



Social Firms Scotland
Supporting businesses to transform lives



Former Clydesdale Community Initiatives Participant Personal Story



CCI Scotland's mission is to give people who are experiencing complex barriers to inclusion the opportunity to make a contribution to their community.

CCI was initially set-up in 2002 to enable young people at risk and adults with mental health issues to develop a derelict site in Lanark, South Lanarkshire. This project was so successful, that it was decided they would undertake further projects.

CCI provide opportunities for adults and young people who have experienced social exclusion and significant disadvantage to experience a real working environment and learn associated skills in landscaping and design. CCI offer placements to people with learning disabilities, mental health issues and young people who are at risk. Through being supported to take part in a wide range of business activities, individuals are empowered to substantially improve their health, well-being and self-confidence, as well as their vocational and social skills.

An award winning Social Firm, CCI uses high profile community landscaping and public art projects to create outstanding opportunities for people experiencing social exclusion and significant barriers in the labour market. The work CCI does has a significant positive impact on people's lives and the communities they live in – they make a real difference.

Before I came to Clydesdale Community Initiatives (CCI) I was quite unwell. I wouldn't leave my house or socialise with anybody.

My illness made me very paranoid so I wasn't able to speak to anyone and everyday tasks were difficult for me to complete.

However, I was eventually referred to CCI. When I first came to CCI I thought it would be a good opportunity for me to work on my fitness but CCI offered so much more than that. It gave me confidence and responsibility, which I didn't even realise at the time.

Personally, I think what worked best for me was the responsibility I was given. I had duties to do and this made me interact with people, something that I had trouble with due to my illness. It also gave me confidence which I didn't have before. I'm now able to go and collect my medication on my own which is something I would never have been able to do 2 years ago.

CCI let you go at your own pace but also give you that little push when you needed to get out of your comfort zone. Sometimes I wouldn't attend CCI for a while due to my illness and CCI were really good at giving me that space when I needed it but at the same time would give me a push when I was getting too comfortable. Striking this balance is important and something I feel CCI is very good at.

I took part in many training courses while I was attending CCI. I was able to get my CSCS card, still saw license and took part in a wood chippers course. I was involved in a landscaping type job previously and so thought that this was the career path that I wanted to follow. However, after taking part in these activities at CCI, I realised I didn't have the correct level of fitness for this. Before this would have really got me down but CCI showed me my other capabilities and gave me a lesson that there were other jobs out there that I was capable of doing.

I now work at Oxfam and consider this to be my job now. I felt I was becoming too comfortable at CCI and so needed to move on and put myself outside of my comfort zone again. I do get anxious about it sometimes but I'm now able to manage this well. Overall, CCI was really helped in this progression and I feel the support I received from CCI, my Occupational Therapist and Lanarkshire Association Mental Health (LAMH) all contributed to get me to the point I am today.

