



## **PRESS RELEASE**

**Date: Friday 1<sup>st</sup> March**

### **YOUNG PEOPLE GATHER FOR CELEBRATION EVENT**

**58 participants, along with family and friends, gathered on 28th February at Belfast Met e3 campus, to celebrate their success since the project launched in August 2018.**

Futures is funded under the EU's PEACE IV programme, managed by the Special EU Programmes Body and is led by Belfast Metropolitan College in partnership with Start360, Northern Ireland Housing Executive and Southern Regional College. Futures is one of 11 projects funded under the programme's 'children and young person' objective.

Catherine, 23, a Futures participant, said: **"I feel I've come in leaps and bounds since joining Futures! It's been an amazing experience right down to the tearful end. Making lifelong friendships, new found confidence and better awareness when it comes to others and my own mental health. My eyes have been opened to new perspectives of the community as well as an understanding of people's views and opinions."**

Each group grew from circling each other warily, to becoming a supportive family that accommodated and learned about each other's cultures. They found their way around language barriers, while engaging, learning and welcoming our differences and similarities. They focused on mental health, resilience and confidence building so that, come the end of their time on Futures, they would feel better equipped to work for their hopes and dreams and help others to achieve theirs as well.

Katie, 21, a Futures participant, says: **"I was scared and didn't know my place in society or what to do with my life. Now I have a solid idea of my place in the world, a better understanding of the world and the issues that young people face."**

Participants are successfully moving into education, employment, volunteering or training with many taking the first step to achieve Essential Skills. These are the next generation of engineers, motor vehicle technicians, youth workers, hotel managers, software engineers,



social workers and fashion designers who are self-assured, non-judgemental and determined to contribute to the continued social and economic success of the region.

Thomas, 20, a Futures participant, says: **“I came to Futures as I was jobless, out of education and aimless in my life. I had been struggling with mental health issues and had a lot of mental blocks. Since joining in early October, I have developed a lot of confidence and have figured out my career path and want to be a youth worker! This course essentially changed my outlook, my ideas and basically my life.”**

We are currently recruiting for our next phase of the programme. If you are aged 16-24 and want help to find your future, please get in touch by phoning 02890265212 or emailing [futures@belfastmet.ac.uk](mailto:futures@belfastmet.ac.uk).

- ENDS

#### **Notes to Editor:**

#### SEUPB

- The Special EU Programmes Body is a North/South Implementation Body sponsored by the Department of Finance and Personnel in Northern Ireland and the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform in Ireland.
- It is responsible for managing two EU Structural Funds Programmes, PEACE IV and INTERREG VA which are designed to enhance cross-border co-operation, promote reconciliation and create a more peaceful and prosperous society.
- The Programmes operate within a clearly defined area including Northern Ireland, the Border Region of Ireland and in the case of INTERREG VA, Western Scotland.
- The PEACE IV Programme has a value of €270 million and aims to address the economic and social problems which result from the existence of borders.
- For more information on the SEUPB please visit [www.seupb.eu](http://www.seupb.eu)