

Kelsie Fitzsimmons

WINNER - 16-19 LEARNER OF THE YEAR

Kelsie Fitzsimmons is an inspiring 17-year-old who has shown exceptional resilience and drive. Growing up she faced many challenges but thrived on the City & Guilds Level 1 Hair and Beauty programme, earning praise for her 97% attendance, dedication, and leadership. Kelsie became a mentor to her peers, helping shape a supportive, high-achieving learning environment and even influencing how the course was delivered.



Determined to keep progressing, she completed her qualification early and secured an apprenticeship with MJ Miller & Co, pursuing her ambition to become an accountant. Her positivity and professionalism have left a lasting impact on both students and staff.

Kelsie's journey is a shining example of courage, growth, and the power of self-belief to transform challenges into success.

Can you tell us about your journey into the Hair and Beauty Study Programme and how you felt starting out?

Starting the hair and beauty study programme I was anxious. College was a last minute choice for me so picking a course I had no interest in doing in the future, I felt was a waste of time for me and especially for my tutors but throughout the course my confidence grew and I started to enjoy it despite not wanting to be in the college environment.

What's helped you stay strong and succeed despite barriers you have faced?

The main thing that helped me stay strong and succeed was definitely my tutor, head of department Claire. I knew any problems or worries I always had someone to go to. Opening up is a massive struggle for me but knowing Claire was there at any time, made me feel more comfortable. Not only Claire, I made an amazing friend during my course who I had with me everyday.

Your teachers describe you as a selfless role model. What motivated you to support others and take on a mentoring role during your time at college?

I always knew that college was never going to be long term but knowing I could get myself up in the morning and attend college with a smile on my face, I knew my peers could also do the same thing so I helped them and that made me feel so much better about myself.

What sparked bold and inspiring move from Hair and Beauty into accountancy, and how did your experience at college prepare you for it?

Not knowing what I wanted to do from the day I left school was daunting, having to go into the real world itself on my own to make decisions all on my own, I knew that I always wanted to have a job.

I spoke to the careers advisor at college who asked me to list my interests and they helped me find the accountancy role which I left college to start full time.

What would you say to other young people facing difficult circumstances who might be unsure of their future?

I'd always say what I did and that was to take each day as it comes there is no point putting so much pressure on yourself into finding a career in the future do what makes you happy and something always comes out of it.

How did it feel to win the 16-19 Learner of the Year award at the GM Skills Awards 2025?

Winning the 16-19 learner of the year award honestly I was so shocked that I was even considered but then when i won it I was so happy with myself and my confidence grew even more but I couldn't of done it on my own id always thank my tutors in college for helping and guiding me through everything.

“Kelsie has consistently demonstrated exceptional motivation, determination, and focus throughout her studies. Her strong work ethic and commitment to learning have enabled her to progress quickly through her qualification and successfully secure an apprenticeship, reflecting her dedication to achieving the best she can for her future.”

CLAIRE OWEN

**Head of Hair and Beauty at
Wigan and Leigh College**