Sharing Innovative Approaches to Delivering 16-19 Study Programmes

East Norfolk Sixth Form College
“Study Programmes have opened the door to an undiscovered country of personalised curriculum delivery”

Nick Morgan-Baker, ALS Manager

About the college

East Norfolk Sixth Form College is a medium sized college located in Gorleston-on-sea, Norfolk, not far from Great Yarmouth. The college’s core business is academic programmes with virtually all of its further education provision funded by the Educational Funding Agency. The college is the main local provider of GCE A-levels covering courses in all subject areas, with the exception of construction and education and training.

Approximately 1750 students study at the college. The vast majority of students are aged 16 to 18 years and follow full-time, advanced level courses.

Around 320 students take GCSE subjects including retakes of GCSE Mathematics and English. The largest number of full-time enrolments is in science and mathematics and visual, performing arts and media. Around 5% of full-time students enrolled at the college are of minority ethnic heritage, above that of the local population. In 2009, the proportion of school leavers with five or more high grade GCSEs including English and Mathematics in Norfolk was 50%, broadly in line with the national average for England. At least 60% of the college’s students however, come from schools who achieve below the national average.

The college was graded as Good in its September 2013 inspection. There are over 350 colleges in the UK and for the last twelve years East Norfolk Sixth Form College has been in the top 20. Some 275 students gained the equivalent of three GCSE A levels in 2012/13. East Norfolk Sixth Form College is also the top college in the East of England for value added measures. Over 400 students went to 95 universities to study in 113 different degree areas in 2013.

Many of the districts served by the college are characterised by relatively high unemployment, with pockets of high deprivation. Around 5% of the full-time students enrolled are of minority ethnic heritage, above that of the local population. The college strives to be inclusive, with relatively low admission criteria for a sixth form college. Its mission is: ‘Excellence and care: the college is working for its community’.

In 2012/13 the college was awarded the Prince’s Trust Award in English for the commitment for inspirational teaching. And, for seven years in a row, East Norfolk has been the “Top College for Sport” in the East of England.
In return for the excellent services provided, students are asked to sign a college Contract, agreeing to respond properly to college procedures for punctuality, attendance and meeting deadlines for work. This is described in the college Charter, which also provides details of the college’s commitment to its students, including the belief that: “Your years in the college should be an enriching experience, providing an opportunity for you to develop your potential to the full and to develop a sense of responsibility towards others.”

**Study Programmes**

East Norfolk College has created a student-led Study Programme framework. Instead of fitting into a curriculum, students with high needs have the curriculum fitted around them through their Study Programme. These programmes have opened the door to an undiscovered country of personalized curriculum delivery and participation for students with high and or complex needs. It means for the first time a college can begin to adapt the curriculum around a student’s needs and strengths rather than fit them around it. This is not discrete provision, but mainstream and inclusive for GCSE and GCE A level awards.

This case study outlines how East Norfolk Sixth Form College has designed and implemented two Study Programmes for students with high and complex needs within a standard “6 block” time table. A project funded through LSIS in 2012 examined how post 16 provision was developing a Study Programme delivery for students with a disability, or difficulty or disadvantage. This considered Sports / Hobbies, and Employability / Supported Work Placement within Study Programmes. These ran as pilot projects with small numbers of students in 2012 and went mainstream in September 2013.

**Developing support**

In response to serving areas of deprivation and disadvantage, East Norfolk Sixth Form College has developed effective pastoral, welfare and additional learning support provision, including through Level 2 curriculum choices. All students receive pastoral teaching from a tutor who also teaches them. The college provides careers advice, additional learning support, a counselling service and a student welfare service. Subsidised or free transport is available for everyone travelling over three miles, which is significant given the large rural and coastal area served. Books and examination entries are free for full time students.

A discretionary support fund is also available. Gifted and Talented students have access to Foundation Scholarships. These are awarded to the top performing student in each 11-16 school. Additional awards are available based on GCSE scores. Three separate but integrated student support provisions facilitate the
subject teaching, learning and assessment at Level 2 and Level 3. These are: Welfare, Pastoral and Learning Support. The cross-college services operate the college strategy of four core values: excellence, care, diversity and integrity.

In 2013 sixty students have high and/or complex needs with more than one disability co-occurring. Integrating these students into Level 2 and 3 curricula required two distinct Study Programmes timetabled into their main course of study. Independent Skills development is thematic and seen as essential for effective learning and working after college. Students with High Needs are given more opportunity to move from a “dependency” on high levels of support in school, towards “independency” via aspirational routes through sports / hobbies, or employability / supported work placements.

**Study Programmes structure for students with High needs**

From 2013, two Study Programmes are available for students with High Needs:

- Sports and Hobbies, with 12 students
- Employability and Supported Work Placements, with 6 students

These pathways are delivered in four sessions or 4 ½ hours per week per study programme over 38 weeks (684 hours per year). So a high needs learner will study 22.5 hours over 38 weeks (855 hours per year) with 4 ½ contact hours for one of the study programmes, three subjects on average and study skills. This learning programme contrasts with 16 hours per week (608 hours per year) for a learner without high needs. Funding is achieved for these extra hours by core, element 2 and 3 funding for high needs learners with evidence (Learning Difficulties Assessment or other). The Study Programme does not vary with Level 2 or Level 3 learners, as all students follow a standard curriculum structure. Timetables for High Needs Learners are personalised at enrolment so that the blocks of lessons are distributed; those learners receive guidance then choose and participate in the Sports and Hobbies or Employability and Supported Work Placement pathways.

Initial guidance is essential and is tracked through to the induction programme. East Norfolk operates a “swap not drop” policy for the first few weeks of the academic term, which allows students to access or move away from a pathway. After this point the time table is set, so the Sports / Hobbies, and Employability / Supported Work Placement pathways remain open throughout the year.

A student with High Needs will usually study three subjects and one of the following: Sports / Hobbies and / or Employability / Supported Work Placement, and one block of supported Study Skills, for up to 22.5 hours of contact time per week. However, most students will have 4 to 8 free sessions for personal study
within their time table. Lunch times and break times are additional to these hours. The Sports and Hobbies pathway is organised by a Sports Coach and supported by a Learning Support Assistant. The college’s reputation for sports is reflected in the offer. Sports tournaments - football for instance - are played between colleges and schools (see Appendix 1).

The Supported Work Placement pathway is led by a Job Coach in 1:1 and small groups preparing for employment. There are 4.5 hours in one block over 10 weeks, repeated three to four times per year. Successful completion leads on to supported work placement in the Hospital Internship Programme (HIP), a partnership between James Paget University Hospital (JPUH) and East Norfolk Sixth Form College.

The work placement in the hospital is arranged around the free blocks of the student and the needs of the Hospital, resulting in an individualised timetable. Work placements occur for 3 hour periods in the afternoon or morning once a week.

This placement is based on the successful Hospital Internship Programme Pilot (HIP) trialled in 2012 (Appendix 2). In the HIP, students who completed rotations of their internship in one year were guaranteed an apprenticeship interview. Students were interviewed for the internship. Four students with high functioning Autism and Dyslexia began an internship while studying full time at college from September 2012.

The college and JPUH delivered a Work Skills BTEC award at Level 3 and equivalent to one AS Level. Job descriptions, daily diaries, employer witness statements and end-of-rotation reports provided evidence for the modules or elements. Portfolio building and instruction in free study periods at college (140 minutes per week) enabled students to organise their work placements into a formal record.

**Cross college strategy and practice**

In 2013-14, these specialised Study Programmes involve 18 students with high needs across GCSEs and GCE A Levels. All the students participate in mainstream college tutorials, exams, breaks and lunch time activities. Subject- specific trips and activities are shared with all students. Study Programmes are timetabled using the same “6 block” model to ensure no student is excluded from the curriculum or the wider benefits of the college community.

The Study Programme activities are all registered and form part of the attendance targets for each student (95%). Participation and positive wellbeing is noted in personal tutorials. Feedback is given to parents about the achievements students
gain from the Study Programmes; parental entitlement is also part of the college Charter and has particular value for parents of High Needs students.

These processes inform the self-assessment review and quality improvement plans for each subject area, which assess the impact of the Study Programme offer on performance by each student, and between groups of student types, subjects and levels. The college’s Equality and Diversity analysis has demonstrated that Study Programmes devised in this way, contributed to rapid improvements in the attendance and success of students with disabilities.

A key part of this cross-college curriculum integration is the focus on maths and English, especially functional literacy, language and numeracy. Study Programmes embed speaking and listening skills, effective written communication and efficient reading, and the development of financial literacy. These skills are included in Study Programmes for A level students with High Needs, helping them in their confidence and self-esteem.

**Sample activity.** The Sports / Hobbies pathway Study Programme students prepared for a fund raising activity in January 2014. They decided the target amount (£200), the activity (static biking) and the collection of money. The planning and implementation included advertising the event, presenting to students and staff then delivering the activity. An article in the local press is planned, celebrating their achievement.

**Sports and hobbies**

The Sports and Hobbies Study Programme has been an effective tool to bring young people with High Needs together, and increase their social communication, group cohesion and interaction skills through using a range of sports, tournaments and peer-assisted activities. For example, they played at the Eastern Region football tournament October 2013 (Appendix 1).

Boccia, personalised gym training and football sessions with theory-based classes and team building have enabled twelve learners with high and complex needs to compete with each other, and also with students from other colleges and schools. A range of students with disabilities participate in the Sports and Hobbies Programme, including those with Autism, Asperger’s Syndrome, Muscular Dystrophy, Social Communication difficulties, Visual Impairment, Mobility Impairment, and Specific Learning Difficulties.

This Study Programme enables students to take a guided step towards their future. For them to be able to use the Entry Level qualifications that they gain (functional English, functional maths, financial studies and a Sports Leader or Arts award) along with learning from inspirational talks from staff, ex-students, and
external agencies. A selected number of students become eligible for the Employability Programme through their maturity and approach to team work.

The Sports and Hobbies Study Programme enables students to develop and incorporate increased social communication, organisation, and leadership and group cohesion skills. They increase in motivation, allowing them the opportunity to take a step in choosing the correct pathway towards their career or further learning.

Specific resources have been necessary to make this pathway a success, such as providing a base classroom, digital camera, digital camcorder, computers, laminator, Colour printer, and clothing and sportswear for sporting fixtures.

**Employability and supported work placements for high needs Study Programmes**

The Employability part of this programme is based at the college and delivers employability skills; online and paper based searches for work, approaching volunteering opportunities, interview techniques, social communication, developing a career plan, curriculum vitae design and careers advice. Some requires personal development and understanding, such as preparing for rejection, which can happen to anyone applying for employment.

After successful completion, a student with High Needs is invited to a supported work placement at the James Paget University Hospital (JPUH) in an area of work that is aspirational and motivating. This is called the Hospital Internship Programme (HIP). Previous students have worked in Health & Social Care, Administration and Pathology, Mid-Wifery and Accounts. The pilot in 2012 resulted in two students entering Health and Social Care related apprenticeships (Appendix 2).

The HIP is a supported and integrated work placement for Students with Disabilities studying GCSE and A Levels. A range of work placements are available for students with Dyslexia, Autistic Spectrum Disorder and/or co-occurring difficulties.

The aim is to help prepare students with complex needs, on GCSEs and A level programmes, for adulthood, by challenging low expectations through sharing delivery and effective practice between the college and JPUH.

The objective is to undertake developmental work in areas such as student co-delivery and phased transition. These approaches nurture students to demonstrate resource efficiency, reach hospital employee standards and sustain quality assurance, whilst maintaining the college's curriculum effectiveness.
In summary, this element of the Study Programme is:

- The first time a Sixth Form College has partnered with a major employer, within the area of work based learning, for supported work placements of student with disabilities
- A promotion of real independence for students who would have received 15 hours a week plus of learning support at school
- A cost-effective and financially viable offer within existing ALS and/or High Needs Learner funding.

A similar model of supported internship was tested by the Pathfinder projects 2011-2012, with guidelines published June 2013:


Currently six students are preparing for the Hospital Internship Project via the college's Employability Pathway. In 2014 the college aims to increase participation to ten students with High Needs.
Appendix 1 Sports / Hobbies Pathway Eastern Region Football Competition

On Wednesday 23rd October 2013 the East Norfolk Sixth Form College entered eight students with a range of support needs to a 7-a-side football tournament held at Lynnsport, the College of West Anglia, Kings Lynn, Norfolk.

The tournament was very successful whereby the team came in 3rd position. Equality and diversity was displayed at its finest as it enabled a diverse group of individuals with a diagnosis of ADHD, Asperger’s syndrome, Autism and Visual Impairment to participate in a team sport; this is a huge accomplishment as historically students who have a diagnosis of ASD do not tend to participate in contact sports.

The players all expressed their enjoyment in participating in the tournament and would like to become involved again should relevant fixtures arise. The following students gave their opinion of the day:

Baden Connolly
“The team played well, we just need to jell more as a team, the coaching staff organised the team and Andrew (Crouchen) motivated the team better than Mr Motivator himself”

Robert Nesbitt
“It was an enjoyable experience and I would like to be involved in other activities in the future”

Ryan Wiltshire
“It was a very fun and exciting experience”

Because the team came in third position in the tournament it has added 7 points towards the Clifford Dixon trophy.

The introduction of the Sports and Hobbies program over the academic year 2013/14 has had an outstanding impact upon the students who have been participating as they have been involved with planning which sports that they would like to do and coaching their own sessions to build confidence and belief in their own ability. The Sports and Hobbies programme and the enablement for participation in the outer college tournament has shown them that they are able to engage, compete, participate and most importantly have the opportunity to be involved in sport and team building activities.
Appendix 2 Hospital Internship Pilot Programme (HIPP)

East Norfolk Sixth Form College (EN) with James Paget University Hospital (JPUH) piloted an integrated curriculum with a Hospital Internship Pilot Programme (HIPP) in Health & Social Care, Administration and Pathology for A and GCSE Level students with complex needs such as Autism and Dyslexia, Health and Physical Difficulties.

Students who completed left with a high probability of employment or professional development in a related area of work. Integrated with A level and Diploma studies at Level 3, students with complex and high needs were supported in a working environment.

Students who completed rotations of their internship, in 1 year were guaranteed an apprenticeship interview or opportunity for University study or Work Based Learning in their internship areas of work. Students were interviewed for the internship. Four students with high functioning Autism and Dyslexia began an internship while studying full time at college from September 2012.

JPUH and EN delivered a Work Skills BTEC award that is at Level 3 and equivalent to an AS Level. Job descriptions, daily diaries, employer witness statements and end of rotation reports provided evidence for the modules/elements. Portfolio building and instruction in free study periods at college (140 minutes per week) gave students the chance to organise their work placements into a formal record.

The aim was to prepare students for GCSE and A level students with complex needs for adulthood, by challenging low expectations through sharing delivery and effective practice between EN and JPUH.

The objective was to undertake developmental work around areas such as co-delivery and phased transition, then to adapt this supported employment for resource efficiency, hospital employee and college curriculum effectiveness.

The HIPP was a supported and integrated work placement for students with disabilities studying GCSE and A Levels. A range of work placements were available for students with Dyslexia, Autistic Spectrum Disorder and/or Co-occurring difficulties.

Readers will find this case study interesting because although a Small Pilot (N=4); it resulted in 50% full time apprenticeships in Health and Social Care sector, set a precedent for curriculum and funding and was part of a national approach –

- Was the first time a Sixth Form College has partnered with a major employer, within a traditional General Further Education area of work based learning, for supported work placements of student with disabilities
- Promoted real independence for students who would have received 15 hours a week plus of learning support at school
- Was cost effective and financially viable within existing ALS and/or High Needs Learner funding

**Key Lessons Learned**

- Pilot selection and recruitment was not completed until October 1st, too late for resolving work placement issues and informing students and their families /carers comprehensively about the HIPP. Resolution has been to start this process in June and July; Interns should be recruited by September for a start date in October.
- HIPP is about work and some issues about attendance and commitment from 2 interns resembled a school view, unacceptable to the workplace. A competitive process for limited places is now in place for the recruitment and selection process; poor attendance and motivation will result in withdrawal from the HIP
- A curriculum structure, BTEC Work Skills and timetabled attendance, organised how two different employers should standardise evidence of progress in the work placements. Each Student kept a Supported Internship Record of Achievement containing: Job descriptions, daily diaries, employer witness statements and end of rotation reports, attendance record, pen portrait, weekly Learning Support Assistant updates
- HIPP is limited to 5 places only due to the frequent support, supervision and review updates necessary for safe, equal and healthy work practices

Support at JPUH from EN learning support assistants required them to have:

- Job Coaching training
- Background in Medical practices
- Knowledge of support needs - Autism, Dyslexia
- Knowledge of individual needs
- Specific support during rotations for each student linked to BTEC
- Employability L3 award and gathering evidence
- Student Supported Internship record of achievement

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Sector coverage: Work based learning and further education for support and aspiration in an alternative approach to special educational needs and disability. It is the second part of a national project (Strand 1 completed in March 2012) to encourage a culture shift from one of competition to one of collaboration. The Cluster focused on the following areas ‘Preparation for Adulthood’ and ‘Challenging Low Expectations’ through sharing delivery. It undertook developmental work around areas such as co-delivery, phased transition and developing supported employment and social enterprise models. Examples are outlined in partner projects, and link with 1 or more of the following:

- developmental work around areas such as co-delivery
- phased transition
- developing supported employment and social enterprise models

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Introduction

Many of the nearby areas in Gorleston and Great Yarmouth are characterised by relatively high unemployment and some pockets of high deprivation. Around 5% of full-time students enrolled at the college are of minority ethnic heritage, above that of the local population. In 2012, the proportion of school leavers with five or more high grade GCSEs including English and mathematics in Norfolk was 45%, below the national average for England. Around 60% of the EN's students however, come from schools who achieve below the national average.

In 2012 1800 students studied GCSEs and A Levels with 300 with declared disabilities, difficulties and or disadvantages and 30 with complex needs. 10% of these students were gifted and talented. Achievements and progression into University and Employment are lower for students with disabilities than those without.

The Wolf Report (2011) considered how vocational and academic education for 14- to 19-year-olds could be improved in order to promote successful progression into the labour market and into higher level education and training routes. A key recommendation of this was to introduce principles that guide study programmes for young people post-16 and ensure they are gaining skills, which will lead to progression into a variety of jobs or further learning.
The Coalition government’s strategy to maximise the participation of 16-24 Year olds in education, training and work; ‘Building Engagement, Building Futures’ (December 2011), and the report from BIS; ‘New Challenges, New Chances’ (December 2011) clearly set out that a strong work offer was necessary in further education for young people, so that they can access a skills ladder of opportunities at whatever point they are at.

These factors of a weak local economy, a lack of work opportunities for educated students with disabilities, historically below national averages local GCSE results and government initiatives for work placements resulted in a project plan for a supported internship programme in 2011 with a local and major employer. The Hospital Internship Pilot Programme (HIPP) was implemented with the James Paget University Hospital in September 2012.

About the organisations involved

The James Paget University Hospital (JPUH) provides acute services to a local population of around 230,000, with a significant proportion being over the age of 75. It provides a range of services including accident and emergency and maternity as well as general medical and surgical treatment. It provides these services:

- Acute services with overnight beds
- Community healthcare service
- Dental service
- Hospice services

These services are regulated:

- Diagnostic and screening procedures
- Family planning
- Maternity and midwifery services
- Surgical procedures
- Termination of pregnancies
- Treatment of disease, disorder or injury

In 2013 JPUH met these standards:

- Respecting and involving people who use services
- Care and welfare of people who use services
- Meeting nutritional needs
- Cleanliness and infection control
- Staffing
East Norfolk Sixth Form College (EN) is a medium sized college located in Gorleston, Norfolk. The college’s core business is academic programmes with virtually all of its further education provision funded by the Education Funding Agency. The college is the main local provider of GCE A-levels covering courses in all subject areas with the exception of construction and teacher education and training. The vast majority of students at the college are aged 16 to 18 years and follow full-time, advanced level courses.

Around 320 students take GCSE subjects including retakes of GCSE mathematics and English. The largest number of full-time enrolments is in science and mathematics and visual, performing arts and media. Overall, student enrolments have increased by around 20% since the last inspection. In 2009/10 the college was selected as one of ten national Football Association (FA) focus colleges.

**What we wanted to achieve**

Both EN and JPUH wanted an embedded employer – integrated curriculum model of aspirational driven work-placement for GCSE and A Level students with disabilities, difficulties or disadvantage. Previous co-operation in student volunteering and alumni links between EN and JPUH prepared the way for this project. Post 16 SEN changes and Further education sector changes, regarding enrichment and study programmes, required alternative curriculum offers that maintained academic and vocational successes, within a challenging economic context.

HIPP instituted and extended student and parent/carer participation and leadership for independence whenever possible, by placing the student in a real work environment with responsibilities and risks in a supportive and risk managed context.

**What we did**

EN with JPUH developed an integrated curriculum with Internship programs in Health & Social Care, Administration and Pathology for A Level students with complex needs such as Autism and Dyslexia with Health and Physical Difficulties. Completing students left with a high probability of employment or professional development in a related area of work. Integrated with A level and Diploma studies at Level 3, students with complex and high needs were supported in a working environment.

Students who completed rotations of their internship in 1 year were invited for apprenticeship interviews or graduated to University to study in their internship
areas of work. Students were interviewed for this programme. 4 students with high functioning Autism and Dyslexia began this internship while studying full time at college from September 2012.

Placements were limited to 4 per year, with 15 students listed in July for a September start. HIPP was equivalent to 5 hours of teaching per week over 38 weeks and was part of their study programme. A national award, BTEC Work Skills Level 3 was equivalent to 1 AS Level and structured the evidence gathering during two afternoons at JPUH. JPUH provided bespoke rotations of 5 weeks, 4 rotations over 38 weeks with a designated mentor in each.

A co-ordinator managed the rotations for each student with a learning support assistant from EN acting as a job coach. While at college, directed and undirected study time for portfolio building occurred, 2 ½ hours per week. Learning Support staff directed the portfolio building sessions.

Outcomes and Impacts

In 2012-13, four students 17 – 19 years with Autism or Dyslexia participated in HIPP; one obtained an apprenticeship in Health and Social Care, another was progressing towards. Two completed the Programme. HIPP derived from Project Search, a supported work placement and training scheme for students with severe disabilities, difficulties or disadvantage in a hospital environment.

HIPP delivered an integrated GCSE and A Level study programme within an internship supported and developmental on an individual basis. It was not meant to repeat Project Search but facilitate similar work based opportunities for Level 2 and Level 3 full time students.

Outcomes achieved were

- Job coaching and support assistant costs funded through existing ALS routes
- Portfolio building for BTEC Work skill award does not require a teacher
- Curriculum structure organises the tasks for evidence gathering in the rotations and standardises these tasks
- Integrates very well within a GCSE and A Level (or school based) time table
- Very dependent students can become independent and successful in their chosen career

Partnership between JPUH and EN has set an example of how internships and work placements can be extended with other employers. For 2013 10 supported
work placements and internships are planned with JPUH and Community Connexions in Great Yarmouth.

What we achieved

As a pilot project:

- 50% completion (2/4)
- 1 apprenticeship searching in Health and Social Care
- 1 University entrance for Health and Social Care
- Financially viable supported work placement model for GCSE and A level time education
- Job descriptions for learning support assistants as Job Coaches
- Syllabus that structures the rotations and gathers evidence of work skills
- Basis for a work placement study programme pathway in 2013 for 10 Supported
- Internships and 90 non supported Internships