her skills and confidence. At first this led to 3 hours paid work a week for specific duties. Torbay council are now so pleased with her they have offered her a role for 22 hours a week.



Charlotte has a learning disability and can also have emotional and anxiety issues leading to low self confidence.

Charlotte had never had paid work before.

## **Charlotte's words**

"I am ecstatic about this because I never thought I would get this far and that other people have given me this chance.

Working is far better than I thought it would be. Before I just felt like a nobody. When I come here they made me feel like a somebody.

It's made a major difference to my life. I am living like a normal person now, not like a disabled person.

I'm very excited. With my first wage packet I would like to buy an iPhone."

My advice to someone else would be if you really want to do it, if you really put your mind to it you can find work. Pluss' support helped me to understand what it would be like to work - the expectations."

## **Charlotte's Employer**

Jo Beer, Consultation Research Manager

"This is a complex job that demands real skill and technical knowledge. Charlotte is a good worker with excellent English and literacy skills but her biggest strength is IT. She also does excellent online research and recently put together a report for us on Equality Impact Assessments.

She's a very capable lady and gets on well with her colleagues. If anyone needs work doing, she does it and to a really high standard. It's lovely as she's a real team member.

Pluss have helped Charlotte deal with emotional issues. They also undertake regular reviews, NVQ's and have supported Charlotte with in-house training.

Charlotte struggled to ask for help at first. Now as she has built up a trusted relationship with us, she has no problems asking for clarification. "

**Bernard Page, Group Manager**

"When our team was restructured, we used this as an opportunity to use our modern apprenticeship scheme and customise it to Charlottes needs. She went through the job evaluation process and we have had great support from Pluss to get to this next stage.

I think in the past Charlotte had been told she couldn't achieve and this had obviously knocked her confidence. We really see the potential in Charlotte and know she has a lot more to give.

She is an excellent character with a great sense of humour and great fun to be around. She has faced real challenges in the past – but when you see her achieving and doing well, it's very rewarding. During her time with us she has really matured."