

# newsletter

Guiding Young People with SEND into Employment:  
A Newsletter for Parents & Carers

## Welcome to our Parent and Carer Information Newsletter

This is created for families all around Somerset and across our borders who have children and young people with Special Educational Needs and/or Disabilities (SEND), and/or autism spectrum diagnoses, and our aim is to share information about career and work experience opportunities.

This newsletter showcases the exciting and engaging work opportunities available for young people as well as providing you with some information about supported employment routes and opportunities.

## SAVE THE DATES...

### Somerset Parent Carer Forum & Community Inclusion and Activity Team

**DATE:** Sat 5 July

**VENUE:** The Mendip School

**LOCATION:** Edmund Rack Road,  
Prestleigh, Shepton Mallet BA4 4FZ

**TIME:** 10am - 2pm

### Supported Internship Conference for Parents and Carers

**DATE:** Thurs 27 November

**VENUE:** Taunton Rugby Club

**LOCATION:** Veritas Park,  
Hyde Lane, Taunton TA2 8BU

**TIME:** 9.30am - 2pm



SCAN ME



## specialREPORT



## Supported Employment: empowering abilities through employment

**Everyone has the right to work, and with the right job and the right support, they can live their best adult life.**

Supported employment is a structured approach that assists individuals, particularly those with disabilities, in finding and retaining paid jobs by providing individualised support and training. This approach focuses on

placing and training individuals, rather than the other way around, and emphasizes creating lasting careers.

- Personalised support to reach work goals
- Builds confidence and independence
- Develops practical, transferable skills
- Increases chances of long-term employment

## SUPPORTED INTERNSHIPS: A BRIDGE TO EMPLOYMENT

A Supported Internship Programme (SIP) is a full-time, work-based learning programme for young people aged 16-24 who have additional needs.

- It usually lasts one year
- Is one of the final steps before getting employment
- Support from job coaches
- On-the-job training with a local employer
- Lessons on employability skills (like teamwork & communication)
- The chance to earn qualifications, if suitable
- Some interns spend all their time at the workplace, with learning delivered there and others spend one day a week in an educational setting

A SIP is a partnership approach of working around the intern to support them to:

**Learn. Work. Succeed** and have **Real Experience. Real Support. Real Futures.**

### The programme includes:

- Vocational profiling to find out what the student is good at

*Continued next page...*

# Small Steps, Big Futures: Helping Your Young Person Get Ready for the World of Work

## Talk About Work and Goals

- Have open conversations about what your young person enjoys, what they're good at, and what kind of job they might like.
- Help them think about their future and what independence means to them.

## Build Life and Work Skills at Home

- Encourage routines like getting up on time, preparing meals, or managing money.
- Practice social skills like making phone calls, asking for help, or introducing themselves.

## Support Travel Independence

- If possible, help them learn to use public transport or navigate their way to familiar places.
- Practice routes together and build confidence step by step.

## Encourage Responsibility

- Give them small responsibilities at home to build confidence - like helping with shopping, tidying, or planning a meal.
- Celebrate their efforts and progress.

## Stay Involved and Positive

- Attend meetings with the school, job coach, or internship provider.
- Ask questions and share what you know about your young person's strengths and needs.
- Be encouraging - your belief in them makes a big difference!

## Promote Self-Advocacy

- Help them learn to speak up about what they need or want.
- Practice simple ways to express preferences, ask questions, or say when something isn't working

**Discover more** about different job roles, and industries, with your young person, that include varying tasks, skills and qualifications required through our Skills Maps.



SCAN ME

Continued...



**The employer's role in a supported internship is essential to creating a meaningful and inclusive work experience for the intern. Here's a breakdown of what that typically involves:**

- Providing a Real Work Environment
- Creating an Inclusive Workplace
- Offering Mentorship and Guidance
- Supporting Skill Development
- Exploring Long-Term Opportunities
- Consider the intern for paid employment if a suitable role becomes available
- Offer references or help with job applications if employment isn't possible.

A **job coach** on a **supported internship** plays a vital role in supporting young people with additional needs or disabilities transition into paid employment. Funded by the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) through **Access to Work\***.

## Here's what they typically do:

**Individual Support:** Work one-on-one with the intern to understand their strengths, needs, and career goals.

**On-the-Job Training:** Help the intern learn job tasks, routines, and workplace expectations directly at the job site.

**Workplace Integration:** Support the intern in building relationships with colleagues and becoming part of the team.

**Problem Solving:** Assist with challenges that arise at work, such as communication issues or adapting to new tasks.

**Confidence Building:** Encourage independence and self-advocacy, helping the intern grow in confidence and skills.

## They also work closely,

**With Employers:** Educate and support employers to create inclusive environments and reasonable adjustments.

**With Educators:** Coordinate with schools or colleges to align the internship with educational goals.

**With Families:** Keep families informed and involved in the intern's progress and development.

# Here is Charlie's Story... Charlie Steps into Employment



**In 2023, Clarks Village partnered with DFN Project SEARCH, Strode College, and Discovery to launch a Supported Internship for young people with disabilities, learning difficulties, and those who are neurodiverse. Clarks Village offers placements, workplace mentors, and a base room for these young people during this crucial one-year transition-to-work programme.**

Hi, I'm Charlie. I started at Strode College in 2022. I have always wanted to work - I like keeping busy - but I thought I would never have the chance, as I struggle with confidence in interviews. I was diagnosed with learning difficulties at a young age and received support when I was at school. I've always wanted to be independent and to get a job so I could stand on my own two feet.

In 2024, I started the DFN Project SEARCH Supported Internship and had my first work placement at Clarks Village. My job role was supporting customers with the Guest Services team. On my first day as an intern, I felt so nervous. I wanted to get out there, but I felt shy. I had nothing to worry about though, because the team were so polite, friendly, and supportive - especially my workplace mentors. During my internship, I learned how to use and deliver the mobility

scooters, operate the radio, answer the phones, write and respond to emails, manage lost property, and help and talk to customers. I had never had the chance to do anything like this before. I was supported by Mitie to learn new things every day, and I gained so much confidence.

When I found out there was a job opening with Guest Services, I had to go for it! I thought, you never know - you might get the job. I went for an interview. I was allowed to have my job coach with me, and I had my book with notes beside me - but I didn't look at it too much, as I was prepared. Two weeks later, I got the call: I got the job!



## To understand more about Access to Work


 **VISIT THE OFFICIAL PAGE:**  
[www.gov.uk/access-to-work](http://www.gov.uk/access-to-work)

**Read a helpful factsheet:** Access to Work: factsheet for customers - GOV.UK

**Check out the Easy Read guide:**  
[www.gov.uk/government/publications/easy-read-get-help-at-work-if-youre-disabled-or-have-a-health-condition-access-to-work](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/easy-read-get-help-at-work-if-youre-disabled-or-have-a-health-condition-access-to-work)

The educator's role in a Supported Internship is central to ensuring that the intern's learning and development are in line with their employment goals. This includes:

- designing a personalised learning programme that complements the intern's job placement.
- curriculum that includes employability skills, functional skills (like English and maths), and personal development.
- monitoring Progress
- working closely with the job coach and employer to ensure a joined-up approach.
- helping the intern prepare for life after the internship
- safeguarding and wellbeing
- promoting independence
- keeping families informed and involved in the intern's progress and development.



Now I'm working a 21-hour contract with Mitie at Clarks Village, and I wouldn't want to work anywhere else. I love my team - they treat me like family. I love it when customers come up to me and ask questions, we have some local regulars from the community that come in, who I love to see. Having a paid job has changed my life for the better.



# Supported Internship **VACANCIES**

**Still looking for a Supported Internship Opportunity for September 2025?** Please see our vacancies below, some spaces still available across our programmes. Please email the direct contact asap to find out further information and speak to one of the team.

## **Avon & Somerset Police - Pathway to Employment**

LOCATION: Bridgwater  
EDUCATION PROVIDER:  
Bridgwater & Taunton College  
AGE OF ENTRY: 18  
**Please contact:** Luke Fielder  
fielderl@btc.ac.uk

## **Bridgwater Health and Social Supported Internship**

LOCATION: Bridgwater  
EDUCATION PROVIDER:  
Bridgwater & Taunton College  
AGE OF ENTRY: 18+  
**Please contact:** Shona Howes  
shona.howes1@Discovery-uk.org

## **Hinkley Point C (HPC) Supported Traineeship**

LOCATION: Bridgwater-EDF/  
Hinkley Point C  
EDUCATION PROVIDER:  
Bridgwater & Taunton College  
AGE OF ENTRY: 18+  
**Please contact:** Luke Fielder  
fielderl@btc.ac.uk

## **Musgrove Park Hospital Supported Internship**

LOCATION: Taunton Musgrove  
Park Hospital  
EDUCATION PROVIDER:  
Bridgwater & Taunton College  
AGE OF ENTRY: 18+  
**Please contact:** Luke Fielder  
fielderl@btc.ac.uk

## **Somerset Activity & Sports Partnership (SASP) Supported Internship**

LOCATION: Across Somerset  
EDUCATION PROVIDER:  
Bridgwater & Taunton College  
AGE OF ENTRY: 18/19  
**Please contact:** Luke Fielder  
fielderl@btc.ac.uk

## **Palmer Gardens Trowbridge Supported Internship**

LOCATION: Trowbridge  
EDUCATION PROVIDER: SS&L  
AGE OF ENTRY: 18-19  
**Please contact:** Shaun Pavey  
spavey@sslccic.co.uk

## **Bold & Brave - Young Somerset Bridgwater Supported Internship**

LOCATION: Bridgwater  
EDUCATION PROVIDER: SS&L  
AGE OF ENTRY: 16+  
**Please contact:** Shaun Pavey  
spavey@sslccic.co.uk

## **Bold & Brave - Young Somerset Taunton Supported Internship**

LOCATION: Taunton  
EDUCATION PROVIDER: SS&L  
AGE OF ENTRY: 16+  
**Please contact:** Shaun Pavey  
spavey@sslccic.co.uk

## **The Street Internship**

LOCATION: Street  
EDUCATION PROVIDER: Strode College  
AGE OF ENTRY: 18 + (16+ to be considered)  
**Please contact:** Jasmine Jade  
jjade@strode-college.ac.uk

## **Leonardo/Sodexo & Kuehne + Nagel Supported Internship**

LOCATION: Yeovil  
EDUCATION PROVIDER: Yeovil College  
AGE OF ENTRY: 18+ (17+ to be considered)  
**Please contact:** Derrick Goddard  
Derrick.Goddard@yeovil.ac.uk

## **Digital Supported Internship - South**

LOCATION: South Somerset - Hybrid  
EDUCATION PROVIDER: Yeovil College  
AGE OF ENTRY: 18+ (16+ to be considered)  
**Please contact:** Derrick Goddard  
Derrick.Goddard@yeovil.ac.uk

## **Digital Supported Internship**

LOCATION: Taunton and Bridgwater - Hybrid  
EDUCATION PROVIDER:  
Bridgwater & Taunton College  
AGE OF ENTRY: 18+ (16 to be considered)  
**Please contact:** Luke Fielder  
fielderl@btc.ac.uk

## **Digital Supported Internship Mendip**

LOCATION: Frome & Mendips- Hybrid  
EDUCATION PROVIDER: SS&L  
AGE OF ENTRY: 18+ (16 to be considered)  
**Please contact:** Shaun Pavey  
spavey@sslccic.co.uk

## **Thales Supported Internship**

LOCATION: Castle Cary/Templecombe  
EDUCATION PROVIDER: Yeovil College  
AGE OF ENTRY: 18+ (16+ to be considered)  
**Please contact:** Derrick Goddard  
Derrick.Goddard@yeovil.ac.uk

## **Yeovil District Hospital Supported Internship**

LOCATION: Yeovil  
EDUCATION PROVIDER: Yeovil College  
AGE OF ENTRY: 18+  
**Please contact:** Derrick Goddard  
Derrick.Goddard@yeovil.ac.uk



## CELEBRATING SUCCESS: increased supported employment opportunities in Somerset

We have a target that in 2025/26 we will have over 160 young people on supported employment programmes, this will be an increase of over 500%! since 2022/23.

“ we need to shout this from the rooftops, everyone should be talking about this.

“ life affirming, so many people are involved in the Internship, it is really wonderful. We now feel so optimistic.

“ it has been a wonderful change, life changing.

parents and carers

We've seen more young people applying for jobs and more families supporting them. But we know changing the culture takes time. We're committed to continuing this work, tracking our progress, and sharing what we learn - especially when we find ways to remove barriers to employment.

“ Parents have informed us how happy they are for the opportunities the project has created for their young people, and the skills that they have been gaining.

Somerset Parent Carer Forum

Help us spread the work about these opportunities and the outcomes being achieved by the young people taking them up. To hear more come to the conference in November, See Events front page for further details.

## FROM LEARNING TO EARNING: THE GREEN PATHWAY TO SUCCESS

There are three “Imagine the Possibilities” pathways: Yellow, Blue, and Green.

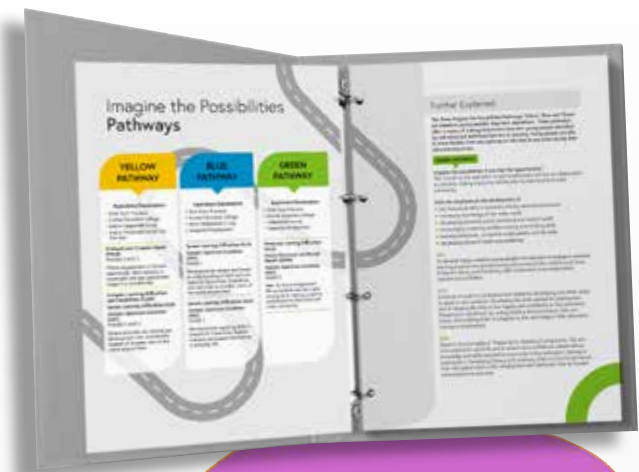
These are based on what young people want to achieve in the future, and they are now being identified for and with a young person as early as Year 7. Parents and carers can discuss the path for their young person with their schools.

Each pathway helps to support students based on their individual needs. Students can switch between pathways at any time during their school years.

The Green Pathway is the one that focuses on getting a job. It helps students work towards becoming independent and making a positive difference in their community.

**This pathway focuses on developing:**

- Important skills in maths, reading, writing, and communication
- A better understanding of the world
- Personal, social, emotional and mental wellbeing
- Creativity, problem-solving, and thinking skills
- Workplace and life skills
- Physical health and fitness



## Drive and commitment at the forefront of partnership working

A wide range of partners have been working tirelessly together from education and business sectors, Job Coaches, Parent/Carers, Somerset Council to provide the right support at the right time to develop and grow from 2 to 17 Supported.

Somerset have been told they are leading the way in the Southwest.

We are committed and will continue to shape and develop Internship Programmes in Somerset and to increase the numbers of young people applying for them.



## FOR MORE INFORMATION

and resources please visit Imagine the Possibilities -Somerset Education Business Partnership website: Imagine the Possibilities



## spotlightREPORT



## The Supported Employment future continues to look bright:

### LOOKING FORWARD:

The work of the recently enlarged Supported Employment team continues at pace and looking forward we are excited to be developing work on the following:

#### Supported Internships across Somerset: New industry internship sectors

Construction  
Farming and Food  
Motor and Transport  
Manufacturing  
Watch out - more details to follow!!

#### Developing Somerset's Digital Expertise: Digital Supported Internship programme

Offered by 3 training providers across Somerset Opportunity to have hybrid working, combining working from home with time in the office Chance to work in a range of digital roles.

#### Imagine the Possibilities Alumni Network: Time for launch

online platform for former, current and prospective future interns connect young people and fellow interns promote job and training opportunities develop a positive community of news and support.

#### Internship Heat Maps: Developing Communities of Prospective Supported Interns

Recognition of where young people live and what industry sectors they are interested to make sure programmes are developed and in place when young people need and want them.

#### Widening the range of information for parents/carers and young people

Supported Employment options are clear, accessible and concise and that you know how to access them look out for the Imagine the Possibilities 'Green Pathway' branding!

#### Identifying future interns earlier: working with our schools to secure future pathways, so our young people are best prepared

raising awareness of different options understand what support young people need in the future building school programmes that include more visits to employers and colleges.

#### Providing opportunities for our SEND young people without an EHCP

to access our full range of Supported Internship programmes - so they have the same opportunity to participate and succeed.

#### A new range of leaflets and information: future publications

Connect 2 Work and SEET (Support into Education, Employment or Training) programmes.



# WELCOME TO THE ALUMNI NETWORK!

**We're excited to introduce you to the Alumni Network - a space created just for current and former students or 'Alumni' to stay connected, be inspired, and supported.**



## So, what is it?

The Alumni Network is a go-to community after a young person leaves school or college. Whether starting a new job, exploring next steps, or just staying in touch with people who've been on a similar journey - it's all here.

- Connect with old classmates and meet new people
- Find opportunities like jobs, internships, and events
- Share your story and hear what others are up to
- Get support from mentors or offer advice to others
- Stay in the loop with updates from your school or college

## Why join?

This network is here to help alumni grow, give back, and be part of something bigger - where alumni voices matter and experiences count. Let's build something amazing together.

## We've got plans!

We aim to host and promote targeted networking opportunities tailored to specific industries. These events aim to connect employers with potential interns and foster meaningful professional relationships.

## Key Features:

Focused Networking

Employer Spotlights

Alumni Ambassadors Programme

Opportunities for Alumni Ambassadors:

Podcast Participation: Take a turn as a podcast host!

Ambassadors will have the chance to:

- Pitch an episode idea
- Record and co-host the session
- Learn basic editing techniques
- Promote the episode across Hub channels
- This is a great opportunity for young people to build confidence, develop digital and communication skills, and play a key role in shaping the Hub's content and community.

## CiCi: The powerhouse to support your career

CiCi is a chatbot that provides personalised career support with 24/7 access to up-to-date information.

It helps you to explore career opportunities, find education and training courses, and offers multilingual support by translating chats into over 40 languages.

### FEATURES INCLUDE:

- Engaging activities for jobs discovery
- Directory of courses
- Job information & vacancies
- Career insights
- SEND opportunities
- Volunteering
- CV support
- Personalised support

CiCi is a chatbot that supports personalised career, giving 24/7 access to current and relevant careers advice information in a single place.

- 26,000+ Jobs and skills information profiles
- 40,000+ Course information profiles
- 1,500+ Inspirational career journey video shorts

Scan the QR code or visit  
[cicichat.uk/somerset](https://cicichat.uk/somerset)  
to start your career  
discovery today!



# LEARNING, EARNING, AND GROWING - TOGETHER:

## What you Should Know About Supported Apprenticeships

A Supported Apprenticeship is a job with training, designed for young people who may need extra help to succeed in the workplace. It combines real work experience with learning and support, helping individuals build skills, confidence, and independence.

### A YOUNG PERSON WILL HAVE A:

**Real Job:** The apprentice works for an employer, earning a wage while gaining hands-on experience.

**Learning:** They study part-time (usually one day a week) to gain qualifications related to the job.

**Support:** Extra help is provided - this could be from a job coach, mentor, or tutor - tailored to the apprentice's needs.

## ABOUT THE TEAM WHO ARE HERE TO HELP

Through our discussions with parents and carers, having a 'front door' to go to when ready to take explore further information about routes to employment, was important. Knowing who to ask to be signposted from, at the right time.

Please email: [supportedemployment@somerset.gov.uk](mailto:supportedemployment@somerset.gov.uk)

Thank you for taking the time to read through our newsletter and please look out for further publications from the Imagine the Possibilities team.



## spotlightREPORT



## The Laurel Trust funded project: Changing Lives - Fulfilling Dreams: Improving Supported Employment in Somerset



Leading Learning through  
Action-led Research and Innovation

This project was led by sen.se, working with a range of key partners, sen.se is a collaborative partnership between all of the special schools and a range of specialist provisions within Somerset. Sen.se stands for Special Educational Needs, Somerset Expertise. A range of partners have been working together to increase Supported Employment (SE) opportunities for young people with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) in Somerset. This funding enabled this work to be further developed.

The Laurel Trust said this funding enabled Sen.se to foster their ground-breaking work on creating viable routes to employment which will bring success for young people with special educational needs. The work is underpinned by a passion to ensure improved life chances and well-being for all their young people with special needs - and in many cases to fulfil their dreams. The dynamic project team do not accept barriers or negative responses to their work and have a great track record of overturning these. They are supported by an ever-increasing group of partners including local industries and businesses.

### WHAT THE PROJECT TEAM HAVE ACHIEVED

We've made great progress through this project, including:

**Raising Aspirations:** We created a communication plan to share success stories of young people with SEND in work.

**SEND Alumni Network:** A platform called Imagine the Possibilities showcases stories of supported interns and apprentices.

**Helpful Guides:** We developed guides for parents, practitioners, employers, and young people.

**Vocational Profiles:** Piloted in mainstream schools to help students with EHCPs plan for work.

**Educator Support:** Started a guide for Somerset educators and added a SEND section to the work experience database.

**Technology Use:** Helping young people and families find job opportunities more easily.

**Events and Recognition:** Launched a website, sponsored awards, and hosted a Supported Employment Conference.

**Training and Support:** Trained staff across various services and tripled the number of Supported Internship programmes.