

# Thistle to trial new training academy

**Edinburgh charity Thistle is trialling a ten week course for those who are considering returning to work in social care – or who are starting out in the sector for the first time.**

The Thistle Academy will train and guide those looking to work in social care and will receive a welcome payment of £500 as well as full pay from day one. The charity is responding to what it has witnessed during the pandemic – a growth in demand for services with many employees moving from other jobs. This is part of Thistle's drive to train and develop employees and they hope that the in depth people focused course will enable successful applicants to build their confidence before moving into a job.

Heather Simmons, Thistle Academy Lead, said: "We want to ensure the highest standard of support is available for people living with disabilities and long-term health conditions, which is why we are so pleased to be launching our Thistle Academy for the first time and to be helping those looking to take an important next step in their career.

"Our trainees will work alongside a supportive cohort of like-minded people who have a passion to make a difference to the lives of others, encouraging those with disabilities or long-term health conditions to live life to the fullest."

Mark Hoolahan, Chief Executive of Thistle, commented: “The social care industry is full of highly skilled people who draw on their own experience and natural empathy with others to deliver the best support possible. I hope the programme will help attract people who might be looking to make a significant career change and give them the support and confidence they need to progress.

“The last two years have demonstrated the vital role of social care in so many people’s lives. The Thistle Academy is our way of showing how much we value our employees and believe in the real difference they can make. I hope we will be able to offer further courses later in the year and that the academy will become a permanent part of our recruitment process going forward.”

To apply to the Thistle Academy, please visit: <https://www.thistle.org.uk/academy/apply>.

Applicants should send in a personal statement and a ‘[best selfie](#)’ that demonstrates their values, strengths, interests, and why they would be the best fit for the academy. The closing date for applications is Friday 8 April and the course starts on Monday 25th April.

Finalists will go through to the recruitment day at the Thistle site in Craigmillar, giving them the chance to meet and chat to those supported by the charity, as well as the chance to talk to existing employees.



Emma and Tracey

Tracey is a mum, runs her own travel consultancy business, and lives some distance away from Emma, who she supports on a one-to-one basis.

Tracey works part-time supporting Emma, including sleepovers in case Emma needs support during the night, which fits well into Tracey's routine.

Tracey acknowledges being a mum to three boys as being good preparation for her role at Thistle.

She said: "You're always having to listen, think ahead, adapt plans and deal with the unexpected. That gave me confidence."

Tracey continued: "I still work as a travel agent and learned from my Thistle experience. One specialism I have added is that I now can offer accessible holidays for people with disabilities.

“The most rewarding aspect of my role at Thistle is helping Emma live the life that she wants. We really do have lots of fun and laughs together.”