



**CHOICES COLLEGE**  
STEPS TO SUCCESS

# Work-based course at Choices College



## Information for Learners, Parents and Family Carers

*Looking for support to get into paid employment?*

*Looking for real hands-on work experience and more career opportunities?*

*Motivated to develop skills to find a paid job?*

*Choices College can help!*



## What is Choices College?

Choices College is a national specialist post-16 **college** which delivers high quality provision for vulnerable students with learning difficulties, disabilities and/or autism. The college provides tailored educational support, alongside a supported internship Study Programme for young adults aged 16-24 who have a current Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP).

The college partners with NHS healthcare settings, local organisations, and private businesses to create supported work environments and provide real work experience for our Interns.

Support is tailored to each Intern, based on their skills, interests and prior learning.

During the Study Programme, Interns spend one academic year attending up to three 12-week placements to increase their vocational knowledge, skills and experience. This is supported by weekly classroom sessions where maths, English and Employability qualifications are embedded. Interns must attend each element of the Study Programme.

## Our Approach

The college believes that every young person embarking on the Study Programme has the potential to succeed, and we provide skilled, informed support to maximise their potential.

The College aims to:

- Empower Interns and build their confidence as individuals in the workplace.
- Change perceptions, raise awareness and create valuable career pathways for young people with learning difficulties, disabilities and/ or autism.
- Raise awareness of the value that the Interns can add to the workplace.
- Increase the diversity of the workforce and promote equality of opportunity.
- Provide Interns with a life experience and knowledge outside of their home and school.
- Widen access to the NHS workforce.

# Choices College Impact

Choices College interns use the course as a pre-entry level qualification to move into apprenticeships, work or further education.

In 2023 – 2024 of the Choices College interns that completed the course...

53%

entered **paid employment, apprenticeships, or volunteering** roles.

17%

went on to complete **further or higher education.**



## Our college

The College is subject to Ofsted inspection and Department for Education (DfE) regulations.

We teach a DfE approved curriculum and National Council for Further Education (NCFE) accredited provision. The aim is to support interns into employment at the end of the Study Programme.

Our curriculum includes:

- Employability Skills
- Functional maths and English
- Preparation for Adulthood
- CV, interview and job search preparation
- Pastoral support

# Our Support

We support young people to gain work skills through a phased stage of development to access employment.



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## Pre internship

- Preparing for adulthood sessions delivered in class-room from Y10
- Virtual work experience platform
- Access to work experience placements
- Suitable for anyone aged-16 and above
- Coordinated with the learner's Local Authority, school or college

## Supported Internship

- Full time college course
- 1 day classroom delivery functional skills maths and English, and employability skills
- Up to 4 days per week on a practical work experience
- Up to 3 rotations of placement, each 12 weeks in length

## Transition

- **Paid employment** which allows to develop a career and become a valued employee
- **Apprenticeship** combines practical training on the job with study. An apprentice works alongside experienced staff in a company or organisation to gain job-specific skills.



*Interns thoroughly enjoy attending work placements which are well matched to their long-term career aspirations and personal interests.*

**-OFSTED Report (Jan 2025)**



## Work Experience Support

- For learners aged 16-24 still in school or college.
- Classroom PFA sessions led by our team according to the individual school/college need.
- One half-day placement per week for six weeks.
- Support is organised through the school/education provider.
- Choices College Work Experience Leads will meet with the learner to talk about what kind of work experience they want to do. They arrange different placements dependent on learner interest and suitable environment.

## Supported Internship Support

- The Study Programme runs five days a week, over 38 weeks, Monday to Friday, over an academic year, September to July.
- Each week, interns attend up to one full day of education (maths, English and employability lessons) and up to four days of professional placements. In addition, there are extra study days.
- We provide full transition support and can usually tailor education and placements to suit the intern's needs.
- Placements with Choices College business partners are tailored to each intern's skills and interests.
- Interns are given a two-week, full-time induction at the beginning of the Study Programme, with educational learning including confidentiality, inclusion and diversity and professional expectations.
- Interns attend all additional training as required by their placement partner e.g. manual handling.
- College staff complete weekly/fortnightly reviews and work with partners to develop and maintain the intern placements.

## Transition & Employment

- Support with job search, applications and interview practise.
- Support with formal discussions with the employer around reasonable adjustments in the recruitment process.
- Pastoral support.
- HR issues (reorganisation, conduct, performance etc.).



## Eligibility & How to Apply

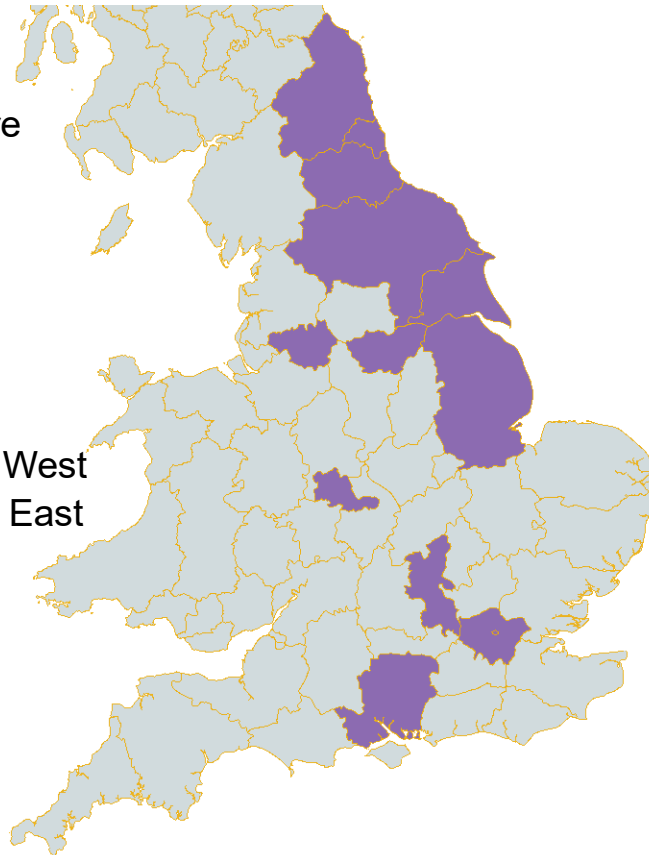
To join, Choices College applicants must meet each of the following eligibility criteria:

- Live within one of our current Local Authority partnership areas
- Be aged 16 – 24 years.
- Have a current Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP).
- Already able or working towards being an independent traveller before starting at college

To apply, please use the QR code at the end of this leaflet or go to our website and complete the online form. Alternatively, if you would prefer a hard copy of our application form please email the contact on the last page of this leaflet.

### Our Delivery Locations

- Birmingham
- Buckinghamshire
- Darlington
- Durham
- Gateshead
- Hampshire
- Hartlepool
- Lincoln
- London – North West
- London – South East
- London – West
- Manchester
- Middlesbrough



- Middlesex
- Newcastle
- Northumberland
- North Tyneside
- Portsmouth
- Redcar & Cleveland
- Sheffield
- South Tyneside
- Southampton
- Stockton-on-Tees
- Sunderland
- York

## Ellie's Story

Ellie's diagnosis is Congenital Myasthenic Syndrome, a rare disorder that causes extreme muscle weakness. She uses an electric wheelchair when she becomes tired and has a permanent tracheostomy for ventilation if she becomes unwell.

Ellie joined Choices College with no previous work experience due to her condition.

Mentors and staff supporting Ellie were given specialist training prior to her starting her internship, to ensure there was an awareness of her needs and appropriate care if she ever became ill in the workplace.

Ellie then commenced admin placements with the Research and Education teams at Newcastle Hospitals. She flourished in these roles, learning all about NHS administrative systems and processes; she made fantastic progress.

Ellie was supported to apply for a Business Administration apprenticeship in the NHS at the end of her internship and was able to talk with confidence at her interview about all the experience, skills and independence she has gained through Choices College.



## Nathan's Story

Nathan has a diagnosis of Cerebral Palsy and Global Development Delay.

He commenced the Supported Internship and his first placement was in a hospital post room. This allowed Nathan to be slowly introduced to a hospital environment to allow time to increase his confidence and move somewhere busier at his own pace.

When Nathan felt ready, he asked to move to a ward environment. There, he assisted patients coming into the department, supported the transfer of patients and chatted with people waiting in the discharge room.

Nathan's work on the department was so valuable that when a position for Ward Assistant in the Emergency Department became available, staff encouraged him to apply. Nathan was given reasonable interview adjustments and scored highly at interview, securing a part-time position on the ward.



If you would like further information about Choices College, please get in touch with our team at the address below:

## Contact Us

**Email:** [england.choices.college@nhs.net](mailto:england.choices.college@nhs.net)

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Scan the QR code  
above to visit our  
website



Scan the QR  
code above to  
apply!

**Contact your local Choices College Staff member:**

**Area Manager:**

**Email:**

**Phone:**

