

Adult Achievement Awards: learner case study #1

David Leather, Lead Scotland

Introducing David

David Leather is a learning support volunteer with Lead Scotland. He also works as a classroom support assistant at New College Lanarkshire.

In 2017 David achieved an Adult Achievement Award at Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF) level 6. This was his first qualification since achieving a Higher National Diploma (HND) in Social Sciences several years earlier.

David's learning journey

David achieved his Award by reflecting on how he developed his skills in instinctive archery. David taught himself instinctive archery by researching it on the internet and watching videos, such as those on YouTube. He also learned from a more-experienced coach and practiced his skills in two archery clubs where he was a member.

The Award gave David an opportunity to recognise his informal learning for which there was no specific qualification. He says:

There's no way of recognising it other than the Adult Achievement Award. The Award allows you to step back and reflect on your learning and get credit for your learning journey, no matter what the subject.

David says that doing the Award enabled him to identify and record skills he was developing, including research and problem-solving skills. He says that previously he might have taken these skills for granted.

David worked towards the Award over a number of months. He says that the process required "quite detailed thought" about what evidence to provide for individual questions in his reflective journal. However, he found doing the Award an enjoyable experience, after a less positive previous experience of formal learning. He says:

You get time to enjoy your learning experience because there's no pressure of assessment. It is the most user-friendly SCQF level 6 qualification I've ever encountered.

David found his tutor and Lead Scotland, the organisation that supported him to achieve his Award, very supportive. He says:

Lead Scotland were very good. They gave me time and space and support and kept me on track. Lead Scotland is good at providing personalised support.

The difference the Award has made to David

For David a major benefit of undertaking the Award was having a chance to focus on his personal plans.

David is now working as a sessional tutor for Lead Scotland, supporting a group of learners to achieve the Awards at SCQF level 3. He even adapted some of the learning materials so that they were more accessible, to help one learner to understand what was required of them.

What next for David?

David has begun to implement the personal development plan he created when working towards the Award. He has enrolled for a part-time digital apprenticeship programme at New College Lanarkshire, and is also planning to complete a certificate in counselling skills. In the long-term David plans to work towards a degree level qualification.

What David would say to other potential learners

David would encourage anyone to work towards an Award — in fact he regularly does so. He says:

It's the way that education should be. Exams put people under too much psychological pressure. This approach suits a lot more people.