

Students have fun building skills in the outdoors

Level 1 animal care students have had some fun in the great outdoors this autumn, challenging their communication, interpersonal and team-building skills through the National Citizen Service (NCS) scheme.

The NCS scheme is designed to support young people in their transition to adulthood through residential projects and community-based activities.

To maintain Covid safety, the class of 40 was split into four groups which participated over two weeks. Each week the groups had the opportunity to visit Portland College, on Nottingham Road, to get to grips with woodland adventures and work within the college's small animal farm.

A range of physical activities helped the groups to develop teamwork techniques, and included rock climbing, an orientation game which saw them searching for clues in the woods, as well as caring for the environment and the animals.

Tutors were able to join them for some activities, which helped the groups to maintain an aspect of familiarity.

For two of the days, the challenge was spent at our Derby Road campus, where students took part in workshops and activities which concentrated on enhancing communication skills through a Snapchat challenge and quizzes. They also welcomed guest speakers Claire Wilmott from Notts County Football in the Community, and Stephen Cooper, a motivational speaker from Mansfield Community and Voluntary Services, who spoke about his disabilities and how these have not stopped him from achieving.

Animal care tutor Chloe Patman said: "This experience was incredibly positive. Many students have said it really brought them closer as a group and helped to build a rapport. Together, they successfully overcame many obstacles within the activities.

"Students showed really positive behaviours and the NCS staff encouraged them to push their limits in the tasks. Everyone got the chance to take part in something and didn't feel left out.

"It was great that tutors could also get involved in some activities with the students – even I went rock climbing!"

Student Georgia Large said: "I really enjoyed meeting new people because it helped me with my social skills. Also, I enjoyed trying new things because it helped me to be more positive about myself."