

## **Case study: Prior's Court**

*Prior's Court*, a Thatcham-based charity that supports young people aged five to 25 who are affected by autism, received a £45,176 grant from the Inspiring Futures Fund.

The charity offers a range of support opportunities and services, including a residential school for young people severely affected by autism, as well as a research programme that funds projects and learning. They also offer specialist training and development intended to boost awareness on autism, and since they opened over 3,000 professionals, parents, carers and families across the UK have been given this key training.

**Cohort:** 83 young people whose experiences have been negatively affected by the COVID-19 pandemic will benefit from the activities supported by the Inspiring Futures fund.

**Typical barriers to employment:** According to the National Autism Society, autism is a lifelong developmental disability that affects how people communicate, interact with and perceive the world. As a spectrum condition, autistic people's needs can vary from extremely complex to entirely minimal; often, autistic individuals have exceptional skills and simply need the right conditions to enable them to thrive.

Due to their varied needs, however, the National Autism Society notes how autistic people can often be disadvantaged both in the workplace and prior to employment because of other people's lack of understanding and awareness of autism. This presents several barriers to employment, including poor or ill mental health, harassment and abuse.

### **Solution:**

Using their grant funding, *Prior's Court* hope to provide horticultural skills development and work placements for disabled children and young people negatively impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. As a result of this project, the young people they work with will improve their aspirations, employability skills and positive relations with adults.

**What we hope to learn:** We hope this experience will enable us to understand how organisations working to support disadvantaged young people can use one-off emergency funding to enhance the services they provide for those who face discrimination or disadvantage.

In light of how the pandemic has amplified inequalities faced by those from often marginalised backgrounds, we hope the funding will help highlight areas that need more focus and attention.