

Ignite

Enable – Supported Employment Services Shropshire Council



The Ignite programme, funded through £417,590UKSPF, provided personalised employability and wellbeing support for people in Shropshire who were economically inactive or not currently able to consider employment. The programme offered a holistic package including confidence-building, emotional resilience, employability skills, careers advice, digital support and in-work assistance. Each participant was matched with a dedicated key worker who guided them from initial engagement through to employment or further training.

Key support workers played a central role in delivery. Their day typically involved working one-to-one with participants, completing a vocational profile, helping them build CVs, prepare job applications, practise interview skills and explore realistic career pathways. One support worker described face-to-face contact as one of the most effective aspects of the programme, enabling rapport to be built quickly and allowing support to be tailored to individual need. Early assessment and the use of personalised SMART action plans helped ensure that different ages, backgrounds and confidence levels could be supported appropriately.

Ignite served people with diverse and often complex needs. Participants included long-term unemployed, young people unsure about next steps, individuals recovering from poor health or people with limited qualifications and experience. Key workers adapted their approach to each person to build trust and identify what could make the biggest difference.

Despite challenges, particularly working with a wide age range and participants with multiple barriers, the programme delivered significant outcomes. Examples highlighted by a support worker included young people achieving the grades they needed to progress into their chosen careers and several participants, with criminal convictions, gaining their CSCS card and securing employment in construction. For Ignite, success was measured not just by job outcomes, but by stability, confidence, regular income and individuals feeling “happy and content” in their working lives.

Ignite also achieved wider community impact beyond its formal outputs. In Shrewsbury, the key worker noted that Ignite had become the ‘go-to programmes’ for young people needing support, with Jobcentre staff, community groups, parents and teachers routinely signposting individuals to the service. This visibility and trust allowed the programme to reach people who may otherwise have fallen out of the system.

Looking ahead, Enable suggested the programme could be strengthened by tailoring delivery by age group and involving experts-by-experience in group workshops, helping participants relate to stories from people “in similar situations.” Without UKSPF, the support would be far more limited, reduced to brief community-based meetings, ad-hoc training referrals and a single in-work support call before case closure.

The UKSPF investment has enabled a far more intensive and person-centred model. As a result, Ignite has supported people to rebuild confidence, gain qualifications, enter work and see a future for themselves that previously felt out of reach.