



## Hair at the Academy

Education to Employment

Hair@theAcademy is a specialist training salon supporting vulnerable young people and adults who are not in education employment or training and who are furthest removed from education or work place environments. Their learners include people who are vulnerably housed, young people in the care system and young people with additional needs or disabilities. Hair@theAcademy has an exceptional track record in enabling these individuals to progress and succeed, with over 90% of learners passing their qualifications and 70% moving on to further education or employment.

Hair@theAcademy needs to find a new site for its training salon in Exeter. This proposal gives an overview of Hair@theAcademy provision and sets out the business case for identifying a new site, raising awareness of the project and gaining support from the political and business community. Hair@theAcademy is a valuable resource for the city of Exeter and has the potential to make a significant impact nationally with the role out of its training model.

# Hair Salon Training – “Education to Employment”

**Hair@theAcademy provides a range of courses in Hair and Beauty including Barbering and Men's and Women's Hairdressing. Alongside this, Hair@theAcademy provides training in Customer Service and Maths and English, offering learners transferrable skills which can be used beyond the sector.**

The provision is aimed at those furthest removed from education or employment, including those who are vulnerably housed, those excluded from mainstream provision and people who have been unemployed over the long-term. Individuals may have experienced abuse, substance abuse and mental health issues. Their backgrounds are often complex and they require specialist intervention within a flexible learning environment.

Working within a professional salon environment is a core part of Hair@theAcademy's training programme. Many learners have not experienced professional working environments before and the standards required in the workplace can be alien to them. Learners are expected to arrive on time, dress and behave appropriately and follow health and safety procedures, as they would be expected to in a professional salon. This is essential for learners wishing to move on to a career within the Hair & Beauty industry.

As well as preparing individuals for the workplace, Hair@theAcademy helps learners find work experience and training placements and provides support with moving on to further training in a mainstream environment, or into employment or self-employment.

## Specialist Support

The ethos of Hair@theAcademy is to support the wider wellbeing of its learners, recognising the complexities of their needs and giving them a space in which they can build rapport and trust with Tutors, share their concerns and receive additional help where needed.

The salon provides an environment where learners feel safe and can work at a pace to suit their needs. With small class sizes, learners receive a high level of support and the timetable can be flexible to accommodate personal issues, such as child care, family problems or mental health issues.

Hair@theAcademy staff are experienced in working with learners from challenging backgrounds. They also have particular expertise in working with Deaf young people, supporting them to overcome communication barriers in a work place environment, and building their confidence in working with hearing staff and peers.

## Life-Changing Outcomes

Over 70% of Hair@theAcademy learners move on to further training placements, employment, or self-employment. This is a huge achievement for learners who have come from such disadvantaged or challenging backgrounds and is a testament to the dedication and support of Hair@theAcademy staff.

Last year two long-term unemployed mums from Exeter embarked on new careers in hairdressing thanks to Hair@theAcademy. After graduating from a traineeship scheme at Hair@theAcademy, with a Level 2 Diploma and 100 hours spent at salon placements learning on the job, Nik and Abbey were offered full-time apprenticeships at Saks in Princesshay and The Hair Boutique in Musgrave Row.

*Nik said:*

*"Doing a traineeship with Hair@theAcademy has **changed my life**. I have learned hair and beauty skills in such a friendly and encouraging environment, and **found confidence** and **professionalism within myself**."*

*Tom Wilson, owner of Saks said:*

*"We are lucky to have found a talented apprentice in Nik. **I cannot praise her highly enough**. From day one, she has had an **incredible work ethic** and such a positive impact on our team."*

# Partners

## Partner Organisations

- **Learn Devon** – provide funding for specific courses
- **Local hair salons** - who take students for traineeships / apprenticeships
  - Space
  - Saks
  - Hair Boutique
  - City Barbers
- **MyHairdressers.com** – provide free access to online training for Hair@theAcademy students
- **VTCT** - the awarding body for Hair@theAcademy qualifications

Hair@theAcademy is continuing to develop partnerships with local employers and other organisations who can support learners including hair salons, mobile hairdressers, local hotels and other service based industries.

## Learning Partners

Hair@theAcademy works with a number of organisations to identify individuals who are not in education, training or employment, or who are excluded from learning, to offer them places on Hair@theAcademy courses. Key partners include:

- **Local Schools** - students attend from:
  - Isca
  - St Peters
  - Exeter Deaf Academy
  - Ratcliffe
  - Southbrook

Hair@theAcademy provides training in the Atkinson Secure Children's Home for 8-10 learners per year. These learners study for the Level 2 Award in Hair & Beauty and do work experience at Hair@theAcademy. All of the students pass their course and many then move out of the county and continue with hairdressing in another Local Authority area. Learners who stay in the county are able to progress into more training in Devon.

## Hair@theAcademy's pilot programme for Vulnerably Housed adults

In partnership with Learn Devon, Hair@theAcademy is piloting a Level 2 Certificate in Barbering for 6 homeless adults. Before starting, all of the participants complete a Citizenship course with Learn Devon to ensure they are ready to begin learning.

The Barbering course is normally 19 weeks, but for this pilot it was set up with the flexibility to run over a longer period, recognising that these learners are likely to encounter additional issues along the way, or will require more time to take on the learning and develop their skills.

Initially the course is taught on a 1-1 basis with only two learners at a time. As the learners become more confident they are encouraged to join in with a bigger group of learners in readiness for their assessments, whilst still maintaining 1-1 support.

Currently 4 vulnerably housed individuals are working towards their Certificate. 1 individual is taking a learning break, and 1 more individual is being sought to start the course. The 4 learners currently completing the course have all had drug or alcohol issues and are on a substance abuse programme to try and overcome these.

Whilst it has taken even longer than expected, with additional unpaid tutoring time from Hair@theAcademy staff, all 4 learners are now on track to pass their course.

The first learner is due to qualify in February and plans to work on a self-employed basis as a Barber in the local community. They specifically want to support other people who are homeless or vulnerably housed. The other 3 learners will begin their assessments in January.

## Here, two learners share their stories:

*"My name is Lisa. I started hair at College but I fell pregnant so I had to leave. I've always wanted to be a hairdresser but my life was too hectic until now. At the moment I'm living in Supported Housing as I was homeless. I started the Barbering Course 2 weeks ago and loved it. When I'm qualified I'd like to stay on to do hairdressing as well...I'm planning to have my own mobile hairdressing service. I'm looking forward to my future in Hair & Barbering."*

*"My name is Jack and I have been doing the Barbering Level 2. And the more I am coming the more I am enjoying it! At first I wasn't sure if I would enjoy it...but I am 100% glad I started the course and I'm going to see it through until I am a qualified barber! The people who are training me are great! When I have finished the course I am hoping me and my partner start our own business! We are currently living in Supported Living because we were homeless."*

A report by Niace on community learning for homeless and vulnerably housed people in 2012-2013 highlighted that socially vulnerable individuals face multiple barriers in relation to confidence and self-esteem, health, poverty, social inclusion and their ability to live independently. Key messages included:

- Learning and skills can transform the ability of individuals to manage the challenges they face and to aspire to a better future for themselves. This will only happen if learning programmes are designed and delivered in a way that is tailored and responsive to the needs of learners and seen by them as relevant and useful to their real life requirements.
- Vulnerably housed and homeless people can and do engage in learning, achieve and progress, but sustained and effective learning is most likely to be delivered flexibly and informally in settings where they feel secure and understood.
- Working in partnership is key to delivering excellent outcomes for learners. Community learning partnerships should work in collaboration with third sector organisations which are in close contact with socially vulnerable groups. With each agency playing to its strengths, even small injections of funding will be seen to make a real difference to the lives of the most disadvantaged

Hair@theAcademy's training programme closely follows this model, offering a tailored and flexible learning programme in an environment where learners feel supported and engaged. Staff are able to support learners with broader issues they are dealing with, identifying where additional support and help may be required and making sure this is in place.

This training programme is unique in offering tangible employment or self-employment opportunities. In Exeter, Hair@theAcademy is the only provider offering this kind of training and intensive support for people who are homeless or vulnerably housed. The YMCA in Exeter has recently expressed an interest in running a course for its residents. Discussions are also in progress with HMP regarding the delivery of barbering or hairdressing qualifications to prison leavers. There is also interest in rolling out the training nationally, offering huge potential for Hair@theAcademy to develop a national training programme.

Partnership working is key to the success of Hair@theAcademy and at this critical point in our history, we are reaching out to additional partners and businesses, seeking support to find a new site in Exeter so that we can maintain and expand our essential provision.

## A New Salon in Exeter

Hair@theAcademy needs to find a new site in Exeter as the current salon, based at Exeter Deaf Academy, will no longer be available from September 2019. The new site needs to:

- Be close to the centre of Exeter, with good access via public transport for learners
- Be a minimum of 12 square metres
- Be available for a long-term lease of at least 3 years
- Have permission from the building owner to convert the space into a training salon, including plumbing in sinks for washing hair
- Have a private meeting space available for one to one discussions and support for learners
- Have space for office use, filing and storage of equipment

The salon will be open for 5 or 6 days a week and will have space for up to 10 learners, and their support staff, at any one time. It will offer a range of training courses including:

- Traineeships – *funded through Learn Devon*
- VTCT Level 2 Certificate in Barbering
- VTCT Level 1 Certificate in Hair & Beauty
- VTCT Level 2 Diploma in Women's and Men's hairdressing
- Customer Service Skills – *relevant to a wide range of sectors beyond hairdressing, including the hospitality industry, retail and the care sector*
- English and Maths courses – *Entry Level, Level 1 and Level 2 Functional Skills*

### Key Audiences

Hair@theAcademy will continue to focus on supporting those furthest from education and employment, including:

- Those who are homeless or vulnerably housed
- Those who have experienced substance abuse
- Those with mental health issues
- People who are long-term unemployed
- Learners with Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs)
- Deaf learners
- People with other challenges and barriers which make it difficult for them to access employment

## Funding for the New Salon

It is expected that the fit out of a salon space will cost in the region of £40,000. Funds for this capital expenditure will be sought through grant applications, in the first instance to Exeter Foundation and Wooden Spoon, who have previously supported Hair@theAcademy. MyHairDressers.com also supports Hair@theAcademy and may donate some furnishings or equipment to the new salon.

Once up and running, the new salon will be self-sufficient, with courses continuing to be funded through Education funding or through Learn Devon. Private courses may also be offered to supplement this income and allow Hair@theAcademy to invest in the development of its provision.

### Value for money and long-term impact

On average it costs around £2,000 a year per student who attends a Hair@theAcademy course. It therefore costs around £4,000 per person to deliver the 2 year Diploma.

For the Barbering Project working with vulnerably housed people, it costs around £2,500 per person to provide the programme.

The Social Value Bank has created a tool to estimate the social value, or wellbeing impact, of different interventions. This includes an indication of the wellbeing benefits of supporting people into employment:

- Individuals moving from unemployment into self-employment, £11,588 over a year
- Individuals moving from unemployment into full-time employment, £14,443 over a year

These values represent only the uplift in wellbeing, separate from salary or income.

On this basis, it is clear that investing in Hair@theAcademy, where over 70% of learners move on into further education, employment or self-employment, offers exceptional value for money, whilst also providing life-changing opportunities for vulnerable young people and adults.

### Key Outcomes

A new hair salon site in Exeter would achieve the following outcomes within the first year:

- 6 vulnerably housed people achieving a Level 2 Certificate Barbering (*work ready*)
- 20 unemployed people achieving Level 2 Certificate in Barbering (*work ready*)
- 10 learners achieving a Diploma in Women's and Men's Hairdressing (*work ready*)
- 25 learners moving on to Further Education or Employment

## Support Us

Hair@theAcademy urgently needs to find a new site in Exeter.

This valuable training provision supports people across the city who are furthest removed from the labour market and gives them skills and opportunities with a clear pathway to employment. We are looking for the support of the political and business community in Exeter to help us identify and establish a new salon in the city so that we can continue to provide training and a pathway to independence for these individuals.

The new salon will also provide a base from which to explore the potential for rolling out our training programmes, with the opportunity for Exeter to become a hub for training other providers and lead the way in delivering effective, life-changing training in the Hair & Beauty sector.



Thank you for your interest in our work. To find out more, please contact:

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