



EMPLOYER INFORMATION

Imagine the Possibilities

Somerset Supported
Internships & Apprenticeships

What, Why and How?



Introduction to Supported Employment

Supported Employment Programmes have been running for 10+ years and are one of the most successful ways to enable young people, with an identified additional need, to gain sustainable paid employment. However currently, only 5.1% of people with special educational needs and disabilities gain permanent paid employment in the UK, compared to 80% of their peers.

This guide aims to give an overview of Supported Employment programmes, how they can be beneficial to your business, FAQs that employers have raised and most importantly how to get started. Supported Internships and Apprenticeship opportunities for young people cannot be achieved without forward thinking employers such as yourselves.



What is a Supported Internship?

- A full-time, structured work based educational programme offered by colleges and training providers for young people, (aged 16-24) with identified additional needs and where the majority of their time is spent within the workplace.
- The structured study programme includes on the training with a local employer, supported by expert job coaches, an employability programme looking at soft skills of employment, vocational profiling to identify a student's skills and qualities and the chance to study for relevant qualifications, where appropriate.
- Job coaches provide support to employers, increasing their confidence of working with young people and helping them to understand the business case of employing a diverse workforce.
- The support given to both the intern and employer, by a job coach, is fully funded by Access To Work - a Department for Work and Pensions grant.
- Supported internships aim to help young people gain paid employment by giving them the skills and experience by learning in the 'real workplace'
- There are different models of supported internships which can be flexible to meet your business need. For example:
 - Interns spend all their time with the employer, undertaking learning, delivered by an education provider, within the workplace environment.
 - Interns spend one day a week with the educational provider, and approximately 15 - 20 hours per week with the employer
- The model appropriate for the employer's business needs can be discussed with the education provider.
- There is no cost to the employer as the Intern is in full time education.
- There is no obligation to employ the young person at the end of the placement, however, supported internships are the perfect form of working interview, should there be a suitable vacancy.
- The overall goal of supported internships is for young people with additional needs to move into paid employment or a Supported Apprenticeship.

Why should my business host a work placement?

As well as making a positive contribution to society and increasing the diversity of your workforce to reflect your customer base, the benefits to your business include:

- ✓ Developing an ethical corporate image which can be fundamental to business success. A study found that 87% of consumers preferred to use companies that hired people with disabilities, and that 92% felt more favourable towards companies that hired individuals with disabilities.
- ✓ Working alongside a young person with an additional need can increase your organisation's understanding of your market. For an average business, more than 20% of your customers are disabled people. A workforce that reflects the diverse range of customers it serves, and the community in which it is based, is good for business.
- ✓ The placement can act as an extended working interview; giving you an increased chance of getting the right person to fill your vacancies and bringing new skills to your workforce.
- ✓ Interns can be trained to undertake tasks using an employer's methods, thereby meeting the required standards.
- ✓ Offering a placement will increase an employer's disability confidence, with job coaches available to supplement any in work training that the employer provides. The intern can also undertake additional learning in college to work on qualifications that the employer would want for their workforce.
- ✓ There may be an opportunity to give a member of staff mentoring or supervisory experience if they act as a 'buddy' to the intern.



What will we need to do during the placement?

- Interview (or other method to assess suitability) the intern prior to placement.
- Provide the line management as you would with any employee.
- Work with the intern and job coach to ensure lines of communication are kept open and honest.
- Have input to the intern's review.
- Share with the training or education provider/job coach any concerns you may have.
- If a young person requires a reasonable adjustment to undertake their duties, the job coach can support you by identifying this. If there is a cost Access To Work government funding can be applied for, but a successful funding application will depend on nature of the reasonable adjustment.

How can I offer someone a supported internship placement?

- If you are thinking of becoming a host employer and offering a placement, a list of the support available in Somerset and contacts are at the end of this guide.
- They will work with you to understand the role/s you have available, to identify the education provider and appropriate job coach support taking in account your business requirements.
- Supported internships are flexible and the provider will work with you and your business to ensure the internship works for all.
- Partnership is key to a successful supported internship and your input will be invaluable prior to and during the placement.
- The aim of supported internships is to prepare young people with additional needs for employment. So what happens at the end of the supported internship?
 - As the intern has been fulfilling a real business need in your organisation, you might consider whether you would like to employ them.
 - If you are not in a position to recruit you can still play an important part in an intern achieving employment elsewhere e.g by providing a reference, recommending to other employers.
 - If the intern requires further development of skill and behaviours talk to the job coach and education provider so they can support the intern with next steps.

CASE STUDY of Supported Traineeship

The HPC Supported Traineeship has been designed to provide opportunities for local young people with Special Educational Needs or Disabilities (SEND) to access work readiness training and a work experience placement on the HPC project. We work with our delivery partners Bridgwater & Taunton College, who deliver the first five weeks of funded training, including employability skills, nuclear behaviours and health & safety training, and Discovery UK who provide Supported Employment workplace support (funded by HPC) through Job Coaches. HPC provide overall management of the programme and source the placement opportunities across the Project, overseeing the onboarding process including risk assessments.

The relationships between the delivery partners are very much a partnership, we rely equally on each other to deliver the various aspects of the programme from promotion and selection to delivery and employer engagement. We draw upon each other's strengths and areas of expertise, and access to networks and opportunities. The work carried out by Discovery is of particular importance as the Job Coaches develop strong relationships with the families and are vital during the work transition stage, ensuring that the right person is matched with the right role.

They also provide training for the employers in terms of working with and getting the best out of a young person with SEND.

For many Trainees, this programme has led to paid employment with their placement provider, enabling the individual, often for the first time in their life to earn a salary, have a professional identity and to achieve a new level of independence. Equally, the employers also gain from this outcome, not only from an intrinsic reward perspective but also as hard to fill job vacancies have been filled, a stronger focus on ED&I has been achieved within the company, and retention rates are high. HPC have demonstrated that even a large construction project can provide an effective Supported Employment programme and we are incredibly proud to offer this opportunity as part of our commitments to young people, and to achieving a diverse and inclusive workforce.

Donna Brown,
Skills Development Coordinator



Introduction to Supported Employment

The Project SEARCH vision is to ensure that everyone with a learning disability or autism can attain high-quality, integrated employment in their local area. Offering a high aiming one-year transition to work programme in their final year of school or college, our approach is so much more than work experience, it is education and training at its very best. 70% of graduating interns on Project SEARCH secure paid employment with an impressive average of 60% securing full-time roles, creating life changing opportunities and transforming outcomes for young people with additional learning needs. Project SEARCH offers an evidence based model and professional resources that deliver results through developing great relationships with high aiming and committed partners. Businesses experience increased local, regional, national and international recognition through marketing of this unique programme. Furthermore, organisations dramatically improve performance and retention in some high turnover or hard-to-fill posts.



George Pickersgill

Programme Specialist, Project Search

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FAQs Supported Internships

What are additional needs?

This is a term used to encompass any needs that may require consideration within education or the workplace. Not all interns will have additional 'learning' needs but all those on a supported internship will have an Education, Health and Care Plan. This is often referred to as an EHCP or EHC plan.

Will we have to pay the intern?

No, the interns are on a full time education programme that is taking place within the workplace rather than an educational establishment.

Will we be able to meet the intern before they start?

Yes. The interview and selection process are very important to all concerned. You will have discussed your requirements with the education provider who may suggest potential interns complete an expression of interest and take part in an assessment and selection day. This may take place at your place of business or the education provider. It would involve the education provider, job coach and the employer.

What happens if we think it isn't working?

If you or your staff have concerns, please speak to the job coach or education provider as soon as it is possible. This will enable them to be addressed and the placement can continue.

Who will support us?

The job coach will support employer, intern and staff. There is no cost as it is funded by Access to Work

Will the job coach stay all the time?

The job coach will stay for as long as is required. The job coach will liaise with you in planning a phased withdrawal.

If we don't have a suitable job at the end of the placement what will happen to the Intern?

If you do not have a vacancy the job coach/education provider will work with the intern to seek alternative employment.

My staff are worried about working with someone with additional needs, they are worried they will say something wrong.

Free awareness training can be provided and if needed specific training to address and individuals needs. The job coach will be there or can be contacted to answer any questions.

What is a Supported Apprenticeship?

Supported Apprenticeships are very much like normal paid, full-time jobs but with tailored training and qualifications included within them. Apprenticeships give the individual the skills, knowledge and behaviours required for the job role, with additional tailored support.

- 1 to 5 years to complete
- Paid employment with holiday leave
- 16 years or over
- Level 2 – 7

Supported Apprenticeships will provide individuals with practical skills and work experience in a particular industry or occupation while receiving additional support and guidance in a partnership approach from a Job Coach, training organisation/college and the employer, to help them succeed.

They are tailored to people who may face barriers to employment or training, such as those with disabilities, and can benefit both individuals and employers.

Research has shown that supported apprenticeships and supported employment can be highly effective in helping individuals overcome barriers to employment and improve their overall quality of life.

Supported Apprenticeships

The same as an apprenticeship with added support for the apprentice and the employer if there are additional special needs required by the apprentice, this may include education or ability needs.



Added support



Employed



Paid a salary



Contract

80%
work
20%
study

Typically
1-4 years +

700+
standards



Intermediate -
degree level

EASY

Not the easy
option



Real job = real
responsibilities

CASE STUDY of supported employment

Erin Barsby a supported employee who has made a great contribution to their employer.



It has been an absolute pleasure and privilege to have Erin within the Organisational Development team at Somerset Council - Erin has thrown herself into the apprenticeship and has made use of every learning opportunity presented to her.


She has continuously impressed senior managers across the organisation through her proactive approach to all tasks and her willingness to challenge where she sees an issue. For example, Erin was instrumental in Somerset Council becoming a Sunflower Scheme Organisation as she identified that we were not doing all we should as a large employer to be inclusive.

Erin has made a huge impact to her immediate team and is an important part of the Early Careers Strategy - on a daily basis she supports me in administration tasks associated to apprenticeships, work experience and graduate programmes.

I'm thrilled to be retaining Erin within HR at Somerset Council and can't wait to see where her Level 3 apprenticeship takes her. The sky really is the limit for Erin!

Misha Liddiatt
Early Careers Strategy Lead
Somerset Council





My experience in supported employment is a very positive one thankfully. I saw the job on Indeed and had to double check with family when it said for SEND as at first, I thought working in SEND but it was a job in HR which I had been interested in the past. When I saw apprenticeship, I was sceptical as a past non supported apprenticeship didn't go as planned. I was intrigued about supported employment as I had never been in supported employment or office work before. I wanted a change of career, and this seemed the best option. I applied and got an interview via Teams which I was sceptical about as never ever used it. It went well I was interviewed by my now colleague and soon to be boss Michael and Natalie and Nicky from the training provider were also there. A couple days after the interview I got a phone call from Michael saying I had got the job I was overjoyed and tearful a bit that I was successful. It was sad to leave my old job the residents I had come to know dearly, I made sure I keep in touch with them as they had grown to be my friends in the end. I started at the council it was a bit nerve racking at first as a new start new people and new etiquette. My team were amazing and welcoming so was all the other HR staff. My experience in this team is now coming to an end sadly I will miss working closely with all of Organisational Development. Thanks to their support and help

throughout my 18 months with them I have achieved a lot. To name a few I've spoken at events for supported employment, helped the council launch the sunflower lanyard scheme, became a facilitator for the Oliver McGowan mandatory training and won an award in supported employment. This is not the end of my time at county hall as in October 2023 I will be moving on to a Level 3 in HR Support and moving to the Business Partnership Team for Childrens and Families in HR Resourcing.

My life hasn't always been the easiest but very lucky to say better than others. For most of my life I felt I didn't deserve to call myself disabled or say I had Autism and my other Learning Difficulties as I am High functioning, so I felt if I asked for help, I was being an inconvenience or a burden. Because according to a few in society I am basically normal and should just deal with what I have silently then society doesn't have to acknowledge it. I'm making it my mission to put my point across to society and spread awareness of neurodiversity and supported employment. As sadly only 22% of Autistic adults are in employment, I feel so lucky ever day to be one of them. Supported employment is crucial and so important to help get disabled people into the workplace to give them as chance to flourish and bring many valuable aspects and skills to the workplace.

Employer Concerns

Referred to in the Department of Education Guidance (base-uk.org)

Are there health and safety issues?

Interns/apprentices are covered by the employer's insurance as for any employed staff. For the vast majority of interns/apprentices, there will be no need for any considerations beyond those that exist for all staff. If there are particular issues, these will be discussed openly with the employer and strategies agreed between learning provider, employer and intern/apprentices with support provided to implement any additional control measures. The learning provider will do an initial risk assessment at the job matching stage, which should prevent interns/apprentices being placed in unsuitable environments in the first place.

Will it take up a lot of time for employer and staff and affect productivity?

The intern/apprentice will require new staff induction and training on the tasks to be undertaken but the job coach will be there to give the extra time required to support the intern/apprentice and ensure the tasks are learnt to a high standard.

We have no experience of communicating with or supporting people with additional needs in the workplace

The training provider/ job coach can deliver awareness training for you and your staff on the needs of your intern/apprentice including communication and providing advice on strategies for managing challenging behaviours or creating an environment which will minimise the risk of such behaviours occurring. The job coach will be available to the employer, on site or at the end of a phone, if issues/concerns are arising.

Can someone with a disability or learning difficulty really do any of the jobs I could offer?

Employers are often surprised at just how much a person with a learning difficulty or disability can do, once the right support is in place. It may also be useful to think how a specific role might be 'carved' for an individual if tasks were allocated differently across a team. Some employers have found productivity is increased when they take this approach (e.g., freeing up some staff from data entry work, taken on by the intern/apprentice, so they can do more customer-facing activity).

What will other staff or customers/clients make of it?

The job coach can support the staff to understand the abilities and needs of the intern/apprentice. It is rarely a problem for existing staff and often brings out the nurturing side of one or more colleagues who thrive in that role. Customers and clients are often pleased to see a diverse workforce, especially if it helps the workforce to better reflect the client group – and that's any workforce that serves the general public. If issues do arise, the job coach can help negotiate solutions.

Will a job coach just get in the way and be an extra burden?

Job coaches are very skilled in making their presence as unobtrusive as possible. They are likely to be around quite a lot to start with - but this is very helpful to the employer in getting the intern/apprentice trained up to do the job and ironing out any teething issues. As the intern grows more confident, the job coach will begin to withdraw although will do some light-touch monitoring and be available to intern/apprentice or employer if additional support is needed (e.g. if employer introduces new or more challenging tasks).

Will I face some kind of equality/discrimination challenge if I don't recruit the intern at the end?

Employers are not obliged to recruit the intern at the end of the internship. This is the ideal outcome but is not always possible. Employers are only expected to recruit the intern if there is a vacancy and the intern is the best candidate for the job. Providers will expect them to apply their normal recruitment procedures - with reasonable adjustments to the process as required, as for any disabled job applicant.

The Disability Confident scheme supports employers to make the most of the talents disabled people can bring to your workplace. Being Disability Confident could help you discover someone your business just can't do without.

The scheme has 3 levels designed to support you at every step on your Disability Confident journey. You must complete each level before moving on to the next

Level 1: Disability Confident Committed

Level 2: Disability Confident Employer

Level 3: Disability Confident Leader

For more information

and further details on how to apply search for How to sign up to the Disability Confident employer scheme - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)



Access to Work

Making work possible

Access to work is a publicly funded employment support grant scheme that aims to support disabled people start or stay in work. It can provide practical and financial support for people who have a disability or physical or mental health condition. Support can be provided where someone needs support or adaptations beyond reasonable adjustments.

Young people who start a work placement with an employer as part of the Department of Education supported internship programme will be able to apply for Access to Work support for the time of their work placement only.

For further information and eligibility criteria which could relate to other employees including Apprentices please see

Access to Work factsheet for employers - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)

www.gov.uk/government/publications/access-to-work-guide-for-employers/access-to-work-factsheet

For further information and advice please contact

Somerset Supported Employment

Julie Young - Julie.young@somerset.gov.uk

Emma France - efrance@fiveways.school

Skill Up Somerset

Free impartial information and advice on Apprenticeships
(including Supported Apprenticeships)

<https://skillupsomerset.org.uk>

Discovery (part of the Dimensions group)

For information on the role of the Job Coach

Discovery (discovery-uk.org)

Further resources

Somerset Education Business Partnership Somerset

Education Business Partnership (EBP) (somerset-ebp.co.uk)

Imagine the possibilities

Video Vault - www.somerset-ebp.co.uk/imagine-the-possibilities

Internships work

www.ndti.org.uk/change-and-development/internships-work

British Association for Supported Employment

(base-uk.org)

Access To Work

Access to Work: get support

if you have a disability or health condition:

What Access to Work is - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)



Transformation Through Collaboration



Somerset
Council

