

# Kent Supported Employment

**Kate James** describes her job as an Employment Support Officer

I was born deaf and have bilateral sensori-neural hearing loss. I attended mainstream school, college and University using visiting Teachers of the Deaf, radio aids and note takers for support in school. I graduated in 2008 and started working for Kent Supported Employment in September 2008 as a job coach where I supported people with various disabilities and disadvantages in the workplace to learn and keep their job. I have since progressed on to working as an Employment Support Officer for Kent Supported Employment where my role is to support people from 16 years – no upper age limit – to find and keep suitable paid employment.

Our support is tailored to the individual and we pride ourselves on matching the person to the job role. This involves getting to know people and using career-based assessments to determine what their career goals are and what motivates and inspires them. What underpins our service is the 12 core values of Supported Employment and we follow the five stages of Supported Employment to help each person achieve their goals.

We liaise with numerous training providers and colleges to ensure smooth transition from education into the world of work. We have been pivotal in the implementation of supported internships within Kent having worked on the pilot from the start.

We look at what benefits our clients may be claiming and ensure that when they start work they are going to be better off and if there are any in-work benefits they may be entitled to.

Part of our role is to liaise with employers and deliver training such as disability confident training and deaf awareness training; this is to ensure the smooth transition of a new employee into the workplace whatever their disability may entail. We look at implementing reasonable adjustments, and sourcing natural support within the workplace.

We work with Access to Work to ensure any aids or adaptations including interpreters are funded. We support

our clients to contact interpreters to support them both at interviewers and within the workplace for meetings and training. We also employ a member of staff who signs to a Level 4 in British Sign Language. She offers her skills and we also provide trained interpreters in our client meetings.

We also support clients to source suitable training courses if they wish to improve their skills and experience.

Our clients are mainly referred to us via care management within Kent County Council and we are in the process of obtaining trusted assessor status so that we can accept referrals from people who have disabilities and live within Kent.

Training providers and schools also refer to us via our supported internship programme and this has resulted in some young people interning and then progressing onto a paid apprenticeship. This has helped to bridge the gap that young people post 16 often fall into when they finish college aged 24 not having had the opportunity to access a work environment and to learn those vital social and cultural aspects within a workplace whilst gaining valuable skills and experience. Part of the supported Internship Programme involves Kent Supported Employment supporting young people to learn how to use public transport to get to their workplace.

We have been operating for over 25 years and work closely with the British Association for Supported Employment. If you would like to find out more, please visit our website: [www.kent.gov.uk/jobs/helping-disabled-people-into-work](http://www.kent.gov.uk/jobs/helping-disabled-people-into-work) and twitter page: <https://twitter.com/kentsemployment>



*Kate James is Employment Support Officer at Kent Supported Employment.*


## BATOD Magazine

This article was published in the November 2018 issue.

© BATOD 2018

**BATOD**  
British Association of  
Teachers of the Deaf

MAGAZINE • November 2018 • ISSN 1336-0799 • [www.batod.org.uk](http://www.batod.org.uk)



### Preparing for Adulthood



Peer awareness  
New terminology for SaLTs  
Pre-school music group

*Join BATOD to get THE Magazine for professionals working with deaf children*