

Young Enterprise's impact for young people taking part in Team Programme, described by Students E and B¹ from Rotherham Aspire, a Pupil Referral Unit (PRU) in Rotherham, South Yorkshire, England.

In June 2024, team Bloom Cycle, from Rotherham Aspire PRU took part in Young Enterprise's Team Programme showcase event held in Doncaster, at the Eco Power stadium.

Team Programme is an enterprise journey designed to aid young people's transition from education into employment and independent living. It is tailored to benefit young people with mild to moderate learning difficulties, equipping them to develop key life skills and confidence, while learning how to run an enterprise collaboratively.

A Pupil Referral Unit (PRU) is an alternative education provision in the UK that caters for children who are not able to attend mainstream schools due to various reasons. PRUs provide education and support for pupils who need greater care and attention than their regular school can provide.

Competing with teams of young people from across the region, Bloom Cycle were interviewed by a panel of judges and delivered a presentation to over 80 guests at the showcase. Bloom Cycle succeeded in winning the Teamwork award, which was presented by Scott Jones from law firm Squire Patton Boggs.

Bloom Cycle created innovative products from items like discarded plant pots and bricks, using donated materials sourced from local recycling centres.

Speaking about her role as a peer mentor, B. explained what this involves and her motivation for taking part: *"Basically, I've decided that I wanted to help the people in my school that haven't really experienced the young enterprise and show them the way it works. I've done it for two years now. It's like instead of them going out there into the world, I like to offer them some support."*

Taking part in YE's programme for the first time, E. described what activities she'd been involved with: *"We're painting some of the things that we've recycled, like plant pots, pine cones and bricks to use as doorstops. We took some pine cones into a primary school and worked with the children to make little characters out of them."*

As a result of this experience, E. discovered her natural aptitude at working with young children and is now interested in exploring a career in this. She explained: *"I have always wanted to do childcare, I grew up around babies because I've got a big family."*

Like B., E. also plans to continue as a peer mentor next year, to help other students at Rotherham Aspire to develop their skills and confidence. Summarising what she'd enjoyed most



Some of the Bloom Cycle products showcased at the Doncaster event

¹ Names have been shortened to initials to protect the students' anonymity

about the experience of taking part this year, E. reflected: *“Just everyone working together in a team, I’ve enjoyed that.”*

B. reflected on the impact from YE’s programme by commenting: *“The influence [from YE] really helps people to get out there, it brings people together as a community so they don't feel like they are different from everybody else. Not everybody here comes from a good background, we come from a PRU, we’re kids that got kicked out of school because of behaviour reasons. There’s other kids who can’t be in normal mainstream school because of their situation, but here nobody looks at our differences, we’re all succeeding.”*

Maxine Hughes, Careers Lead Rotherham at Aspire PRU, added: *“The Young Enterprise programme provides an excellent opportunity for our students to bring themselves in the world of business, gaining an entrepreneurial spirit. Without the Young Enterprise project, our students would not have had the opportunity to build the essential skills that are invaluable for their future. Participating in the Young Enterprise programme empowers students to build up a diverse set of skills essential for success in the world of work, equipping them with practical knowledge, hands-on experience, and an understanding of running a business. Through this learning experience, students are prepared for future entrepreneurial ventures but also develop a skill set that enhances their employability and career prospects.”*

Thanks to support from diverse sources, we are pleased to report that 539 young people with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) participated in Team Programme in 2023/24. We partnered with 49 learning centres (SEND provision/settings) across England and Wales, also engaging teachers in these locations, to develop their skills in teaching enterprise and financial education for their learners in the long term.

Creativity, confidence and aspirations were the areas where we saw the greatest degree of progression for learners taking part in Team Programme this year. In addition, we are pleased to highlight the following impacts for young people from our survey data:

- 100% of learners surveyed agreed with the statement: *“I understand my personal strengths and areas I need to develop.”*
- 100% of learners surveyed agreed with the statement: *“I can create original ideas using my imagination.”*
- 78% of learners said that they know what qualifications/education they need to get to where they want to be.

We are grateful for the support from all our partners towards our Inspiring Futures programme, which contributed towards our work with young people living in the most disadvantaged communities of England and Wales. The Rotherham Aspire Pupil Referral Unit is located in such a community and so our Inspiring Futures funding will contribute directly to young people taking part in Young Enterprise’s programmes in the 2024/25 academic year.

For more information about Young Enterprise’s work, please contact Viv Couche, Senior Relationship Manager on viv.couche@y-e.org.uk or 07926 071968