



KICKSTART KICK-OFF

My name is Ciera, I'm 22 years old and I recently completed my first full month as a Fundraising Assistant with Total Insight Theatre as part of the Kickstart scheme.

This project has created over 19,000 vacancies for young people aged 16-24 who are struggling to find work, and operates across a number of different industries. It aims to allow young people to pick up a new trade or learn new skills, which could be beneficial to them in the future and should help them to find employment once the 6-month scheme ends. My experience with the kickstart scheme has been an incredibly positive one: from the start I found it easy to access and there was a lot of support available to me.

After being told about the role at Total Insight Theatre, I reached out to them and set up a zoom interview, after which I was offered the role of Fundraising Assistant. It was immediately a role that I was very excited about. Although this role was unlike anything I had ever done before, I did have a lifelong love for the arts and was excited to be a part of such an important and impactful youth charity. Total Insight Theatre is an arts charity that operates across England and works with young people. They focus on pivotal problems facing our youth, such as knife crime and mental health problems, and provide important support for the communities that need it the most.

The kickstart scheme aims to allow young people to learn new skills and this is definitely something I have experienced in my new role. Having previously worked in hospitality and retail pre-pandemic I had never been faced with tasks such as the ones I was presented with in my first month – tasks such as researching funders, reaching out to them to see if we were a suitable candidate and even coming up with my own project to be funded.

The team all work remotely and this was a challenge for me in itself, as I had a lot to learn about time management and how to structure my days. Adjusting to this change has definitely helped me to be more self-disciplined, which is an important and transferable skill to have.

My favourite task so far has been when we were given the freedom to each design a programme for young people on a subject matter that we were passionate about. I chose employability in order to highlight the current struggle that 16-24-year olds are facing in light of the pandemic as that age group has been hit disproportionately hard and young people in deprived areas are at serious risk of being forgotten about in the midst of it all. I found applying for funding for my own project extremely rewarding and really enjoyed the sense of responsibility I got from it as this was our first individual task, having previously worked in a team of 4 with the other kickstarters as we settled in.

I am definitely enjoying my time at Total Insight Theatre and finding the range of opportunities very enjoyable and eye-opening. I feel like I have already grown as a person in the first 6 weeks and am incredibly excited to see what the next months will hold for me.

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