Karly:

I started my apprenticeship with the Participation Team in July 2021. I decided to do an apprenticeship because I knew college was not for me. I felt I could learn better when being active and learning in my own time. The apprenticeship engages me because it's my passion and career path. It has helped me express my interests and given me freedom and life skills.

My confidence has grown and I feel I can do anything I want with the skills and knowledge I have learned. I have learned so many new things, but also gained so much experience through doing what I want to do. I feel like this has helped me find what I want to do as a profession. I have been able to be independent and meet so many people.

I have learned how to communicate with different people’s abilities and situations that arise. I have also learned that my experience and knowledge can have a positive impact on people's lives through the work I do. I feel apprenticeships should be spoken about more and made more known books is a good experience to have and can help a lot more people engage in work and education as it's so different from school or college.

Gina:

I've been an Apprentice Participation Worker with Virtual School Kent since November 2022. My main responsibilities involve providing activity days for young people, including the planning, delivery and evaluations. In order for them to experience fun days out and whilst making new friendships. We also assist in running council groups to gather feedback and enable children to feel heard. I participate in interviews and training for professionals.

Every day is varied and different. I chose to join the apprenticeship scheme to provide young people with better opportunities. I grew up in the care system and I think I can use my experiences to help young people feel understood and listened to. I think it's important to work with apprentices so that we have opportunities to learn on the job and enables us to gain skills and experiences working with young people.

The environment helps us to naturally adapt and learn how to be part of the working environment and interact with professionals. So far it has allowed me to build more confidence, become more adaptable and learn new skills in diplomacy and organization.

Amy:

Hello, my name is Amy, and I have been an apprentice within Kent County Council's Participation Team since June 2022. I have learned many things during my apprenticeship, such as laws and legislations around working with young people as well as working in the public sector. I have learned how to use my experiences in a positive way and I understand the complexity of the care system and the importance of my role to care experienced young people.

I believe apprenticeships are amazing option to those who want to develop contacts in a career they wish to pursue, to people who do not feel that the orthodox schooling system is suited to them and to those who thrive in a works setting, who feel motivated to put their learning into practice in a paid work environment. All of these reasons encouraged me to take on an apprenticeship at every day I am thankful that I did.

Nathan:

My name is Nathan Moody and I was in foster care for 12 years. Growing up, I attended the activity days and awards ceremonies that were run by Virtual School Kent. Now working for them as an apprentice, I've been able to share my own experiences of these days. I now help to support activity days and encourage the young people to take part in this. I’ve been apprentice for a year and six months and in this time my roles and responsibilities have changed a lot; from setting up and making boards to the activity days on to organizing my own and now feeling confident speaking and doing presentations to rooms full of people. This apprenticeship means a lot to me because it's given me vital skills I will be able to use in the workplace, such as communication skills, team building skills and skills to support young people.

I do this apprenticeship because I have a real passion to help young people in foster care and the adoption service because I've been through it myself. I'm able to use my own lived experience when working with the young people and helping them in care. I feel that the apprenticeships are good for the service because they give the chance to make positive change in the care system.

It's also gets them ready for the workplace by having such a caring and nurturing environment.