

Volunteering spotlight

Craig Thomson volunteers for MCR Pathways



I'm Craig Thomson...

I am one of the Senior Surveyors within the Property Team in Scotland working predominantly on the Aberdeen to Inverness and Carstairs Remodelling projects. My role involves the acquisition of land and rights whilst also providing property advice to a number of colleagues and teams within the route.

I wanted to volunteer my time to a scheme that I felt would help others, so when the team from MCR Pathways visited our office to present the benefits of the programme I was very keen to find out more. This led to me becoming a mentor within one of their Glasgow schools, helping support care-experienced and disadvantaged young people to improve their educational outcomes and future chances of meaningful employment.

The project

Through one-to-one mentoring, the programme provides support and assistance to young people in secondary school who maybe don't have the same opportunities as many of us have been fortunate enough to have. My role as an MCR Pathways mentor is to meet with my matched young person for one school period per week for the full school year, providing guidance and setting challenges and goals to work towards. All the young people who apply to be mentored via the MCR Pathways Programme do so because they would like extra support and are not required to do so by their school. This makes it all the more important that the young people who need that additional guidance can get access to it.

Key benefits

The main benefit for me has been helping young people who want to achieve their goals. The first mentee I worked with has a real interest in working towards becoming an Engineer within Network Rail and is now in his second year of college working towards completing his degree at university, after which he plans to apply to Network Rail's Graduate Scheme.

The programme is extremely well run and the support from the staff working with MCR Pathways is excellent. To monitor development between mentor and mentee, a weekly progress report has to be submitted which also acts as a safety tool to ensure the young person is attending the arranged meetings and gives the mentor the opportunity to highlight any issues to the wider team. The online resources via the MCR Pathways website are vast and can also act as a useful tool for Continuous Professional Development.

Lessons learned

I have learned that giving just an hour of your time a week can really make a difference to young people who are driven and know what they want to do but just need a little help getting there. I would recommend that anyone interested in using their volunteer leave to become a mentor to young people contact me or the MCR Pathways Team to find out more about getting involved.

For more information please get in touch...

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Or visit www.MCRPathways.org