



PARENT/CARER 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 young person, FAQs that families and employers have raised and most importantly how to support your young person to access a programme. Supported Internships and Apprenticeship opportunities are increasingly an exciting way for your young person to gain permanent paid employment.



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.
- Usually one year in duration – and should be the young person's final stepping stone into employment. It is not the expectation that a young person goes back to another college course afterwards.
- The structured study programme includes on the job 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 the businesses 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 will be discussed with the education provider to get the best fit.
- 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 your Young Person do a Supported Internship?

A Supported Internship offers:

- a chance to show an employer what they can do
- valuable experience and the opportunity to learn new skills
- help to develop confidence and self-belief to find a job
- direct support from a Job Coach to help them succeed.



How will the Job Coach support the young person during the placement?

- ✓ They will meet the young person before the Internship and help to make sure they understand what's involved and what they need to do for each step.
- ✓ They will find out what the young person likes to do, what their job hopes are and helps to match them to the available experiences in the workplace.
- ✓ When they start the Internship they will show the young person each part of the job and teach them to do it step by step, until they can do the job on their own, however long that takes.
- ✓ Help them to talk to the employer and support them all the way.
- ✓ Help them to work with the education provider to learn the employment skills they need to succeed
- ✓ Be there at the end to celebrate with the young person and help them to find a permanent paid job, either with this employer or a different one.



What will the employer do during the placement?

- They will meet the young person before the Internship and make sure they understand what they will be doing whilst working with them.
- Meet them regularly to make sure they are progressing well
- Work with the young person and job coach to discuss progress and any issues.
- Have input into Intern reviews.
- Share with the training or education provider/job coach any concerns anyone may have.
- If the Intern requires a reasonable adjustment to help them in the workplace, they will work with the job coach to put this in place.
- Consider whether they will have space to employ the young person at the end of the Internship and if they don't they will help them to find a job, which might be by writing a reference for them or telling other employers about their skills.

What will the education provider do during the placement?

- They will enrol the young person onto the Supported Internship programme and they will be one of their 'students' whilst the programme takes place.
- They will work with the employer and job coach to make sure the young person is making good progress throughout the Supported Internship
- They will teach them the extra skills to help them become the best employee they can be - called Employability Skills - this can include topics like:
 - Communication - being confident to discuss the job and what they are doing with their employers and customers
 - Teamwork - working with work colleagues so everyone achieves the best they can
 - Being Reliable - so that the employer and colleagues can depend on them to do the job well and in time.

CASE STUDY of Supported Employment

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

George.Pickersgill@dfnprojectsearch.org

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 employers 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 the employer meet the intern before they start?

Yes. The interview and selection process are very important to all concerned. The young person will have discussed their 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 the place of business or at the education provider's institution. It will involve the education provider, job coach and the employer.

What happens if you think it isn't working for your young person?

If you 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 hopefully continue.

Who will support the Intern?

The job coach will support the Intern, employer and their staff. There is no cost as it is funded by DWP Access to Work funding.

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 the young person and employer in planning a phased withdrawal when it's the right time, but can step back in when needed, e.g. when a new skill is being learnt.

If the employer doesn't have a suitable job at the end of the placement what will happen to my young person?

If the employer doesn't have a vacancy the job coach/education provider will work with the intern to seek alternative permanent paid employment.

I'm worried about employers working with someone with additional needs, that they may say something wrong.

Free awareness training can be provided to employers and if needed specific training to address an individual's 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. Supported Internships can provide a good stepping stone into a Supported Apprenticeship.

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.

Source: Skills Options - Skill Up Somerset
Your Future Sorted - Directories - DSTPN

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.

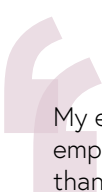
She has continuously impressed senior managers across the organisation through her proactive approach to all tasks and her willingness to challenge where she sees an issue. For example, Erin was instrumental in Somerset Council becoming a Sunflower Scheme Organisation as she identified that we were not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

Concerns raised by Employers

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.

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

The training provider/job coach can deliver awareness training for the employer and their staff on the needs of the 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 an employer could offer?

Employers and stakeholders are often surprised at just how much a person with a learning difficulty or disability can do, once the right support is in place. Sometimes a specific role might be 'carved' for an individual if tasks can be 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 employers face some kind of equality/discrimination challenge if they 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 via their normal recruitment procedures - with reasonable adjustments to the process as required, as for any disabled job applicant.

Family Concerns

Our family are worried about our existing benefits and possibly losing money if our young person works?

Once your young person is in paid employment they will continue to be able to access support if needed. Having a job will help them to have additional independence, opportunities, friendships and their own money. If you are in receipt of benefits DWP will need to be informed of a change of circumstances and they will help with reviewing your entitlements.



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)

Families Guide

Available at [www.somerset-ebp.co.uk/
imagine-the-possibilities](http://www.somerset-ebp.co.uk/imagine-the-possibilities)





Transformation Through Collaboration



Somerset
Council

