

PfA FACT SHEET: SUPPORTED INTERNSHIPS

Why has Government introduced supported internships?

The Government has reformed the special educational needs (SEN) and disability system through the Children and Families Act 2014¹. The reforms include a greater focus on preparing young people with SEN and disability for adulthood, including preparation for employment. The overwhelming majority of young people with SEN are capable of sustainable paid employment with the right preparation and support, and Government wants to raise aspirations about what these young people can achieve in their jobs and careers.

In 2012/13, 15 Further Education colleges took part in a trial of supported internships. A key finding² was that 36% of supported internships resulted in paid employment, compared with a national average employment rate of just 7% for people with moderate to severe learning difficulties³.

Who are they for?

Supported internships are for young people with complex learning difficulties aged 16 to 24 with a statement of SEN, 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?

Since September 2013, any institution that receives a funding allocation directly from the Education Funding Agency (EFA) has been able to deliver supported internships. This includes Further Education colleges, schools and independent specialist providers.

What is it?

Supported internships are structured study programmes based primarily at an employer. They are designed to enable young people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities to achieve sustainable, paid employment by equipping them with the skills they need for work through learning in the workplace. Internships normally last for a year and include unpaid work placements of at least six months. Wherever possible, they support the young person to move into paid employment at the end of the programme. Students complete a personalised study programme

¹ <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2014/6/contents/enacted>

² https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/263205/DFE-RR314.pdf

³ NHS Social Care and Mental Health Indicators from the *National Indicator Set: 2010-11* at www.data.gov.uk – 7% of people known to social services

which includes the chance to study for relevant substantial qualifications, if suitable, and English and maths to an appropriate level.

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.

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, but can always be reached if issues arise. Job coaches provide support to employers, increasing their confidence of working with these young people and helping them to understand the business case for employing a diverse workforce.

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;
- training in systematic instruction, a method specifically designed to help people with complex 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 an expert job coach⁴; 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 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 reasonable adjustments needed 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. Further information on Access to Work and an application form can be found at:

⁴ <http://www.excellencegateway.org.uk/node/61>

<http://www.preparingforadulthood.org.uk/what-we-do/supported-internships/access-to-work-fund>.

What are the first steps to making them happen?

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

- Understand the different ways of developing a supported internship: there is no single way of delivering this structured study programme. Many ideas can be found in the Department for Education's advice⁵ on setting up and delivering supported internships. Further support and resources can be found on Preparation for Adulthood's website⁶.
- Understand 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 to 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 case⁷.
- Establishing a partnership: a strong partnership approach is needed to successfully deliver supported internships, between the young person and their family, the school/college, the employer and the job coach / supported employment service. Ensuring senior commitment across the partners is a key critical success factor. A supported employment service can help with engaging effectively with employers⁸.

Key Resources

Department for Education Advice for further education colleges, sixth forms in academies, maintained and non-maintained schools, independent specialist providers, other providers of study programmes and local authorities

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/316676/Supported_internships.pdf

Department for Education's evaluation of the supported internship trial

⁵https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/316676/Supported_internships.pdf

⁶<http://www.preparingforadulthood.org.uk/what-we-do/supported-internships>

⁷<http://www.cipd.co.uk/hr-resources/factsheets/diversity-workplace-overview.aspx> and <http://base-uk.org/employers-business-case>

⁸<http://base-uk.org/about/members>

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/263205/DFE-RR314.pdf

Education Funding Agency – funding guidance for young people 2013/14
<https://www.gov.uk/16-to-19-education-funding-guidance>

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>