



**OCTOBER 2023**

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# **Impact Report 2023**

**TRAINEESHIP YEAR TWO REPORT; SUMMER 2023 1ST AND 2ND  
COHORT**

**LOLLY LABS SUMMER 2023**



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**PREPARED AND PRESENTED BY**

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NO VICE ICE CIC - 12953580

# A little about the traineeship...



The No Vice Ice traineeship serves to give paid training and work experience to people who are facing barriers in the workforce because of invisible health conditions or disabilities.

The content of the traineeship is built in collaboration with the trainees, creating a supportive environment in which they can develop skills related to food hygiene, production and packaging and gain a Level 2 Food Hygiene Certificate. Trainees are also invited to learn about and participate in other areas of the business according to their interests.

Alongside this skills-based learning, we facilitate positive conversations about reasonable adjustments and access to work; provide support with work readiness, positive resources, good routine, with building a CV and thinking about transferable skills.

# Project Timeline

All 15 applicants had a phone conversation with the the Traineeship Manager, with four final applicants accepted.

> **W & J** accepted offers of employment and began their 8 week traineeship on the 19th June to the 7th August.

> **Z & T** accepted offers of employment and began their 8 week traineeship 16th August to the 4th October.



## Trainee Goals & Objectives

At the beginning of the traineeship, the trainees identified personal goals for what they wanted to get out of the programme:

- > **W** wanted to gain work experience to improve his chances of finding future work after nearly 20 years of unemployment.
- > **J** said the traineeship would help them “feel like a valued member of society and acquire accreditation to allow me to pursue a career”.
- > **Z** wanted to gain experience of being in a work place that they can “proudly talk about when looking for future roles” and to get into a good routine for work.
- > **T** wanted to complete her Level 2 Food Hygiene certificate, to learn and be able to complete all the tasks required in the job, to build in confidence related to work particularly with a view to be able to start saving money for their future.

# Traineeship Outline



The content of the traineeship was built in collaboration with the trainees in a supportive environment. Trainees were introduced to all aspects of the lolly making process and were invited to learn about and participate in any areas of the business relevant to them and their interests so as to get the most out of the traineeship for their future employment or other goals. This included recording data for our traceability records using Excel; doing stock takes; completing paperwork for deliveries (all of which are widely transferable skills); as well as learning about fruit surplus and nutrition, and our role in the OX4 Food Crew.

One-to-One support was provided as required by the trainee, including learning support with the Level 2 Food Hygiene certificate; CV writing; enquiries to Access to Work; enquiries to job vacancies, college and university courses; support with paperwork; resources for information about workplace rights, information and advocacy for their needs at work. This took the form of hands-on support as well as simply creating accountability and motivation.



We explored wider issues regarding workplace readiness, including time management; executive functioning; work place expectations; identifying and requesting reasonable adjustments; building and maintaining good routines; familiarity with public transport.

# Barriers to Overcome

- *“I did not believe I had any real strengths. I was unemployed for nearly two decades and could hardly ever get a job interview, let alone hired.”*
- *“The job centre keep sending me to places that say they can cope with people like me [with my needs] but they can’t and it knocks my confidence. I just want to be able to start saving and earn money.”*
- *“I get scared that I won’t get the job that I want because of the way I am.”*
- *“I was told at college [when asking for extra time to process things] that the workplace wouldn’t slow down for me, so neither would they. That really stuck with me*

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W has multiple and chronic health conditions including autism and has been out of work for approaching twenty years. W stated that they felt limited by a lack of experience compared to other applicants, but also by high anxiety around new people and in situations in which they felt judged. W is also limited by transport needs.

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J has had previous work experience though had had to leave work and been unable to return for quite some years due to caring for her mother, for her own chronic mental health conditions, and a traumatic experience. J stated she experienced heightened levels of anxiety and depression when under stress and therefore new working environments felt overwhelming. Despite this, J expressed that she is very keen to continue her recovery journey and return to work.

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T has learning needs which she feels have held her back from getting the jobs she wants, not only due to her learning abilities and the support she requires but also the pace at which she can work. T was homeless in her late teens and lived in sheltered accommodation, which she described as traumatic and stressful environments. She got stable housing just 2 years ago, and is now on a council waiting list for housing. T is very keen to begin working so she can save money and make plans for her future. T says she has often been suggested to do courses but says this is not possible for her as she can’t afford any fees, and lives on a low budget on Universal Credit.

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Z is a young person who volunteers regularly but with no previous employment history, which they say they feel shame about. Z has autism and also experiences anxiety, depression and struggles with executive functioning, specifically related to motivating themselves without any kind of structure even when passionate about something. Z struggles with keeping to daytime hours.

**The traineeship provided a supportive environment not only for practical work experience, but for open discussions about any barriers the trainees felt they faced in entering the workplace or had had experience of at work. All trainees had one-to-one time with the support team to talk about these further, with specific and tailored support provided for each trainee according to their needs and work preferences.**

## **Recurrent concerns included:**

- Gaps or no experience on CV, which are hard to explain or not desirable to employers
- Lack of confidence due to perceived lack of skills, anxiety about being given responsibility, previous bad experiences with job hunting
- Concerns about stamina for a working day, the need for part-time hours to be able manage a working schedule
- Having learning needs or executive functioning requirements which affects their pace, and feeling that employers will not take the time to work with them on this
- Social anxiety, feeling they have limits to social engagement abilities throughout the day
- Difficulties with paperwork
- Challenges explaining required adjustments to new employers and a lack of faith that these would be made and respected
- Facing a lack of awareness or understanding for unseen conditions
- Transport barriers limiting where they can look for work, and not being able to afford to pay any amount towards an Access to Work grant (these are predominantly reimbursed after being paid by the recipient)

## **Support provided included:**

- Learning support with the Food Hygiene Certificate, including reading support to help with dyslexia, creating accountability and motivation for trainees with ADHD
- One-to-one job hunting support, including discussions around what trainees want from work, what hours and locations feel manageable, how to set search parameters
- Text / email support to create accountability for goals set outside of sessions, for things such as making job and university enquiries
- Open one-to-one conversations about emotional needs or confidence issues that arose, related not just to adjusting to the traineeship but to negative experiences or barriers faced in the trainees lives



## Units Covered in the Programme

### TRAINING UNITS COVERED

Personal hygiene  
Separating foods  
Types and causes of contamination  
Pest control  
Equipment maintenance  
Effective hand washing  
Cleaning schedules  
Chilled storage  
Defrosting and freezing  
Shift opening and closing checks  
Stock control  
Traceability  
Introduction to HACCP - Hazards and Critical Control Points

### PERSONAL AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT DISCUSSIONS

Rights in the workplace  
Equality Act and work place discrimination  
Signposting to support - ACAS, Remploy, Access to Work, Scope, Rethink etc  
How to get support at work - through talking to supervisors, HR, using an advocate  
Workplace wellbeing including types of working, such as flexi-time  
Reasonable adjustments  
Setting positive boundaries  
Discussions about what types of work would be sustainable for individual trainees

### PRACTICAL EXPERIENCE IN THE KITCHEN

Food preparation  
HACCP in practice  
Traceability and record keeping in practice  
Manufacturing products for sale  
Packaging and labelling  
Quality control  
Making up orders, including paperwork  
Stock taking

### PROFESSIONAL CERTIFIED LEARNING

All trainees gained a Level 2 Certificate in Food Safety and Hygiene for Manufacturing  
One trainee additionally gained a Level 3 Food Safety and Hygiene, and continued in paid work with us as a Casual Lolly Maker. They will continue next season in this role as hours become available

# Self Evaluation

At the start of working together, we asked the trainees to consider their strengths and skillsets. Many trainees found it difficult to identify any, *stating that they had very little to no experience, and did not recognise in themselves any skills or habits from their own lives that are applicable to working life.*

On completion of the programme, we asked the trainees to reflect on what they now recognise as their strengths.

## **W:**

- > Gained in confidence
- > Found it was possible for him to work 7+ hour shifts
- > Improved in his understanding of food hygiene, cleaning kitchen work
- > enjoyed working with the equipment, and learnt he would enjoy an environment with a small team in which he worked with objects

## **J:**

- > Gained in confidence, particularly in that they have new skills that can be applied to a new job
- > Found they enjoyed the challenge despite feeling anxious before the traineeship began
- > Enjoyed being given the responsibility for handling the product and using the equipment

## **T:**

- > Built on confidence,, learnt not to be “shy or embarrassed” about their needs
- > Learnt not to get frustrated with themselves when something goes wrong, and to be comfortable with the pace at which they work
- > Learnt to work in a team, to communicate and adapt with and to a colleague’s health needs, as well as their own, in the workplace

## **Z:**

- > Built in confidence, and, having not worked before, now feels that they can do it
- > Felt proud that they completed the Food Hygiene Certificate
- > Felt “a sense of reward” at having pushed themselves and completed something
- > Improved as a driver
- > Gained confidence in their ability to work in a team



# Self-Evaluation Quotes

*"I feel motivated to come in every time. Even if I struggle in the shift because I feel tired, at the end of the day I feel a sense of reward because it is reinforcing that I can do it"*

*"I've enjoyed the level of communication and accommodation there has been. It encourages me to feel more confident in future opportunities."*

*"I have become resilient. With [No Vice Ice's] support I now realise that I can learn new skills and adapt well to a new working environment. Nerves have often hindered me from being able to cope. However I have realised that I can stay calm under pressure support I now realise that I can learn new skills and adapt well to a new working environment. Nerves have often hindered me from being able to cope. However I have realised that I can stay calm under pressure and work well. and work well."*

*"Before the traineeship, I was very nervous about adapting to a new working environment. I now feel more confident that I can use the transferable skills I have acquired to fit into a new job."*

*"I've built more confidence. I've learnt to be myself, and to feel like 'yes I can do it'."*

*"I've enjoyed learning that i can be myself, and be comfortable with what I have in the workplace."*

*"Being at Flo's Place at the Park is very open and not discriminating. I feel I belong here and am accepted, people don't look at me or ask what I have which makes me feel appreciated more."*

*"It has helped me to see that the workplace can be a positive, rewarding environment to be in".*

# Additional Impact

Towards the final few weeks of the traineeship, **Z** made pancakes from scratch for the first time, one of the first times they had cooked anything. Z finds nutrition challenging because of their autism and sensory processing sensitivities they have around food, as well as feelings of shame around “wasting food”. Z therefore recognised this as a big achievement felt proud of themselves at having done this.

*“I’m lucky as an autistic person in that I am articulate and can put into words how my upbringing has affected the way I am. Not all autistic people have this. When you’re younger you can’t express why you don’t like food and you get told you’ve barely tried it, you’re just being fussy. As an adult I don’t like to try things as I don’t like the idea of it going to waste.”*

Z is continuing to work with SOFEA after the traineeship, and is particularly excited to work at SOFEA kitchen, which is a project to introduce cooking to young people. Z said they are “excited to try new foods in a safe space”, and says SOFEA is looking to make a “programme on food for autistic people based on my suggestion.”



## Additional Impact (contd.)

**J** participated in a Lolly Lab session after completing her traineeship. Before becoming unwell herself and caring for her mother, J had previously worked in child care though had not returned to it after having to stop working. Though fully supported throughout, J stated that she felt nervous prior to the Lolly Lab. Alongside the Trainee Manager, J's role at the Lab was to be in the production kitchen, to demonstrate the steps and support the kids to participate. J grew in confidence throughout the session and became more and more proactive, and really engaging with the children.

**J** was then able to add this experience to her CV, and was included in her written reference letter about her time at No Vice Ice.

# Programme Statistics



- 1 trainee did a casual shift with us, processing 20kg of surplus strawberries
- Trainees completed 185+ hours of paid work
- 3 trainees attended an apple pressing session with our apple juice suppliers at Oxford Farmhouse



- All 4 trainees completed their Level 2 Food Hygiene Certificate
- 1 trainee completed their Level 3 Food Hygiene Certificate and continues working with us as a casual lolly maker, to continue in 2024
- 1 trainee participated running a "Lolly Lab" workshop with children and families
- Since completing the programme, all trainees have been actively job hunting. 1 trainee did a trial shift at a cafe, another has got temporary work.



- All trainees provided with a written reference for future work applications
- All trainees received one-to-one support related to their specific needs and barriers faced, and any reasonable adjustments made.
- 110kg of locally grown surplus strawberries saved.
- 90 litres of apple juice from Oxford Farmhouse used



# Next Steps & Future Goals

**W** has paid temporary work and continues to engage with his Employment Support Worker at Oxfordshire County Council. He wants to continue working when this contract ends.

**J** attended a trial shift at a cafe, continues to apply for work, and volunteers in a charity shop. J will return to work with No Vice Ice as a Casual Lolly Maker in 2024.

**T** continues to engage with their Employment Support Worker at Oxfordshire County Council and works with a Disability Employment Advisory Team at the DWP, and she is being supported to find further work experience placements through their network of Disability Confident Employers. T has several job applications in process.

**Z** is talking with a University about the support they can offer to neurodivergent students, with a view to do a Bachelors degree. Z has a specific research focus related to the awareness of and advice available to autistic people, which they are very passionate about. Z continues to do voluntary work, and is actively job hunting.

All trainees have been given a written reference from their time as No Vice Ice Employees, and receive ongoing check-ins and motivational support.

# Next Year for No Vice Ice

Lolly Labs for 2024 are in the pipeline with:

**Parasol Project** - an Oxford based play charity that is committed to redressing the balance for disabled and disadvantaged children and young people facing or at risk of social exclusion.

**Ark T** - an arts and community centre that uses the powers of creativity and community to tackle inequality and transform lives.

**Children Heard and Seen** - provide support children, young people and their families who are affected by parental imprisonment.

**Oxford Community Action** - work to promote community development, social inclusion and social justice for diverse, multi-ethnic, BAME communities, to promote equal representation and participation.



# Oxford Farmhouse Apple Juice Pressing



Three trainees attended our work social at Oxford Farmhouse (one of our suppliers), where we pressed apple juice from surplus apples. It was a great day, and gave the opportunity for different trainee cohorts to meet and to learn not only about how to press apple juice, but also about how Oxford Farmhouse works with people who have experienced homelessness. T said she wished there had been something like that available to her when she was homeless.



# Lolly Labs Summer 2023

Throughout the summer of 2023, we ran a series of free Lolly Labs, in which children and families came to our production kitchen at Flo's Place at the Park, and participated in making their own ice lolly. All aspects of the lolly making process were open to the kids to take part in, from start to finish, and the kids all made their own lolly packet.



# Lolly Labs continued...



Over 85 children and young people attend 5 Lolly Labs over the summer months, including open-to-all sessions, and a private booking with Oxford youth group Name It. We made our Tangy Apple lollies, made using apple juice from surplus apples from Oxford Farmhouse. Whilst making their lollies, we told our lolly makers about our mission at No Vice Ice, our traineeship, and what fruit surplus and food waste is.





# Lolly Labs continued...

With Oxford youth group Name It, we went off-menu and invited the kids to come up with their own recipe so they could experience the entire lolly creating process, from flavour to packaging.

We provided a smorgasbord of fresh fruits and juices, and flavourings such as cinnamon and vanilla essence, giving them free reign to make their own flavour. Taste testing and tweaking along the way to lolly-greatness.



Following the success of the more hands-on elements of the 'Name It' session, we plan to include pressing our own apple juice in the Lolly Labs of 2024, giving the participants a broader experience of how seasonal and local fruit is used and how some of the foods they enjoy are made



All Lab participants learnt about their role in reducing food waste, and about the work of oxford farmhouse, as well as No Vice Ice



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# And finally... THANK YOU!

**The last 3 years would not have been possible without the support of many people/funders/organisations so a big round of applause to you all:**

- Customers and lolly lovers of Oxford – you are great!
- Our director team, staff and trainees
- Flo's – The Place in the Park
- OX4 Food Crew
- Oxford City Farm
- Waste2Taste
- The National Lottery
- Oxford City Council
- The Funding Network (Oxford Gives)
- OSEP and OXLEP's Escalate programmes
- CAG Oxfordshire
- The School for Social Entrepreneurs
- Good Food Oxfordshire
- Oxford Farmhouse
- Rectory Farm
- Our Stockists - Flo's Cafe, Eat the Future @ OU Museum of Natural History, Waste 2 Taste, The Missing Bean, The Story Museum, Modern Art Oxford, Yellow Submarine, Rectory Farm, Restore Cafe & The Jolly Postboys

