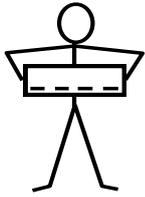


# My Story



**Pam Laws**



**Age 31**

What did you want to achieve?



I used to go to Navigator every day to use the computer and see my friends but I wanted to do something different and a bit more active.

What did you do? Who helped you?



I saw a poster in Navigator about trampolining sessions at Waveney Gymnastics club. This had been set up by Wendy from the Opportunities team.

I used to do trampolining at school so I thought I'd like to give it a try. I took a flyer and rang the gym club and booked myself a place.

Anita from Navigator helped me fill in the application form.

Were there any problems and how did you overcome them?



The staff at the gym club were all helpful and easy to get on with.

I had a problem with my knees getting sore so I wore knee straps every week and they don't hurt any more.

What have you done since?



I also continue to do my own trampolining on a Wednesday and have taken part in 5 competitions to date – this photo was taken at an event in Brentwood where I came 2<sup>nd</sup> and won a trophy. The other people in the photo are from some of the groups I assist to coach.

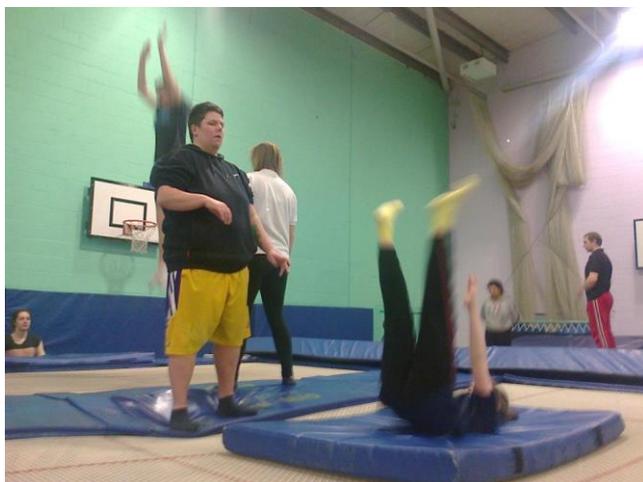
The gym club were really pleased with how well I had been getting on and they asked me to become a volunteer at their club for children with learning disabilities on a Tuesday night.

I have now been doing this for 2 years 8 months, and the gym club have also asked me to help out on a Monday evening with 2 children's groups, a second group on a Tuesday evening and an adults group on a Thursday evening.



SUCCESS STORY: Waveney Gymnastics Club members who took part in the 'In' event at Brentwood.

What happened next?



Wendy from Leading Lives Opportunities Team supported me to apply to the Shaw Trust to look for paid work. As I really enjoy working with young children, Sean at the Shaw Trust talked to the Gym club about taking me on as paid staff. For this they wanted me to be trained but in the meantime they offered me a cleaning job at the Gym club 3 hours a week.

The gym club are raised nearly £500 to send me on a 3-day Level 1 Trampolining Coaches course in Hitchin Hertfordshire in Jan / Feb '15 with an assessment in April '15. Wendy supported me on this course – we had to leave Lowestoft at 6.30am (including on a Sunday) and didn't get back sometimes till 8pm – very long days!

I had a lot of support from Ellen and Danny at the Gym club to help me get ready for the assessment

For the assessment, I had to take gymnasts from the club with me to Hitchin as well. I was very nervous for about 3 days beforehand..... but I **PASSED!**



Once I qualified I started getting paid for 7 hrs/wk – 3hrs cleaning and 4 hrs coaching and I had one group that I ran by myself. I worked with 'SeeTec' for 6 months -they were aiming to get me into full time work and organised for me to volunteer for 19.5 extra hours at the gym club until May '16. Once I finished this I decided to give up my cleaning hours and concentrate on the coaching side of things.

I wanted to do some more training around working with children so the gym club paid for me to do my 'level 0' gymnastics coaching award.

What is your situation now?



The gym club are trying to get me some funding to do my Level 1 Gymnastics coaching course – this will be a 3 day course in Cambridge – Wendy from Leading Lives will again support me to do this. If I pass this I will hopefully also get paid for the gymnastics groups I support.

Also, I have been approached by British Gymnastics to become a Disability Gymnastics Ambassador and are doing a story on me.

What is the best thing about this?



I've been at the gym club nearly 4 ½ years now - it's lots of fun and I am taking responsibility, learning new skills and getting more confident.

I am being paid for 4 hrs coaching trampolining, and 1 hr 'special needs recreation' and I am hoping that once I pass my 'level 1' gymnastics coaching award, I will be able to get more paid hours at the gym club and also coach gymnastics.