

The Supported Internship Programme *In Bexley*



**Information
Guide**



What it is

The Supported Internship Programme is a personalised study programme for young people aged 16 – 24 who have an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP). The programme usually lasts for a year, and it offers interns the opportunity to gain valuable practical experience in the workplace, whilst engaging in further complementary study at college alongside their work. They will generally spend a larger proportion of their time in the workplace, and will also study English and mathematics to the appropriate levels alongside any additional courses. The intern will receive the support of a 1:1 Job Coach, if required, to help them to develop their skills and confidence in the workplace. The goal at the end of the programme is for the intern to enter paid employment.

Who it is for

To be eligible for the Supported Internship Programme, prospective interns must:

- Be aged 16 – 24 years old
- AND
- Have an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP)

What it can provide

The Supported Internship Programme provides interns with the opportunity to develop their work skills and professional identity within a field of work in which they have expressed an interest. It also:

- Provides valuable work and life experience
- Helps students to develop their understanding of work and employment
- Assists interns in developing their CV
- Enables the intern to develop their skills and confidence
- Raises the aspirations of the intern, their families and employers
- Enables the intern to demonstrate their skills and capabilities
- Assists the intern in progressing towards paid employment
- Enables the intern to explore whether a chosen field of work is right for them, and to develop their understanding of work and employment
- Includes the 1:1 support of a Job Coach to assist the intern in the workplace where needed, and to assist in the smooth transition between education and work, and independence in the workplace

Why the programme is so important

This programme can be an invaluable option for young people to consider when planning their futures and considering their pathways to employment. It can assist young people in developing their confidence and their own professional identity, and it enables interns to feel a sense of pride in themselves and what they have achieved over the length of the programme.

Providing appropriate levels of support within the training and working environments ensures that confidence can flourish and paid employment is a realistic and achievable goal for any young person regardless of possible restrictions. In working together closely with families and employers, we can all make a real, lasting difference to our most vulnerable young people.

Being a young person with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) can make it very difficult when trying to transition from formal education into the workplace. Often, the young person may have never experienced any form of work or work experience, or may only have had limited experience of voluntary roles. This can lead to difficulties in applying their skills and knowledge in settings beyond the classroom, if they have never been given the opportunity to do so. We aim to help the young people in our community to overcome these barriers, and to work alongside employers who believe in giving people a chance to learn and develop their skills, to help them take their first steps into work.

This programme is ideal as it ensures that interns are fully supported throughout the duration of their work placement, whilst they are trained and supported in a way which seeks to develop their independence, confidence and skills. Ongoing support is also provided to the employer, and communication between all parties is essential for the success of the programme. It also facilitates the building of strong working alliances and strengthens professional relationships between the intern, their employer, and the education provider. This can, in turn, be life-changing for the intern. It also helps us all to work towards an overarching goal to challenge the perceptions and misinformation held by many in relation to those with SEND: through sharing knowledge, understanding and experience, many of the barriers young people with SEND face in the workplace can be overcome.

What it offers

The Supported Internship Programme offers:

- A long-term work placement in a field of interest to the intern e.g. Admin, Catering, Retail
- A study programme tailored to the intern's needs, delivered by a college/ education provider e.g. English, Mathematics, Retail, Customer Service
- Practical on-the-job learning in a supportive work environment, with 1:1 support and training provided by a Job Coach as appropriate
- Flexibility to meet the needs of both the intern and the employer

What is included

Getting Started:

- Assessment of prior learning and educational attainment
- Assessment of any prior work experience
- Vocational Profiling: a tool to ascertain information about an individual's skills, abilities and professional interests, to assist in the Job-Matching process
- Pre-placement preparation, including meetings between the Job Coach, intern and their family
- Job-Matching: matching the intern to an employer according to skills, development needs and choice

On-the-job Support & Monitoring

- 1:1 Support provided throughout the placement by a Job Coach, where required
- Accredited or non-accredited work-related and personal development learning, including English and maths
- Observation and records of progress and achievement
- Non-accredited personal and social development, for example, travel training, communication skills, social skills for the workplace, money management and timekeeping skills

After the Programme

- Sustainability and tracking – working with the employer and individual to ensure placements are a success.
- Cooperative planning for the intern's 'next steps'

How it works – different models

The Supported Internship Programme can be delivered through different models, depending on the individual's needs, which are always at the heart of the programme. It is important that their voice is heard throughout the entirety of the process, and that they are encouraged to develop their own autonomy in the decision-making processes. The input and involvement of families and carers in the process is also important, as there is a lot of support needed outside of the programme for it to be a success.

Different Supported Internship models are offered by different education providers, and can be explained to you upon request.

The key parties involved in the Supported Internship Programme are:

- The Intern
- The Employer
- The Job Coach
- The Intern's Family/Carers
- The Education Provider

Clear goals should be agreed from the start, and everyone who is involved are encouraged to maintain ongoing communications throughout the duration of the programme. In this way, everyone can work together to ensure that the intern is supported in reaching their full potential not only in the workplace, but also in their transition to adulthood and on their journey towards independence.

Case Studies

Patrick – Sainsbury’s

Learning and Enterprise College Bexley

- Patrick: “I love working in Sainsbury’s. It’s a great environment to work in and the staff are lovely. I feel I have grown in confidence since working there. Thanks Sainsbury’s for giving me the opportunity to work at your store. Thanks to Cat for arranging it and also to Ryan for the words of advice.”
- Miriam, Patrick’s Mum: “Patrick is like a different person since he started this programme. He is almost at the stage where he has outgrown college and is ready to work if the opportunity is given to him. He has grown in confidence since his work placement at Sainsbury’s. He enjoys what he does and actually enjoys going to work. It would be fantastic if this placement became a full-time paid position as he is ready, willing and able to do the work. Thank you to Cat and her team for arranging the placement and believing that Patrick could cope with that environment.”
- Danny, Patrick’s Manager: “I must say having Patrick as part of our team has been fantastic, he has fitted in very well & seems to be growing in confidence each time I see him & he understands what is required. The team are getting used to having him around each Wednesday & he is certainly part of our team. It is a pleasure having Patrick work with us & I am glad that he is enjoying being in our environment, it is fantastic that we can support him like this.”

Adam – An electrical company in Bexley

London South East Colleges - Bexley

- Adam: “I began my work experience placement in October 2018. While I was there I developed my customer service skills – Where I would greet customers and ask if they needed help with anything. I also helped to repair electrical items that were brought into the shop and understood how important it was to keep my work area and service desk tidy. Both of the managers were very happy with my work and that I was willing to learn new things and think that my confidence has grown a lot. I was offered the opportunity to work here part time which I was happy to accept. I have now been employed since 4th December 2018 and really enjoying it.”

Frequently Asked Questions

It is understandable that you might have many questions relating to this programme. For this reason, a separate FAQ “Questions & Answers” document has been created and is available upon request. Similarly, the FAQs are available on the London Borough of Bexley Local Offer website.

Supported Internship Providers – Contact Details:

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