

Testimonials from LINKnet service users

Olayinka

I came in contact with LINKnet Mentoring Ltd through a family friend. And my first day at LINKnet was really welcoming and pleasant. And in addition, I got my first job through LINKnet where I was linked with a mentor who put me through with some likely interview questions, and sincerely, this really helped me to register successes in all my interviews which led to my Employment. A big Thanks to LINKnet Mentoring Ltd and the staff for their unflinching support.

Pepita

I arrived in Edinburgh in Aug 2014 with my daughter. Our English was poor. I started learning English in a class that was conducted by an association. As there were others in the class we started speaking English gradually. But it was not easy to improve English to a good level within a short period of time.

The Job Centre plus advised me to go to SDS. On the third visit I became lucky that a person looked into my documents and recommended LINKnet Mentoring to me. Thus I went to LINKnet and on my first visit I was warmly welcomed.

Since then I was allocated a mentor. My first task was to register with the General Teaching Council (GTC) of Scotland with the hope of becoming a teacher. This was not an easy task as the GTC was very strict in registering people. My mentor and I could hardly communicate with ease in English. Besides my papers were all in French and the French education system is very different to that of the UK system. We worked very hard exactly 15 sessions together, each session exceeding three hours just to get to the point of completing the application. Thanks to LINKnet I was informed early this month that I am now registered with the GTC.

My mentoring continues for another month and a couple of weeks ago, together with my mentor we started applying for jobs in the education sector. Yesterday I received my first invitation for an interview. Unfortunately the School is far away. Hopefully I will get a job soon. Nothing of this could have happened without LINKnet. A big thank to LINKnet and I recommend LINKnet service to all minority ethnic people.

Russell

I was introduced to LINKnet Mentoring by a friend who had received mentoring a couple of years ago. Though I had graduated with a degree in environmental management (from my home country), I had been under-employed since my arrival in the UK; working as a Customer Assistant in a local supermarket and, later, as a Facilities & Security Assistant. In my attempts to launch my career in environmental management, I got almost the same reply from employers: 'you are qualified, but do not have any practical environmental management work experience in the UK'. This, somehow, led me to pursue a UK professional course in Occupational Health and Safety Management.

My first meeting with LINKnet was heart-warming and motivating. LINKnet understood my situation and provided options that could be pursued. As a first step, LINKnet offered me the opportunity to work as a volunteer in administration in their offices, in order to acquire some formal work experience. I was paired with an experienced mentor who, over a few weeks, helped me to re-identify myself, my professional needs and goals, and set the right priorities to help me develop and progress in my profession. While my mentor sought to establish contacts with organisations and individuals to identify opportunities in the environment health and safety management sector, I focused on job applications. My mentor also played a vital role in reviewing my job applications and preparing me for interviews.

I have now secured a temporary post as an Environment Health and Safety Assistant which, I believe, would open doors for other major opportunities. The mentoring process also enhanced my self-confidence and enabled me established contacts with some senior

environment health and safety professionals for career advice and guidance.

Miya

I am 40 years old. I came to Edinburgh five months ago. I was desperate as I had been looking for a job from the day I arrived. I could not get any offers as I did not have a UK work experience and my language skills weren't sufficient to secure work.

I came to know about LINKnet from one of my friends in the church. My friend told me that I could benefit from the services at Linknet as they are helping newcomers. I first approached Linknet by email and after that I was contacted by one of the staff who arranged for a zoom meeting with me and gave me all the information about the services, particularly the mentoring program as I was eagerly looking for employment.

I was paired with one of their professional mentors. We had an initial meeting to get to know each other and to discuss the mentoring aspects that I need as well. I started meeting up with my mentor once a week for a couple of hours. The mentor helped me with job hunting, employability skills, as well as interview skills. I benefited a lot from those meetings with my mentor as all of them were face-to-face. I could also practice English with my mentor at the same time. Finally, I managed to secure a job as a childcare playworker. I was very happy of my achievement.

The regular mentoring is still on going until I feel settled in my job as the usual practice of LINKnet is to continue supporting the successful mentees until they feel more confident to carry out the duties of their jobs.

"I appreciate what LINKnet has done with me, and their services really match the clients' needs. I shared my life experience with my mentor, and I also learned from her a lot regarding employment, culture, literature and values of the UK.

The mentoring program has enlightened my new life here and helped me to become part of the community in Edinburgh."

Raufu

I am 30 years old. I am from South Africa. I came to Edinburgh 3 years ago. I was a teacher back home. I started to look for a job as a teacher but I was not successful. I tried to register as a teacher in Scotland through the General Teaching Council of Scotland (GTCS), but the registration was not successful because of the course I studied in South Africa.

In 2021, I heard of Linknet from one of my friends who used to be one of Linknet's service users. I immediately emailed the office to get more information about the services available. It was a difficult time for me due to the pandemic and everyone was working from home. I was worried for the delay in getting a reply from Linknet. However, in two days from sending my email, I received a reply from one of LINKnet's development officer. The DO arranged for a zoom chat with me and I was very happy. During the chat, the DO gave me lots of useful information introducing Linknet services and how I could get help from them. During the DO's explanation, she mentioned their one-to-one mentoring program regarding employment and education. I was very interested in that program as I was eagerly looking for a job for a long time.

I was introduced to one of LINKnet professional mentors. The DO arranged for an initial meeting between the mentor and me to introduce us to each other and to discuss the mentoring aspects. I then was paired with the mentor. I started meeting up with her mentor once a week for a couple of hours. The meetings were done remotely. The mentor helped me with job search, career development, and overall life goals. The mentor was very efficient and resourceful to me. She took her time to help me through different processes and provide me with useful websites and information that could be of great help to me. The mentor also helped me to search for an abridge course that I could study in order to meet the educational standards of Scotland. She also helped me to look for an early childhood teaching assistant job, do SVQ level 3 course with The Scottish Social Services Council, and register with The Open university for some abridge courses in social and health care.

Now, I am in my last stage of the SVQ3 assessment and I will be awarded my certificate in December 2022 and The Open University has accepted my admission for the course I applied for.

The regular mentoring has changed from a meeting once week to a meeting every fortnight. The usual practice of Linknet is to continue supporting the successful mentees until they feel fully-confident to carry out their education

“My experience with the Linknet has been very positive. The mentoring program has been an eye-opening, educative, and informative especially with the help of Barbara, my mentor, a jovial, friendly, and highly resourceful person.

I really count myself very lucky to have Barbara as my mentor. I really gain a lot through my interaction with her. Words cannot explain how grateful I am to Linknet for this great opportunity.

I would like to thank Linknet for offering such a great service to minority ethnic people and I would also like to recommend this service to anyone who is suffering to go for further education or to find a job.

Mustafa

Mustafa is an 18-year-old refugee from Syria who has experienced the horrors of war first-hand. He arrived in Scotland with his family and has been struggling to adjust to his new home ever since.

Mustafa has a learning difficulty and finds it challenging to communicate with others, particularly in English, which he is still learning. He has also struggled with feelings of isolation and as he has few friends in his new community.

One day, Mustafa’s Dad learned about NINT's befriending program through the Jobcentre. So he brought Mustafa with him who was excited about the opportunity to connect with someone who shared his interests and could help him improve his language skills. Mustafa

loves computer science and was eager to find a befriender who could develop his skills and stimulates him.

With the help of NINT's befriending program, Mustafa was matched with a Befriender who was also passionate about helping people with learning difficulties. The mentor, named Ahmed, was a development officer who has moved recently to Scotland from Yemen and was excited to support Mustafa's needs. They hit it off immediately and started meeting regularly to work on various learning and fun activities. Ahmed was patient and understanding of Mustafa's learning difficulties, and he helped him practice his English skills by playing some console games that has reach story in addition to puzzles and different challenges. He also accompanied Mustafa to different places like museums, parks, and football matches to make him feel at home in Scotland.

Through NINT's befriending program, Mustafa has not only gained a mentor but also a friend who he can rely on for support and guidance. He feels more confident day by day in his language skills. Mustafa now has a sense of belonging and purpose, thanks to the NINT befriending program, which is still helping him overcoming his learning difficulty and build a brighter future for himself in Scotland.