



M.A. Spotlight: Amy Renwick

Promoting inclusion
for Modern Apprentices

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Executive Summary

Amy Renwick has dyslexia and found it difficult to work independently at school, which had an effect on her confidence and self-esteem.

Mainstream teaching techniques did not work for her and she had to rely heavily on support from others. She was unsure what her career options were going to be and lacked confidence in pursuing a career in her chosen field of administration.

Amy engaged with Concept Northern when she left school, undertaking our SQA Assistive Technology Associate course which was run as a pilot through the Skills Development Scotland Equality Challenge Fund. The course allowed Amy to learn key assistive technology software packages while gaining core business skills.

Amy became more confident in her abilities, she was able to work independently and study in a supported learning environment.



Challenges

Concept Northern identified that support is available to individuals attending College or University through DSA and Access to Work when employed, but not for individuals at the pre-employment stage of their lives.

Concept Northern's Solutions

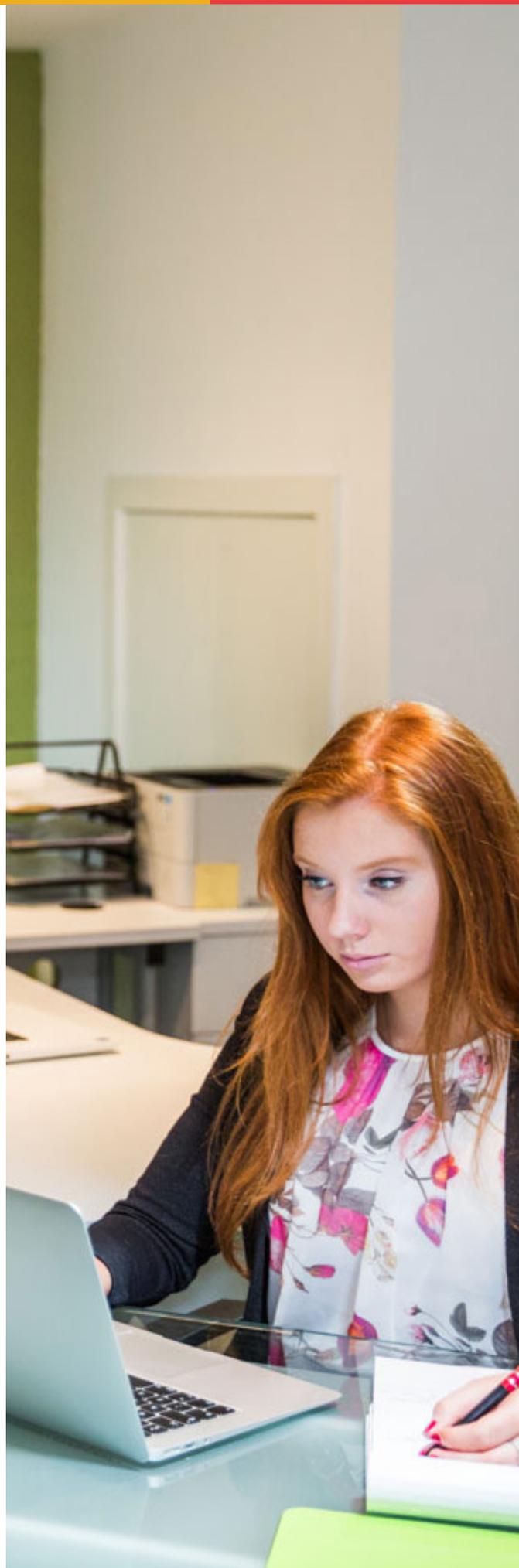
Concept Northern designed a specialist qualification which would assist the individual to use the software that would support the barriers they were facing through dyslexia and allow them to explore career options they may have felt were out of their reach. The programme taught the following assistive technology:

Texthelp (Literacy Support software) – to assist with reading and writing documents, preparing reports, letter and emails. The software provides advance spell check facility along with read back and homophone checker.

MindView (Mind mapping software) – this helps individuals organise their thoughts, manage their time more effectively and can assist with report preparation.

Audio Notetaker (Notetaking software) – allows better organisation of communications and the recall of information by adding audio to images, presentations etc.

The course is designed using varied teaching methods, conducive to effective learning for a young person with dyslexia, such as video, audio and practical assignments to reinforce learning and improve retention of new skills.





Amy's Apprenticeship Journey

The aim of the pilot scheme was to progress individuals with additional support needs (ASN) into a Modern Apprenticeship and we were so impressed with Amy's attitude and aptitude that we started her in her first job as an office junior within our accounts department.

Amy was given immediate support for her dyslexia through Access to Work, having all of the software she would need to support her work role installed quickly to her PC. Training was provided on how to use this within her working environment and we ensured that staff were aware of the difficulties she may face. Amy was trained in a method suitable to her, allowing for a smooth transition from learning to employment.

Having used the software prior to employment Amy was confident and knowledgeable about using it in her workplace and the down time for learning was minimal.

Once settled into her role Amy was registered with a local training provider to undertake her Business Administration Level 2 SVQ Modern Apprenticeship. The award was challenging for her but she said with the support of the software she was able to focus on her learning and prepare the evidence required to meet the standards with renewed confidence.

Amy's National Training Provider (NTP) reported that her efforts were to be commended and the quality of her evidence was of a particularly high standard.

Amy's confidence grows daily, she has blossomed and excelled in her role, leading to a recent promotion to online sales administrator and content manager.



Apprenticeship Challenges

Standard styles of evidence submission for Amy were difficult. The methods used for the delivery of the materials and learning involved in the apprenticeship had to be adapted.

Materials were provided where possible in electronic format to allow use of the assistive technology.

Advice and instructions were recorded for Amy to refer back to and evidence types were adapted to suit Amy's needs (use of audio and video evidence rather than relying on all submissions being in writing).

Our Solutions

Concept Northern supported Amy to identify methods that demonstrated her competency and met the needs of the standards that were suited to her, as well as training her on how to use the software to support her apprenticeship.

Concept Northern provided the NTP with dyslexia awareness training that gave them an insight into the challenges their current practices posed for a young dyslexic person. Simple adaptations were put into place such as the format of providing information, the submission of evidence types, fonts used etc.

The NTP said "we now feel better equipped with the skills and knowledge to support other candidates with ASN undertaking a modern apprenticeship with us".

We provided this training through the Open Doors Consortium of which we are a partner and Access to Work.

Results, Return on Investment and Future Plans

There are 3 results to be considered here: Employee success, improved awareness of fellow colleagues and an upskilled pool of assessors for the NTP to further support ASN candidates.

1. Employee

Amy has excelled in her role and has subsequently been promoted to take on more responsibility and has now started a Social Media & Marketing apprenticeship to support her upskilling to this role.

2. Employer

Amy works to an excellent standard, she has given an insight to her colleagues that allows them to support others with dyslexia in a more practical way.

She is a valuable member of her team and through the apprenticeship scheme they now have a confident, knowledgeable and skilled member of staff.

3. Training Provider

Benefited from the training and experience of working with Amy to expand their own skills and knowledge of how to best support a young person with ASN undertaking an apprenticeship.

Conclusion

These solutions were fully funded by Skills Development Scotland's Open Doors Consortium and Access to Work as part of a national effort to increase inclusion within training programs and employment.