

# Bitesize Case Study: A Supported Internship Programme in Salford

## Voluntary Sector North West

This case study is one in a series of studies curated to capture best practice, and highlight innovations, from the joint Health Education England (HEE) working across the North West and Voluntary Sector North West 'Learning Matters' awards 2017. The awards are part of a cross sector adult learning campaign delivered for the health and care sector through a number of key regional partnerships and collaborations. The overarching theme of the awards is simple: lifelong learning is good for people, organisations and health.

### HEE Quality Standards met:

- 3 - Supporting and Empowering Learners
- 6 - Developing a Sustainable Workforce

### What was the issue or problem? What did you set out to do?

The Supported Internship programme has been running at Salford Royal Foundation Trust (SRFT) since September 2012. The programme came about as the government acknowledged the barriers faced by people with learning disabilities wanting to find paid employment. It is an employment based course that offers ten young people with learning disabilities the opportunity to develop employability skills at the trust whilst continuing to work towards their qualifications. The internship is a partnership between a host employer (Salford Royal NHS Foundation Trust), an education provider (Salford City College), and a supported employment organisation (Pure Innovations). Salford City Council provides the funding and support for the project.



## What did you do? What was the intervention or initiative?

The interns attend lessons at a classroom based at Salford Royal Foundation Trust and complete three different work placements with the trust over an academic year. The interns work with a tutor, an employment officer and a job coach, all of whom with the individuals to enable independence both in the classroom and the workplace.

The interns work towards a Level 1 in business and retail. Units of classwork include customer service, preparing for interviews and making a CV. The classroom sessions aim to build on the practical skills learnt through the work placements whilst encouraging the interns to learn from each other and reflect on their own skills and experience.

Each intern is provided with a person-centred support plan, tailored to their needs, which is completed over the summer before the course begins. Any travel training which needs completing is also done during this period. Once the course begins their skills and interests are carefully matched to job roles available through the employer that will both support and challenge the individual.

This person-centred approach, and partnership between education and supported employment, has a proven track record of helping young people progress into paid employment. The ultimate goal for these young people is paid employment; however the team also recognise the interns gain many new skills along the way.

## What were the Key Outcomes?

- **Appropriate behaviour in the workplace**– most of the interns quickly adjust to the boundaries set early on in the programme. Occasionally specific incidents occur which are dealt with individually.
- **Attendance and punctuality** – the team remind interns that jobs are interconnected to emphasise the impact being late for work can have on others, including patients, which goes against the values of the trust.
- **Work ethic** – Many interns will look to their work experience to draw conclusions from but the programme challenges these ideas as they often have unrealistic experiences of work.
- **Customer service** – Good customer service is essential in any job in the trust so the team use customer service scenarios to work from in the classroom and then put this learning into practice.
- The practical skills to achieve specific roles are also acquired.

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## What were the lessons learned?

In particular, the key learning for this year has been focused on attendance by working closely with Salford Royal NHS Foundation Trust to look at mirroring their absence policy. By doing this it makes the intern more responsible for their own attendance and prepares them further for the real world of work. Placement managers will now be invited to attend the supportive return to work interview.

Key learning for SRFT includes (completed by the SRFT Associate Director of Learning & Development (L&D)):

- Importance of creating a safe environment in which Interns can learn and develop
- Learning difficulties do not prevent people working in the NHS environment and SRFT can support the cohort to develop confidence in becoming work ready

- This year SRFT has shown that with support and the right person at the right time, apprenticeships can be used to develop Interns with mild learning difficulties.

All staff supporting the internship have been trained in systematic instruction which means a complex task can be broken down into manageable chunks to aid learning. Staff often have to be creative in their ideas around learning aids – each intern learns in their own way and it is possible to overcome challenges.

**Level of award:** Nominee - Projects

**Organisations:**

Salford Royal NHS Foundation Trusts, Salford City College and Pure Innovations

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