



Department
for Education

Liverpool University Hospitals Foundation Trust and Alder Hey Children's Hospital

Supported internship employers

Supported internships are helping young people
with SEND get paid employment



Liverpool University Hospital Foundation Trust and Alder Hey Children's Hospital provide excellent healthcare and healthcare training to the North West of England. They have been running supported internships since 2019 and have enrolled 12 young people with SEND onto the programme this year. Annette Pollitt, David Caton and Louise Shepherd CBE explain how supported internships have had a long-lasting positive impact on their organisation.



How did you hear about supported internships?

We worked with a group called DFN Project SEARCH whose aim it is to get 10,000 young adults with SEND into paid employment by 2030. They put us in touch with Green Bank College and Liverpool City College, and we went from there. These two education providers made sure we have everything we need to help the supported interns, including education care plans and the job coaches who we work closely with.

Why did you want to offer supported internships?

Because it's the right thing to do. We care for a lot of young people with SEND in our hospitals and for them to see people like themselves working for us gives them a massive boost. It's all about representation. As one of the biggest employers in the local area, we're facing all sorts of challenges with employment and retention, and supported internships meant that we could give our local young people the opportunities that they deserved. For us, it became a mission to do something meaningful.

What did you hope to achieve by offering a supported internship?

We wanted to get a much richer understanding of young people with SEND so that we could design our services in different ways, to understand their needs better and get under the skin of the issues facing these young people. We also believed that it would be empowering for our staff to work closely with, and learn more about, individuals with SEND.



Have you offered any long-term roles to any supported interns?

Yes. We recently introduced a 'golden ticket' scheme. If we feel like a supported intern is hitting all their competencies and is showing great potential, they will be prioritised as the first candidate for any available job opportunities. This year we have already offered the golden ticket to two of our supported interns.

How does the job coach help?

The job coaches, provided by the intern's education provider, are a vital factor contributing to success at our hospital. They immerse themselves in the job before the supported internship starts. This means that when the intern begins their role, the job coaches are well-prepared to show them the ropes, making necessary workplace adjustments so they can perform the job just like any other team member. The job coach also helps us to make adjustments if they're needed.

Would you encourage other businesses to offer supported internships and what advice would you give them?

Quite simply, yes, we would encourage it. These young people have a genuine desire to work so why would you not want to support them to do that? Our supported interns are working 10am until 3pm, but they regularly stay later than they should because they want to be here. The benefits from offering supported internships are staggering. There's no reason why the supported interns that we have at the moment can't rise to the top of our organisation. As a business, you only need to invest a very small amount into young people and what you get in return can be massive. We're talking about loyalty, determination and dedication to a role that is sometimes lacking elsewhere. You don't have to start big, you could hire one, maybe two people and then grow from there.

Don't underestimate what you get back from these young people



If your business or organisation is thinking about being part of the supported internship programme, you can **find more information on our website.**

