

# CSR - Opening up Work for 'Hidden' Job Seekers

**Location:** Desford, Leicestershire **Date:** February 2018 **Turnover of contract:** £12 million **Employees:** upto 600 **Contract Structure:** Sole Supply

## Overview

Siamo Group have been working together with our Leicestershire-based client and the Prince's Trust Talent Match Programme to increase employment opportunities for candidates with specific learning disabilities, such as Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD).

Recognising the difficulties some young people with ASD face in gaining employment, our client's team have been working with us and Prince's Trust since 2018 to put an employment programme, named Qube, in place at their Leicester site.

The Talent Match programme aims to create an introductory role set in a real working environment. This is an alternative recruitment process enabling individual needs to be identified in a safe working environment, with team cohesion and a taster of a real job role.

## Siamo Group's Involvement

Recruitment of each group is carried out by Prince's Trust, based on candidates they are currently working with, who are eager to start work. For some, this is their very first opportunity for employment.

We carry out an induction with each group, introducing them to the shop floor team to begin work. We work closely with the candidates' mentors to ensure they are both supported whilst on site and sufficiently challenged by their job roles - having real work tasks to complete, time to learn and ownership of individual tasks.

We allow and encourage each group to work together to foster a welcoming and comfortable environment where they can flourish. However, each team member has their own responsibilities, as per any other employee, and is managed for performance, attendance, punctuality, attitude and productivity on an individual basis. This allows each team member to find their strengths, and recognise and work on any things they find more difficult, in a fair and supportive way.

One of the mentors we have been working closely with is Shân Needham, Senior Careers & Development Advisor for B-Inspired/Prince's Trust:

*"Our experience working with Siamo Group has been really great. They have always offered a professional, personalised service. Siamo Group have been quick to address any matters that arise and get the issue resolved. They have been extremely accommodating to ourselves and the young people."*

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## The Mentoring System

When each team starts, they receive onsite assistance from us, our client's Job in Training (JIT) team and Prince's Trust mentors. The impact the programme is having is clear as soon as you speak to the candidates involved. Since starting, candidates on the programme have become more confident, and less reliant on mentor support. They are now able to work independently with just their coach and Siamo Team Leaders to manage and assist them and have been able to become part of the wider team, gaining confidence in both work-based and social skills. Testament to this are the words of programme candidate, Blake McKillop:

*'I have worked here since the beginning of the Talent Match Programme. Since being here I feel my social skills have been developed to the point I can talk to any colleague, manager or coach with confidence. This wasn't the case in my previous employment, which was in a similar environment (logistics) but the management were nowhere near as tolerant or helpful with training and additional support. I find the work extremely rewarding, especially when we complete the task.'*

Blake has continued his success since finishing his time on the Talent Match programme, transitioning to be a member of the wider warehouse team onsite. His success has been such that he has since been awarded a regional award from the Prince's Trust and has progressed to the national finals of their Breakthrough Award. He has also recently been offered a permanent contract direct with our client.

Several cohorts of Prince's Trust Talent Match employees have now come through the programme. Like Blake, many of these candidates have gone on to successful full-time employment within the business. Some have been successful at gaining further qualifications, such as FLT training. Others have stayed within the Talent Match project – becoming mentors to the next cohort.

This ground-breaking project has been recognised nationally, with Siamo Contract Manager Adam Martin, speaking at both the Prince's Trust Talent Match National Conference and the Movement to Work conference. Adam has been the voice of Siamo, explaining the success of the project from an employer perspective in order to engage other employers and encourage uptake of the programme within other industries. Rightly proud, Adam says:

*'The scheme is fantastic and opens a door for those who may struggle to find the opportunity for employment, and therefore miss out on the benefits that come with working, and being part of a team.'*

## Overall Impact

The teamwork between Siamo Group, our client and Prince's Trust has enabled these young people to realise and develop their skills, utilise their work ethic and feel valued and trusted in their work environment. It has given them confidence, encouraged them to integrate and enabled them to develop their potential. They are a much-valued part of our workforce.