

SUPPORTED INTERNSHIP QUALITY ASSURANCE FRAMEWORK

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# Introduction

Supported Internships (SI) are a study programme which provide an excellent platform and transition into meaningful paid work for young people aged 16-24 with an Education, Health and Care plan (EHCP). The aim of the programme is for interns to progress into employment of over 16 hours per week. There is a growing data set which provides evidence that SIs do work and at scale. With the growth of SIs, we need to provide assurance in the quality and consistency of provision and ensure that interns have clear outcomes, so they develop the skills and experiences they need for sustainable employment. This framework draws on effective practice and sets out what is required to achieve a high-quality SI. The framework asks you to develop a ‘culture’ of quality by committing to ongoing monitoring and reporting. It targets improvements and encourages you to proactively manage the quality of SI and outcomes for interns.

# Self-Assessments

A self-assessment tool has been created using the Supported Internships Quality Assurance Framework. For more information and to download the self-assessment follow this link: [INSERT LINK]

# Section 1. Leadership

There is a clear vision and culture of high aspiration for interns. Leaders’ directions and actions enable interns to gain sustainable paid employment because:

* 1. The senior leadership ensures there is a clear culture and strategy and there is an ambitious curriculum within the SI. Everyone understands the benefits of a SI and have high expectations of the intern to gain sustainable employment.
  2. Senior leaders ensure all partners understand and fulfil the requirements of their roles.
  3. The provider accesses funding that enables interns to be effectively and fully supported on their SI.
  4. The SI is a programme of study that lasts a minimum of 6 months to a year and includes maths and English.
  5. The SI team is resourced well through staff contracts that allow for interns to mirror typical employer work patterns as applicable.
  6. All staff are trained, supported, and appropriately qualified, with professional development prioritized. The job coaches use their skills and knowledge, following the National Occupational Standards. They are trained in systematic instruction, which enables interns to build on skills and learn complex tasks.

# Section 2. Planning

A SI is planned well and is a final step in education for interns with the goal to achieve paid sustainable employment because:

* 1. 70% of intern’s time on the SI is based in the workplace, with all the work-placements off site with an employer. Interns have an opportunity to experience the shifts and working patterns in the business if relevant to their job aspirations. The SI follows a personalised curriculum which has clear aims for sustainable paid employment.
  2. There is appropriate off the job training and evidence of personalised support to help the intern to participate effectively within the SI programme.
  3. The job coach is skilled at facilitating links between the interns and employers through job analysis, negotiating job matches and ‘carving’ job roles. They tailor support for both the intern and the employer.
  4. The employer is supported by the partnership throughout to understand the needs of the intern, to ensure a safe workplace and to make reasonable adjustments.
  5. The intern’s skills development and social inclusion is supported by a workplace mentor and/or buddy who is identified by the employer. Appropriate training is in place for the employer, manager, workplace buddy and mentor.
  6. The programme ensures there is good skills matching of the intern to the employer placement either through a single appropriate placement or rotations within the employer / between employers. The placement/s are matched to the intern’s long-term goals and aspirations.

# Section 3. Partnership

Effective partnership underpins the success of the SI and enables the best opportunity for interns to succeed. Working together ensures standards are upheld and there is openness and transparency, sharing effective practice with a commitment to high standards and continuous quality improvement. Partners work well together because:

* 1. The partners commitment enables interns’ skills to be developed well. Everyone is committed to the SI and there is an open, transparent approach to sharing the effective practice of the SI programme.
  2. Employers value onsite support and the job coach gives timely and skilled support. The employer identifies a lead contact person within their organisation who liaises with the SI partnership.
  3. The programme identifies employer(s) for the SI placements, with explicit opportunities to progress into sustainable paid employment, either within the organisation or elsewhere.
  4. There is a partnership culture and process that enables honest and robust feedback from all stakeholders including, and most importantly the intern.
  5. There is well informed family (or circle of support) involvement, who share the intern’s aspirations for employment and support their aim to achieve sustainable employment.
  6. The Local Authority and relevant partners promote the SI programmes on the Local Authority’s Local Offer and with local employers. The provider engages with the Local Authority to understand availability of SI schemes and provides data to the Local Authority on their employment outcomes.

# Section 4. Preparedness

Interns are prepared for a SI and they have a strong motivation to work. The placement(s) must fit with their vocational profile, contribute to their long-term career goal and be flexible enough to address barriers where necessary. To enable this to happen, the intern is prepared for a SI because:

* 1. There is evidence the programme has provided unbiased information, advice and guidance to the intern before commencement of the programme, to determine it as the most suitable option for the individual.
  2. All interns have an EHCP, the provider undertakes the annual review in line with their statutory duties and supplies annual review documents to the Local Authority within the specified timeframe. Interns are between 16-24 years of age, in their last year of education and employment is the intended pathway.
  3. The interns have high aspirations of achieving sustainable paid employment. They are well prepared with the employability skills developed to transition effectively to the SI workplace.
  4. There is a robust recruitment, selection, and induction process which ensures the intern has the appropriate documentation to secure work. Interns and their families are clear that the end goal is paid work.
  5. The intern’s aspirations and employment goals are identified through a vocational profile. The programme and intern identify suitable career paths that match to their interests and goals.

# Section 5. Progress

The intern is on track and making good progress into sustainable paid employment because:

* 1. The SI placement is managed through Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant and Time-defined (SMART) action plans that are developed with and shared with the employer, delivery partners, intern and families/carers as appropriate.
  2. There is good and regular communication between the job coach and employer regarding skills development and support for the intern.
  3. The programme has robust, regular and timely review processes in place for interns that supports them to make progress within the SI, develop required skills and informs action planning.
  4. The progress review process involves the intern and all key partners (employer, job coach, families/carers and other relevant programme staff) who are committed to the success of the intern.
  5. The interns are supported to be socially included within the workplace as part of the team.
  6. Any barriers to participation and progress are identified and addressed, using external partners if appropriate.
  7. The personalised level of support enables the intern to be as independent as possible and flourish in the SI. Support is decreased (faded) over time but is in place to ensure the intern can undertake duties effectively.

# Section 6. Results

The primary goal of the programme for the intern is paid employment. Jobs must work for both the intern and the employer, and the SI should reflect a real business need. The employer is committed to supporting the intern towards paid employment. This document recognises that interns could be moving into employment up to 12 months after completing their internship, using the skills learnt during the programme. When evidencing this section, you should use up to the last two years’ worth of graduating cohorts. The SI is successful because:

* 1. The programme is focused on securing appropriate and sustainable employment for the intern. Interns are well prepared for work through support for job searching, building a CV and interviews, ensuring the interns are successful with recruitment and selection.
  2. Interns secure sustainable paid permanent positions that match their aspirations, skills and employment goals.
  3. Job outcomes exceed 70% for the reporting cohort.
  4. The job outcomes for reporting cohort are no less than 16 hours per week (or adjusted to meet evidenced individual circumstance).
  5. Outcome data is kept for each cohort, regularly reviewed and acted upon to continually improve the quality of the programme.
  6. There is commitment from the provider through partnerships such as the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) and local providers, to support the intern and employer with future needs beyond the SI if the need arises.
  7. 70% of reporting cohort are in paid work 12 months after starting their employment.