

## **Studley Castle's Fair Chance Employment success**

A leading Warwickshire hotel is reaping the rewards from a programme that matches individuals facing barriers to employment with organisations looking to fill vacancies.

Studley Castle - a Warner Leisure Hotel - has signed up to Warwickshire County Council's Fair Chance Employment Programme, and has recruited 21-year-old Jay Smith to support the venue's busy kitchen.

Prior to receiving support from Warwickshire County Council's Supported Employment Service, Jay, who has ADHD and autism, was living in supported accommodation and was unemployed after leaving college.

Jay fell in love with the world of hospitality after attending one of the county council's industry tours at Studley Castle, and a week later was invited back for a work trial rather than a traditional interview where he was eventually offered a job as a kitchen assistant.

Jay has now progressed on to a Commis Chef Level 2 Apprenticeship where he is helping to produce top quality food for hotel guests.

Joanne Hammick, General Manager at Studley Castle, a Warner Leisure hotel, said: "Being a 'Fair Chance' employer not only underlines our commitment to being an inclusive employer, but it also allows us to recruit from an untapped talent pool to help fill vacancies that arise.

Peter Marczewski, Executive Chef said, "Jay is a very capable and friendly individual who has settled into the team well, and he has a bright future ahead of him."

Jay added: "Since taking this opportunity I have grown in confidence and I now feel like I have a purpose.

"I look forward to going to work, and I never thought I would say that!"

More than 60 employers have now signed up to Warwickshire County Council's Fair Chance Employment Programme.

Charlotte Smith, who is the delivery lead at Warwickshire Supported Employment Service at Warwickshire County Council, has supported Jay throughout his journey.

Charlotte said: "Stories like Jay's are the reason this programme was created – to help individuals who are struggling to gain employment unlock their potential with businesses that are looking to recruit.

"Jay's story is typical of so many across the county, and we are hoping that sharing Jay's journey will encourage other businesses to sign up to become a 'Fair Chance' employer."

For more information visit [fairchancejobs.warwickshire.gov.uk](https://fairchancejobs.warwickshire.gov.uk)