



PfA Factsheet: Supported Internships



Why is the Government introducing Supported Internships?

The Government wants to end the assumption that young people with severe learning difficulties and/or disabilities cannot work, and wants to ensure that they receive the right support to move into adulthood with paid jobs and careers. Supported Internships build on the strong evidence base that many young people with severe learning disabilities and/or disabilities want a paid job, and with the right support, can secure and retain jobs that employers value. The special educational needs (SEN) Green Paper, *Support and aspiration*¹, built on this learning. It set out a cross-Government commitment to ensure young people with severe learning difficulties and/or disabilities receive a seamless package of support as they move from education into employment. This is consistent with the Government's vision for disability and employment set out in *Fulfilling Potential: Making it Happen*².

Who's it for?

Supported Internships are for young people with severe learning difficulties and/or disabilities aged 16 to 24 with a Statement of Special Educational Needs, a Learning Difficulty Assessment, or an Education, Health and Care Plan who want to move into employment and need extra support to do so.

Who can offer them?

From September 2013, all Further Education colleges, sixth form and independent specialist providers will be able to offer Supported Internships.

What is it?

Supported Internships are personalised study programmes based primarily at an employer's premises. They are designed to better enable young people with severe learning difficulties and/or disabilities to achieve sustainable paid employment by equipping them with the skills they need for the workplace. For the young person, the internship should contribute to their long-term career goals and fit with their working capabilities. For the employer, the internship must meet a real business need, with the potential of a paid job at the end of the programme of study, should the intern meet the required standard.



1 [Support and aspiration: a new approach to SEN and disability. Progress and next steps](#) DfE (2012)

2 [Fulfilling Potential: Making it Happen](#) DWP (2013)

The overall goal of Supported Internships is for young people with severe learning difficulties to move into paid employment. The structured study programme includes on-the-job training provided by expert job coaches, and the chance to study for relevant qualifications, where appropriate. Job coaches are critical to the success of Supported Internships. They provide in-work support for young people which tapers off as the individual becomes familiar with their role. Job coaches provide support to employers, increasing their confidence of working with interns and helping them to understand the business case for employing a diverse workforce. Job coaches also provide support at the end of the internship for those young people not offered a paid job.

Supported Internships reflect the following principles:

- the majority of the young person's time is spent at the employer's premises;
- young people are expected to comply with real job conditions, such as time-keeping and dress code;
- systematic instruction, a method specifically designed to help people with severe learning difficulties learn new tasks, is used where appropriate;
- stretching learning goals are set, including in English and Maths;
- both the young person and the employer have support through a tutor and a formally trained job coach in line with the National Occupational Standards for supported employment³; and
- support continues after the course of study to make sure that young people get paid jobs and sustainable careers.

How is it funded?

Supported Internships are funded from a combination of Education Funding Agency core funding (Elements 1 and 2) and with top up funding for the required amount from the relevant local authority high needs budget (Element 3). The Department for Work and Pension's Access to Work fund can pay for the in-work element of an internship, including the job coach and the extra fares to work if the young person is unable to use public transport. Information will shortly be available on how to access this funding.



³ <http://www.excellencegateway.org.uk/node/61>

What are the first steps to making them happen?

Here are some of the first steps you'll need to take:

- Understanding the different ways of developing a Supported Internship: there is not one way of delivering this structured programme of study. One example is Project SEARCH⁴. Other models have been developed such as *Bright Futures* in Kent⁵ and *Traineeships* in Manchester⁶. A good way of finding out more about these is to arrange a visit. You can also read the evaluation of Project SEARCH⁷.
- Understanding the business case for employers: there is a strong business case for employers in employing a diverse workforce, and offering supported internships can be one way that they can do this. Both the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD) and the British Association of Supported Employment (BASE) have information on their websites about the business case⁸.
- Establishing a partnership: a strong partnership approach is needed to successfully deliver Supported Internships between a college, an employer and supported employment services. Ensuring senior commitment across the partners is a key critical success factor. A supported employment service will be able to help with engaging effectively with employers⁹.



4 <http://odi.dwp.gov.uk/odi-projects/jobs-for-people-with-learning-disabilities/project-search.php>

5 http://www.thanet.ac.uk/course_guides/course_page/foundation_learning/bright-futures-entry-level-level-1-full-time/12-13-001048-1-1

6 <http://www.excellencegateway.org.uk/node/20451>

7 <http://odi.dwp.gov.uk/docs/wor/pro/project-search-report.pdf>

8 <http://www.cipd.co.uk/hr-resources/factsheets/diversity-workplace-overview.aspx> and <http://base-uk.org/employers-business-case>

9 <http://base-uk.org/about/members>

Case study

Employment Works is a Supported Internship project in Surrey whose partners are Guildford College, the University of Surrey, St Peter's Hospital and EmployAbility. The first term is used for classroom exercises and discussions hosted by Guildford College. The next two terms are spent at an internship placement at either the University of Surrey or St Peter's Hospital with job coach support from EmployAbility.

Chelsea

Chelsea is profoundly deaf and has learning difficulties, and she was 19 when she started on the project. Her internship was within the Print Shop at the University, and over the course of the 2 terms she gained a range of valuable skills including collating, proof reading, quality checking, using folding and binding machines as well as the ability to take customer orders. At the end of the internship, Chelsea progressed into an Apprenticeship at the Print Shop. She has now finished the Apprenticeship, and continues in employment at the Print Shop and her boss says, "I don't want you to mention that Chelsea is disabled anymore. As far as we and the work are concerned, she has no disability."

David

David is on the Autistic Spectrum, and he was 20 when he started on the project. During the first term, David had additional support to enable workplace visits and travel training to increase his work awareness. His internship was in a variety of catering departments at the University to enable him to develop good coping strategies in managing his anxiety. Over the course of the 2 terms, he gained a range of valuable skills which included clearing and cleaning tables, chairs and tray removal, serving at the food counter, food preparation, coffee shop assistant as well as the ability to use the till. At the end of the internship, David was offered a paid job within the University Catering staff team. This was initially at 15 hours per week to help him adjust to becoming an employee. He now works for 27.5 hours per week and was also a volunteer in catering at the Olympics.

Alan

Alan has a learning disability, and his internship was in the Car Park and Security department at the hospital. Over the course of the 2 terms, he gained a range of valuable skills which included dealing with enquiries and requests, issuing staff ID badges, and emptying car park machines. In addition he developed other transferable skills which included team working, communication and reliability. Unfortunately the hospital was unable to offer him a paid job at the end of the internship. However, he continued to get support from EmployAbility, and secured a paid job with a Surrey County Council Care Home as a Kitchen Assistant in his local area. His employer supported him to undertake an NVQ Level 2 in Food Production, which he successfully completed. The Head Chef says, "it is so good to see the huge progress that Alan has made at work. I feel completely confident that he can look after the kitchen and do the ordering on his own in my absence. He is a real team player."

Key Resources

National Occupational Standards for supported employment – Statements of skills and knowledge needed by job coaches

<http://base-uk.org/policy/national-occ-stds>

Project SEARCH evaluation – Learning from the demonstration sites as part of Valuing Employment Now

<http://www.preparingforadulthood.org.uk/resources/wider-resources/how-to-guide-learning-from-the-valuing-people-now-employment-demonstration-sites>

Education Funding Agency – Funding guidance for young people 2013/14

http://media.education.gov.uk/assets/files/pdf/f/funding%20regulations%202013-14%20version%201%20updated%2016may13_001.pdf

About this publication

This factsheet was produced by the Preparing for Adulthood programme. The Preparing for Adulthood programme is funded by the Department for Education as part of the delivery support for the SEN and disability reforms. The Preparing for Adulthood programme is delivered by a partnership between The National Development Team for inclusion, The Council for Disabled Children and Helen Sanderson Associates.

This factsheet was first published in September 2012. It was revised in September 2013.

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