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# Dan and Brady part of successful trial for new employment project

## Teens' first steps on the work ladder

By **Samantha Payne**  
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THE fortunes of young people in Heathfield have been turned around thanks to businesses giving them their "first step" into the workplace.

Dan Craft and Brady Ells are two of the young people who have completed Heathfield Works! – a scheme helping 16 to 19-year-olds with skills and experience to help get them a job.

Employment charity **Tomorrow's People** selected Heathfield as the first rural place in Britain to trial the ten-week project, which ends with a presentation of certificates on Friday.

Brady, who wants to be a graphic designer, was daunted about the prospect of getting work.

### Scary

The 19-year-old, of Wran Close, said: "It seemed so scary. I have never had a job before and now Heathfield Works! has made me aware of working life.

"I was lucky it came about when I left sixth form."

The former Heathfield Community College student is now carrying out a work placement at Sainsbury's, in Station Road, while training for a retail qualification.

His mentor, Frances Conway from Tomorrow's People, said: "The huge thing is if it was not for the community giving them that extra exposure to the workplace we could not have done this. They have been given that first step. Their whole daily routine has changed."

Dan Craft, a 17-year-old from Five Ashes, is working at Trading 4 U, in High Street, and Sprockets, in Maynards Green, after completing the programme.

He agreed with Brady, saying: "Before this I didn't have a routine before and would be in bed until midday.

"It has got me out and I now have two jobs."

Tomorrow's People worked with the Heathfield Partnership Trust to provide work and training opportunities.

All of the ten participants of this year's project have since secured jobs or are in educational training.

Rupert Simmons, chairman of the Heathfield

Partnership Trust, said: "The partnership has worked incredibly well. Both organisations have worked together to identify the rural need for development opportunities, which is not understood by the Government.

### Relevant

"This scheme will be relevant for other parts of East Sussex. So it's important to provide the evidence to show the Government it is not just an urban problem but a rural one."

It costs £107,000 a year to run the programme, half of which has been secured until March.

Mr Simmons added: "We are hoping to continue to get local support but it does need a more reliable income stream."

Recruitment for the next ten-week project at the Heathfield Youth Centre for mid-January is now being held.

■ Anyone interested should call Julie Kaye on 07710 230715.



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**LEARNING ON THE JOB:** Dan Craft enjoying useful employment experience at Trading 4 U



**WORLD OF WORK:** Brady Ells, who has benefited from a work placement at Sainsbury's