

# Answering some Frequently Asked Questions about supported internships

## What will it cost me to offer a supported internship work placement?

- Extended work placements for supported internships are unpaid, because participating in an extended work placement is part of the young person's programme of study at their school or college. The primary goal of a placement is to help a young person with learning difficulties to develop the skills they need for paid employment
- Funding for job coaches and reasonable adjustments will be arranged by the school or college

## Will the young person fit in to my workplace?

If you are thinking about hosting a placement, the college will work with you to understand the role you have available, to ensure the best job match between the intern and you.

- The college may also suggest 'job carving', which means working with you to tailor the extended work placement to best meet your business needs, whilst utilising the strengths and abilities of the young person
- This might mean that tasks carried out by other employees can be given to the intern, freeing up resource for other staff. Employers who have offered supported internships have found that it decreases the workload of their staff and teams

## What happens if things go wrong?

- Even though your local school or college and the job coach will make every effort to match you with the most suitable young person, sometimes things can go wrong
- If the placement starts going wrong, be honest and act quickly. Contact the job coach and explain your concerns, so that any issues can hopefully be resolved quickly. It may be a skills gap, a difference in expectations between the intern and employer, a behaviour concern or simply a misunderstanding by the young person or employer. Identifying the problem quickly is the best way to

resolve it, thereby hopefully avoiding a possible breakdown of the placement

- If it becomes clear that the work placement is no longer viable, the job coach will work with you to bring it to an end. Either the job coach or the school/college will discuss why things went wrong, and whether it's a good idea to consider placing another young person with you

### **What do I, as an employer, need to do?**

Getting the right young person into the right job role with the right employer is critical to the success of an individual internship. The job coach will work with you to identify a job role that fulfils a real business need for your organisation, and ensure that someone is matched to the job role for the extended work placement. The role can develop over time as you get to know what the young person can do.

You will need to provide effective line management and supervision of the intern as you would with other employees, although a lot of support will be provided by the job coach, especially at first.

### **What support will I receive during the internship?**

- The job coach will work with you to arrange the induction and settling in period, and provide as much support as is needed throughout this time.
- The job coach will also support you to make any reasonable adjustments that may be needed. These often cost nothing and can be of benefit to other employers as well. Where there is a cost, the job coach will apply for government funding to cover it
- As the young person becomes more confident and able, the job coach will gradually withdraw their support, but you will still be able to contact them at any time if any issues arise

### **What happens at the end of the internship?**

- The aim of supported internships is to prepare young people with learning difficulties for employment. As the intern has been fulfilling a real business need in your organisation, you should consider whether you can take them on as a paid member of staff at the end of their internship
- This won't always be possible: you may not be in a position to recruit, or the intern may not have met the required standards. You can still

play an important part in helping an intern achieve employment elsewhere, e.g. by providing a reference, recommending the intern to other employers, or giving honest feedback to the school, college or job coach about the skills and/or behaviours that the young person still needs to develop