

Comms Pack 1: Practical Guide for Local Authorities

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This communication pack contains the set of communication suggestions, guidelines, and requirements for Local Authorities (LAs) to follow as they deliver their work as part of the Internships Work programme.

Document produced by NDTi, as part of their delivery of the Internships Work Programme.

About Internships Work

Internships Work is a programme funded by the Department for Education, which began in September 2022 and has doubled the number of supported internship places in England by enabling over 4500 young adults, aged 16-24 with additional needs, to benefit from a supported internship. The programme is designed to support more young people with additional needs to have greater choice and control over their future, opening up opportunities that prepare them for adult life and independent living.

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A. Your Local Offer

1. Supported Internships Information

Your Local Offer webpage may be one of the first places that young people and families look when exploring next steps, so it is important that information about Supported Internships (SIs) is accessible and easy to find.

As part of the Internships Work programme, LAs must ensure their Local Offer webpage has high quality information about SIs that clearly answers the following questions for young people:

- What are Supported Internships?
- What do I need to get one?
- Where and how are they being offered?
- What support does an internship offer?
- What will I get at the end?
- Who can I contact?

2. Accessible Contact Details

Feedback from families indicates a need for more transparent and accessible contact information on local offer webpages, specifically for enquiries about local offers and supported internships.

Local Authorities must ensure easy access to such information.

This can be achieved by providing a dedicated, regularly monitored email address, and/or a direct phone line to the department responsible for these programs.

Additionally, it is advisable to assess and enhance your phone triage system to include a clear, direct option for families contacting the local authority's general enquiry number about their local offer.

3. Acknowledging Your Grant

As well as the above information, it is important to acknowledge your grant from the Department for Education (DfE) on your LA website. It will also make people aware that your work is part of a national programme to increase SI opportunities across England. Below is a suggestion of how you could acknowledge your grant and the programme:

As part of the national [Internships Work](#) programme, [Your LA Name] has received a grant from the Department for Education to develop our SEND Employment Forum and increase the number of Supported Internships in our area.

4. Examples

As the start of the programme, NDTi reviewed every Local Offer in England. Below is a selection of LAs who have helpful information on their website:

Halton: [Local Offer](#) & [SI Info](#)

Kensington & Chelsea: [Local Offer](#) & [SI Info](#)

Haringey: [Local Offer](#) & [SI Info](#)

Salford: [Local Offer](#) & [SI Info](#)

Surrey: [Local Offer](#) & [SI Info](#)

5. Preparing for Adulthood Resources

The majority of LAs have information about Supported Internships under the Preparing for Adulthood (PfA) section of their websites.

Please note that since the national PfA programme has come to an end, NDTi no longer has funding to continue to run the PfA website.

We know how much the resources are valued, so have saved a selection of popular tools, resources and guides from the PfA website onto a dedicated area on NDTi's website [here](#).

Please bear this in mind when adding links to your own resources or webpages and check older resources for broken links.

If you cannot find a resource, please get in touch via InternshipsWork@ndti.org.uk and we can see about getting it added again.

B. Brand Guidelines

1. Brand Style

Local Authorities have each their own brand style. LA commissioners delivering Internships Work should refer to their Local Authority's brand style and guidelines to create content that is aligned with it.

We have created several resources that you are welcome to use, you will find them available to download throughout this pack.

Resources, documents, presentations, communication pieces and media that you create as part of the programme should tie in with your LA's own branding guidance.

When you are delivering, or work, or creating resources as part of the programme, you must acknowledge your grant and Internships Work where appropriate.

2. Logos

The following banner must be included in each document or asset you create as part of Internships Work.



- In a PowerPoint or video, this banner can sit at the top or bottom of your first and last slide.
- In a document, this banner can sit in the header or footer of your document.
- On a banner, flyer, or social media post, this banner can sit at the top or bottom of your asset.
- [Download the banner here](#)

3. Accurate Credits & DfE Acknowledgement

Any communication produced about Internships work (including and not limited to: social media content and assets, documents, resource, web pages, newsletter, event sign up page, podcast, and more) must include the mention below:

This [resource type – podcast, video, guide etc.] was created by [your LA's Name] while taking part in Internships Work, a Department for Education funded programme.

- For documents and PowerPoints, this mention can be placed on the first page of your document along with the logo banner.
- For printed assets such as flyers, brochures, banners, this should be added at the bottom of your document along with the logo banner.
- For social media posts you can add this mention in the copy / caption of your post instead of the asset, however the banner should be present on the associated media/graphic asset.

4. Fonts

Please use the fonts mentioned in your Local Authority's brand style.

Alternatively, please use Century Gothic.

5. Using Internships Work Content

You **can** use Internships Work graphics providing you are stating the according credits.

- For example, the [banner with young people images in this webpage](#) or [the informative chart in this webpage](#).

You **cannot** in any circumstances use **part(s)** of an Internships Work graphic.

- For example, you cannot crop the banner or the chart and create a new graphic with it or used that cropped part into a new asset you create.

You can only use Internships Work graphic as they stand and are not allowed to modify them. Instead, you should create your own graphics.

C. Communication Requirements & Rules

1. Requirements for Effective Communication on Supported Internships

As a local authority participating in Internships Work, you play a pivotal role in leading and nurturing a network of key partners and collaborators.

This network is essential for providing accessible, accurate and up-to-date information about supported internships to young people and their families.

Here's how you can effectively achieve this:

a. Identify Key Stakeholders

Ensure you are regularly communicating and cascading information about SIs and SEND Employment Forums with a comprehensive group including (and not limited to):

- Local colleges and schools
- Local NHS Trust, GP surgeries, social workers
- Local schools' SENCOs
- Citizens Advice bureaus
- Job centres
- Occupational therapists
- Any other relevant organisations, charities, and individuals involved in the lives of young people with SEND and their families.

b. Lead by Example

As grant recipients, you have the responsibility to be the primary source of information about supported internships in your area. It's crucial that your approach is proactive and strategic.

c. Regular Updates

Keep all stakeholders informed with the latest information about the program. This includes:

- Regular newsletters, emails
- Updates on your website
- Scheduled meetings or information sessions

d. Encourage Collaboration

Foster a culture of shared responsibility and cooperation among all stakeholders. This helps in creating a supportive environment for the programme.

e. Facilitate Access to Information

Make it easy for families and young people to learn about supported internships through trusted sources. This can be achieved by:

- Ensuring all your partners have up-to-date programme details.
- Creating easy-to-understand materials for distribution.
- Utilising social media and other digital platforms for wider reach

f. Long-term Sustainability

Develop a strategy for maintaining these communication channels even after the programme ends. This will help in ensuring the ongoing success and sustainability of supported internships in your area.

By embracing these responsibilities, you are not only complying with programme requirements but also significantly contributing to the successful and sustainable provision of supported internships in your community.

2. #InternshipsWork & #SupportedInternships

On social media, we encourage you to use the following hashtags when posting as part of Internships Work:

#InternshipsWork
#SupportedInternships

When using only one hashtag, please use #SupportedInternships

This helps the many audiences we have (young people and their parents, employers, providers, job coaches, other LAs, allies, the wider public...) to find content about Supported Internships and Internships Work when researching these hashtags.

3. Media releases

If you're creating stories (sometime called 'case studies') about anyone involved in Internships Work (young people, employers, job coaches etc.), please use media releases form to ensure you have the appropriate consent of the individual to publish their story and (when applicable) their picture(s), video(s), or audio recording(s) as part of your communication activities.

In the case you don't have one at hand, we created a media release template that you can download and edit with your own LA's name and logo(s) to use, which includes an easy read version.

[Media Release Template](#)

Make sure to store those media release carefully and adequately in line with government and legal guidelines about data privacy.

4. Events

A great way to raise awareness about supported internships is by promoting them at relevant events. Look out for opportunities to attend parent/carers events, sessions for SEN caseworkers, careers coach gatherings, and information events hosted by other teams within your council or local community.

At these events, you can showcase supported internships through presentations, workshops, pop-up banners, and by being available to answer questions. For instance, we've seen a positive impact when supported internships were promoted at events for Future Career Coaches and SEN Caseworkers, leading to increased participation.

We have provided an example of our pull-up banner: [Internships Work Pull-Up Banner](#).

D. Comms & Marketing Advice

1. Content Strategy

Internships Work's high-level and overarching message is: "Real people are shaping an inclusive society where everyone can thrive."

By reporting the real stories of the real people on the field delivering, participating in, and engaging with the Internships Work programme you can guide their peers to: (i) understand, (ii) trust, (iii) support and (iv) take part in the programme.

To deliver successful communication activities for Internships Work, it is essential to understand how the audience of the programme is segmented, including:

- Young people & their families
- Employers
- Providers
- Local authorities
- Job coaches
- Allies such as charities and non-profit directly in touch with young peoples & families
- The wider public

You must do your due-diligence research to ensure you understand these different audiences and create content that resonates with them, that they can relate to/with, that will interest them and be valuable to their experience.

[Here are the programme global audiences strategic insights.](#)

Please note that these are overall and overarching strategic insights. It is essential you do your own audience strategic research to learn about your specific local audience. This will help you create and curate content that will resonate and add value specifically to them. For example, someone living in Black Country will have a very different life experience than someone living in London and therefore how and what you communicate to them will be different.

You must pay close attention to the authenticity of the content and stories* you share, ensuring they are a fair and accurate representation of the reality on the field.

You should use communication activities as an opportunity to educate your audience on the nuance often needed to read into hard data.

You must aim to have the highest accessibility standards (see **D. Accessibility Standards**) by removing as many barriers as possible, to ensure all your comms are easy to access, process and grasp via clear, concise, and accessible content and design.

**Also known as 'case studies', however we ask you use the term 'stories' instead, as a lot of people in the disabled community find the term 'case studies' dehumanising.*

2. Stories

a. The Story Capture Questionnaire: Making Storytelling Simple and Effective

We're passionate about sharing the amazing stories of young people in supported internships and the incredible people who make these programmes work. To do this, we've created a special "Story Capture" questionnaire, and it works in two simple ways.

A great tool for local authority commissioners to conduct interview and write stories.

Think of it as a set of questions that guide you through talking to people and getting their stories. It's important to use these questions on their own, in a relaxed chat or interview.

Mixing them up with other types of feedback (such as a general feedback form) won't work as well. Providing a specific setting to gathering this specific type of feedback is essential to get real, in-depth stories that people feel comfortable sharing.

Getting support from Internships Work team.

As we understand time and resources can be limited, you can also give out or share the questionnaire directly to all people involved, job coaches, employers, and interns. They can fill them out by themselves (or with support). This way, the questionnaire are sent back directly to the Internships Work communication team which will take on the workload of writing the story.

[You can download the questionnaires from our website.](#) We encourage you to regularly share them with the right people, encouraging them to answer them and send back to us.

Additionally, if you know someone with a great story who might not be able to fill out the questionnaire, and, you don't have capacity to hold an interview with them, send us their details. Our team will chat to them and make sure their story (and by proxy, your local authority's) gets heard.

Important note about the story capture questionnaires.

It's essential that when you're using the questionnaires, you adhere to the guidelines provided within them.

This includes obtaining full recorded consent from each participant. Additionally, in keeping with our standards, no story will be published without the participant's final approval of the written piece. This ensures that we respect and uphold the integrity of everyone's story.

These processes align with our commitment to transparency, authenticity, truthfulness, and support maintaining a positive reputation of the programme and each local authority.

b. Writing your own local stories

We understand that not all local authorities will have dedicated and experienced staff available to support communications activities.

Along the story capture questionnaires, we created a [Story Writing Guide \(download here\)](#) to help you with writing success stories of local people engaging with the programme for your own communication activities.

The guide was developed to help anyone in crafting compelling stories even if writing is not your thing.

When writing the stories of stakeholders for your communication activities you must:

- Request, collect and securely store a media release/consent form signed by the individual mentioned in the story.
- Ask the individual to review and approve the content before publishing it online. This helps manage any risk for your LA's and the programme's reputation.

3. Content Ideas

Topic	Details/Examples (not limited to)
Key updates	Advancement on developing SEND employment forums
Key information	What are supported internships Where to sign up Who to contact at the LA
Key events & Dates	Next SEND Employment Forum dates Job Fairs Information sessions When people need to get in touch/Deadlines to sign up
Stories	1 story max per post to make it accessible for followers to engage/read.
Quotes	1 quote max per post to make it accessible for followers to engage/read to make it accessible for followers to engage/read. E.g., quote from an employer or intern testimonial
Data	1 data point max per post to make it accessible for followers to engage/read. E.g., How many students have signed up/benefited locally, how many employers are supporting etc.
FAQs	1 question max per post to make it accessible for followers to engage/read.
Resources	Sharing resources from your own LA website , and from IW partners' websites such as from the Internships Work young people and families portal .
Resharing	Resharing other people's content about supported internships, especially from key local partner. E.g., Share the content a local employer or college created about their supported internship journey.

4. Gathering Feedback

It is essential to gather feedback to continuously improve services. When positive, this feedback can be used as anonymised quotes in your communication activities.

Ensure your feedback tools include consent statements such as (for example): *"When providing feedback, please be aware that your responses may be used as anonymous quotes in our communications. By submitting your feedback, you agree to this use, ensuring transparency and understanding."*

In an era where everything is constantly monitored, gathering feedback is a difficult task for any organisation, as users can find themselves overwhelmed with having to fill in feedback forms.

There is more than feedback forms and survey to gathering feedback, and it's important to think strategically of how and when you're asking for said feedback.

For example, at an online event, you can gather feedback as the event is happening using online polls as part of your online events. You can ask online attendees to comment their thoughts at various point during your event and collect a copy of the chat section of your online event.

Again, you should ensure clear transparency of use with participants, this may be via a statement at the beginning of the event about how and why the responses will be recorded and how they will be used.

In face-to-face meetings, especially for small gathering, it can be easier to gather feedback by asking direct questions to your audience and writing down their answer as opposed to asking them to fill a feedback form.

Here are six tips to help you with gathering feedback via forms:

1. **Prioritize Clarity and Relevance in Questions**
Craft questions that are straightforward, short and directly related to the topic of interest. Avoid jargon and complex language. It's crucial to strategically think about what information is truly needed and formulate questions that elicit that information precisely.
2. **Use Simple and Direct Language, Especially Avoiding Negation**
Negation in questions can be confusing and may lead to inaccurate responses. For instance, a question like "Do you disagree that public parks are not important for community welfare?" is double-negative and confusing. A better alternative would be "Do you believe public parks are important for community welfare?"
3. **Keep it Short and Focused**
People are more likely to complete shorter forms. Limit the number of questions to the essentials. This approach not only respects the respondent's time but also increases the quality of the responses as people are less likely to rush through the form.
4. **Ensure Accessibility and User-Friendly Design**
The form should be easy to navigate and accessible to everyone, including those with disabilities. Use a clean layout, large fonts, and contrasting colours. Also, consider mobile-friendly designs as many people use smartphones for such tasks.
5. **Offer Incentives and Explain the Importance of Feedback**
Motivate people to participate by explaining how their feedback will be used to make tangible improvements. Where appropriate, offering small incentives can also increase response rates. However, the primary focus should be on communicating the value and impact of their feedback on community initiatives.
6. **Prompt Feedback Form Responses While Your Audience is Engaged**
Engage your audience to complete the feedback form immediately after their

experience or interaction. People are more likely to provide feedback when the experience is fresh in their minds. This approach capitalizes on the immediacy and relevance of their thoughts and feelings. For example, if the feedback is about a public event, having stations with tablets or volunteers with clipboards at the exit points can encourage attendees to share their thoughts right away. When online, this can be done by including 5 minutes at the end of your event for people to complete the form before the call ends.

This method is often more effective than follow-up requests, which might be ignored or forgotten due to the delay and the respondent's detachment from the experience.

Prompting for immediate feedback not only increases the likelihood of participation but also tends to yield more accurate and honest responses, as the details and impressions are more vivid in the participants' minds.

5. Hashtags Guidance

Here's some clear guidance on using hashtags in your communications alongside #InternshipsWork and #SupportedInternships:

Consider your audience when selecting hashtags. It's important to think about what your audience would search for using hashtags:

For instance, an HR manager might not be familiar with supported internships, so they may not search for #SupportedInternships specifically. However, they might be interested in topics like diversity and inclusion, disability in the workplace, or corporate social responsibility, which are closely related to supported internships. To engage this audience, you could include hashtags such as #DiversityInclusion, #DisabilityInTheWorkplace, and #NeurodiversityAtWork.

Parents, on the other hand, might be searching for hashtags like #SEND, #EHCP, or #PreparingForAdulthood.

Always keep in mind who you are addressing, so you can choose hashtags that are relevant to what they are searching for in relation to your topic.

Additionally, you should consider using any relevant hashtag frequently used by your LA, such as, if applicable, your LA and councils official tags, and local area tags such as a county, districts, towns names etc, as and when relevant to help reach your local audience.

Follow our performance tips on hashtags (see table below in 6. Performance tips) and don't overload your social posts with hashtags:

Your post will be considered spam by platforms' algorithms if you have too many hashtags and won't be shown to your audience.

6. Performance Tips

Here are some hacks and tips you can use to maximise the impact of your online communication activities. The tips below are according to what's known to date of this document's creation (2023). **You should regularly research up-to-date data on these tips, as platforms regularly update their algorithms.**

Format, Item or Action	LinkedIn	Twitter	Facebook	TikTok	Instagram	Website
Videos maximum length	Up to 1 min	1 min or less	Up to 3 min	30 seconds	Up to 1 min	n/a
Sharing a video via link or natively	Always upload natively	Always upload natively	Always upload natively	Always upload natively	Always upload natively	n/a
Video-based posts' reach and engagement potential versus text-based posts	3 to 5 times more	Up to 10 times more	Unknown	n/a	Unknown however the platform seems to favour reels.	n/a
Optimum character count per post	300 to 600 and 1900 to 2000	71 to 100	40 to 60	Unknown	Under 125, max 150	Blog: 1760 to 2400 words
Number of hashtags per post	2 to 3	1 to 2	1 to 3	2 to 4	3 to 5 in caption + max 25 in a separate comment	n/a

7. Blog optimisation

Search keyword

- Your title
- Your first paragraph
- The alt description of some of your photos/graphics
- Several times throughout your text (in a natural way)
- At least one subheading

- Your URL (ideally, this is less important)
- Your meta description (this is the short paragraph Google uses underneath your title in search results)

Readability

- Be well structured (short paragraphs, several heading types in use – H2, H3, H4...)
- Have short, easy to read sentences (short + use of transitions, e.g., for example, however, as well as, because...)
- Have a clear goal in mind (“to help the reader...”)

More: <https://www.productiveblogging.com/beginners-guide-seo/>

E. Accessibility

1. Accessibility Standards to Follow

Plain English	Use plain English to ensure any content created is easy to read and process. Plain English Free Guide / PDF Accessibility Free Training (youtube series)
No jargon	
No acronyms	In any context, always use the full worded name or expression. If you must use acronyms, add their meaning in bracket, right after it.
Image Descriptions [ID]	There should be an image description [ID] along any image used. On social media post, incorporate it with the "alt-text" feature of the social platform you're posting on. How to write alt-text descriptions for image accessibility How To: Write Good Alt Text Gov.uk System Guideline - Image Use and Alt-text Web Accessibility Initiative: Alt Decision Tree Resource Five golden rules for compliant alt text University of Birmingham: Ensuring appropriate alt text
Easy Read	Create easy read version as much as possible and wherever relevant (this may not be applied, i.e., social media content) Easy read guide / NHS England easy read guide
Dyslexia Guidance	British Dyslexia Association - Dyslexia Style guide GOV.UK Guidance - Accessible communication formats

Video alt text	Like image alt text but feature may not always be available depending on platforms
Videos Subtitles	Embedded captions/subtitles for every video.
Audios & Video Transcripts	A transcript shared with every audio/video format.
BSL for videos	As much as possible when resources allow.
Short sentences and paragraphs	Avoid long sentences and paragraphs. Try Hemingway App (free)
Implement the basic principles of graphic design for any asset and document produced	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Emphasis 2. Balance and alignment 3. Contrast 4. Repetition 5. Proportion 6. Movement 7. White space
Use Title Case for hashtags	A hashtag in Title Case #LooksLikeThis , with the first letter in each word of the hashtag capitalised. This formatting will make a hashtag accessible. The difference between lowercase and uppercase letters helps a screen reader identify the separate words, allowing it to pronounce the hashtag correctly.

2. Using AI to Support Accessibility Compliance

Using AI can help you create more accessible content in a timely and efficient manner:

[ChatGPT](#) can be utilised as a tool to improve the accessibility of written content, making it easier for a wider audience to understand.

- For example, a useful prompt is to copy and paste your content into it and ask ChatGPT to "re-write this content in plain English." This prompt instructs the model to simplify complex language and use clear, straightforward wording.

Proceed with caution:

- While ChatGPT can provide helpful suggestions, it's important to remember that it is a tool and not a definitive answer. Proofreading and double-checking the output is essential to ensure accuracy and clarity.
- Always consider the context and intended audience when using ChatGPT. Adjusting the tone and style of the content may be necessary to make it more appropriate for the target readers.
- It's important to be cautious of potential errors or inaccuracies that may arise from using ChatGPT. Double-checking and verifying the information provided by the model is crucial.
- Communication managers should be aware that language can be subjective, and different individuals may have varying preferences. Use ChatGPT's suggestions as a starting point and tailor the content according to specific requirements or guidelines.
- By using ChatGPT, communication managers can save time and effort in rewriting content from scratch while still ensuring that it is accessible to a broader range of readers.

Remember: ChatGPT is a powerful tool, but it should be used judiciously and in conjunction with human judgment and proofreading to achieve the best results.

Here are ten examples of prompts that communication managers can use on ChatGPT to make their content more accessible to people with learning disabilities:

1. "Please simplify this paragraph to make it easier to understand for people with learning disabilities." / "Please re-write this social media post so it's shorter and to the point, using plain English and making it easier to read and understand for all, including people with learning disabilities."
2. "Rewrite this sentence using shorter and simpler words to enhance accessibility."
3. "Can you break down this complex concept into smaller, more digestible pieces of information?"
4. "Make this content more accessible by using bullet points or numbered lists to organise the information."
5. "Rephrase this sentence in a way that avoids jargon or technical terms."
6. "Can you provide a clear and concise summary of this article for readers with learning disabilities?"
7. "Simplify this sentence structure to make it easier to comprehend for individuals with learning disabilities."
8. "Could you provide an example or analogy to illustrate this point in a more accessible manner?"
9. "Please remove any unnecessary or redundant information from this paragraph to improve clarity."
10. "Consider using headings and subheadings to enhance the structure and readability of this document for individuals with learning disabilities."