

Julie:

Hello, I am Julie Gowen. I work for The Open University and have led a project which has produced a range of free online courses and resources. These are in collaboration with a number of other national organisations that form our Social Partnerships Network, commonly referred to as the SPN. The SPN consists of 10 organisations, all of whom have a strong commitment to extending education and further learning opportunities to all those who wish to benefit.

Evaghn:

Hello, I am Evaghn DeSouza. I also work for The Open University and I was the project manager on the development of the free online resources – six courses and a website - which we are about to introduce to you.

Julie:

We have developed six online courses, each one only takes around 15 hours to complete. Each course is divided into manageable chunks of learning and consists of between three to five sections. For each section completed you will have the opportunity of collecting an SPN digital badge. You will also be able to download statements of participation which show recognition for your learning.

The six courses are:-

**Supporting children's development.** This is for those interested in the development of children, for example teaching assistants and wider support staff in schools. Subjects include developing and managing relationship, encouraging reading, behavioural management and special needs.

**Introducing practical healthcare** is a course for healthcare support staff, for example healthcare assistants, porters, and the wider healthcare team. Subjects include the healthcare assistant role, healthcare practice and duty of care.

**Caring for adults** is for anyone fulfilling a caring role, either paid or unpaid including carers of family members. Topics include caring for people with mental health problems, palliative and end of life care and top tips for looking after yourself as a Carer.

**Taking part in the voluntary sector** would be useful to people who are new to working or volunteering, or those who might be looking to enhance their transferrable skills in order to improve their career progression.

**Planning a better future** is for anyone considering changing jobs, returning to work after a break, and those generally looking to aspire to better things.

And last but not least we have:-

**Starting your small business**, a course for anyone who is considering or has recently set up a small or micro-business.

Evaghn:

In addition to the courses we have also developed a website called PEARL, which stands for Part-time Education for Adults Returning to Learn.

This website is a point of reference for all those specifically 18 years and above looking for part-time and flexible learning opportunities, primarily across England, but also UK wide where relevant. It provides a comprehensive range of information, and signposts to sources of support and resources which will help to identify academic and vocational pathways through to higher level learning. The website is there to help users to plan their study journey and find relevant information which relates to their own chosen career path. We are incredibly proud to be offering you a one stop shop of information, bringing the worlds of work and education closer.

We hope you find information about a learning opportunity which suits you and encourage you to make use of the interactive 'Advise me' tool. This tool offers you personalised learning options to suit your current circumstances.

Julie:

We hope all of the resources produced as part of this project interest you or at least give you an idea of the next step you want to take.

Evaghn:

Finally, you will notice opportunities to provide feedback within the courses and from the website. We'd love you from you.

Julie

We believe learning should continue throughout life and increases your own self-esteem and wellbeing. Whatever you decide to do we wish you every success.