Portsmouth CITY COUNCIL

Supported Internships



Published: February 2025

A Supported Internship is a **full-time, structured work-based educational programme.**

Offered by colleges and training providers for young people, aged 16–24 with identified additional needs and where most of their time is spent within the workplace.

- The structured study programme includes on-the-job training with a local employer, supported by expert job coaches, an employability programme looking at the soft skills of employment, vocational profiling to identify a student's skills and qualities and the chance to study for relevant qualifications where appropriate.
- Job Coaches provide support to employers, increasing their confidence of working with young people and helping them to understand the business case of employing a diverse workforce.
- The support given to both the intern and employer, by a job coach, is fully funded by Access to Work - a Department for Work and Pensions grant.
- Supported internships aim to help young people to gain paid employment by giving them the skills and experience by learning in a "real" workplace.
- Interns spend one day a week with the Educational Provider and approximately 15-20 hours per week with the employer.
- There is no cost to the employer as the Intern is in full time education.
- There is no obligation to employ the young person at the end of the placement, however, supported internships are the perfect form of working interview, should there be a suitable vacancy.
- The overall goal of supported internships is for young people with additional needs to move into paid employment.

Daniel Sisman

The View café



Dan has just completed the Portsmouth City Council Supported Internship, in partnership with the City of Portsmouth College and Minstead Trust.

Dan completed a placement at The View café in Portsmouth Civic Offices.

Programme

- Supported Internship 2023/2024
- Functional Skills Maths and English
- Employability Skills

Skills learnt

- Customer service
- Barista skills
- Till operation
- Money management

Employer feedback

"Dan has adapted very well to the café environment, he has accepted any challenge that was given to him despite his nervousness to try something new, he did it anyway.

It has been a pleasure having Dan in the café, everyone always looks forward to having him in and I would be happy if he wanted to stay on with Lily & Lime in the future, there would always be a space for him here."

Where next?

A Customer Service Apprenticeship in the Hospitality Industry.
Dan continues to gain experience at the View Cafe and is working towards a Part Time Apprenticeship.

EMPOWERING EMPLOYMENT

MINSTEAD TRUST

Why

Why should my business host a work placement and what are the benefits?

As well as making a positive contribution to society, and increasing the diversity of your workforce to reflect your customer base, the benefits to your business include:

- Developing an ethical corporate image which can be fundamental to business success. A study found that:

87%	of consumers preferred to use companies that hired people with disabilities.
92%	felt more favourable towards companies that hired individuals with disabilities.

- Working alongside a young person with an additional need can increase your organisation's understanding of your market. For an average business, more than 20% of your customers are disabled people. A workforce that reflects the diverse range of customers it serves, and the community in which it is based, is good for business.
- The placement can act as an extended working interview - giving you an increased chance of getting the right person to fill your vacancies and bringing new skills to your workforce.
- Interns can be trained to undertake tasks using an employer's methods, thereby meeting the required standards.
- Offering a placement will increase an employer's disability confidence, with job coaches available to supplement any in-work training that the employer provides. The intern can also undertake additional learning in college, identified by the employer, to work on qualifications that the employer would want for their workforce.
- There may be an opportunity to give a junior member of staff mentoring or supervisory experience if they act as a 'buddy' to the intern.

Are you an employer and interested in finding out more?

Email **Amanda Percy** at **amanda.percy@portsmouthcc.gov.uk**

What

What will we need to do during the placement?

- Interview (or other method to assess suitability) the intern prior to placement.
- Provide line management as you would with any employee.
- Work with the intern and job coach to ensure lines of communication are kept open and honest.
- Have input to the intern's review.
- Share with the training or education provider/job coach any concerns you may have.
- If it became obvious that the young person requires a reasonable adjustment to undertake their duties, the job coach can support you with this and, indeed, if there is a cost, Access to Work government funding can often be used. Very often these reasonable adjustments can also provide useful to current members of staff.



How

How can I offer someone a supported internship placement?

- Now over to you - if you are thinking about hosting a placement, firstly contact your PCC representative. They will work with you to understand the role you have available and to ensure the best job match between the potential intern, the role and your business requirements.
- Supported internships are flexible and the provider will work with your business to ensure the internship works for all concerned.
- Partnership is key to a successful supported internship and your input will be invaluable prior to and during the placement.

What happens at the end of the supported internship?

- The aim of supported internships is to prepare young people with additional needs for employment. As the intern has been fulfilling a real business need in your organisation, you might 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 able 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 college about the skills and/ or behaviours that the young person still needs to develop.

Jake Homer

Comserv UK



Jake has just completed the Portsmouth City Council Supported Internship, in partnership with City of Portsmouth College and Minstead Trust.

Jake completed a placement with Comserv UK at their warehouse in Havant.

Programme

- Supported Internship 2023/2024
- Functional Skills Maths and English
- Employability Skills

Skills learnt

- Wood priming and treating
- Safe use of power tools
- Waste disposal
- Manual handling

Employer feedback

"Jake is a great asset to the team and has done very well on his internship.

His work ethic, reliability and attitude have been fantastic. We're delighted that he has decided to stay with us in a paid role."

Where next?

Part time work for Comserv UK in Portsmouth.

Jake will be joining the Comserv UK team at their Portsmouth depot on a part time contract.

EMPOWERING EMPLOYMENT

MINSTEAD TRUST

FAQs

Employer Concerns Identified in Department for Education Guidance

Are there health and safety issues?

- Interns are covered by the employer's insurance as for any employed staff. For the vast majority of interns, there will be no need for any considerations beyond those that exist for all staff.
- Any concerns can be discussed with your job coach or the education provider. The placement will have been carefully job matched to ensure the environment is suitable for the intern and the employer.

Will it take up a lot of time for employer and staff and affect productivity?

- The intern will still require new staff induction and training on the tasks to be undertaken but the job coach will be there to give the extra time required to support the intern and ensure the tasks are learnt to a high standard.

We have no experience of communicating or supporting people with additional needs in the workplace.

- The training provider/job coach can deliver awareness training for your staff around the needs of the Intern, but they will also be available for any support that is required. Interns can also request training for staff via an Access to Work claim.

Can someone with a disability or learning difficulty really do any of the jobs I could offer?

- Employers are often surprised at just how much a person with a learning difficulty or disability can do, once the right support is in place. It may also be useful to think how a specific role might be 'carved' for an individual if tasks were allocated differently across a team. Some employers have found productivity is increased when they take this approach (e.g. freeing up some staff from data entry work, taken on by the intern, so they can do more customer-facing activity).

What will other staff or customers/clients make of it?

- The job coach can support the staff to understand the abilities and needs of the intern. It is rarely a problem for existing staff and often brings out the nurturing side of one or more colleagues who thrive in that role. Customers and clients are often pleased to see a diverse workforce, especially if it helps the workforce to better reflect the client group – and that's any workforce that serves the general public. If issues do arise, the job coach can help negotiate solutions.

Will a job coach just get in the way and be an extra burden?

- Job coaches are very skilled in making their presence as unobtrusive as possible. They are likely to be around quite a lot to start with – but this is very helpful to the employer in getting the intern trained up to do the job and ironing out any teething issues. As the intern grows more confident, the job coach will begin to withdraw although they will do some light-touch monitoring and be available to intern or employer if additional support is needed (e.g. if employer introduces new or more challenging tasks).

Will I face some kind of equality / discrimination challenge if I don't recruit the intern at the end?

- Employers are not obliged to recruit the intern at the end of the internship. This is the ideal outcome but is not always possible. Employers are only expected to recruit the intern if there is a vacancy, and the intern is the best candidate for the job. Providers will expect them to apply their normal recruitment procedures – with reasonable adjustments to the process as required, as for any disabled job applicant.

Source: Supported internships - British Association for Supported Employment **base-uk.org**

Other FAQs

What are additional needs?

- This is a term used to encompass any needs that may require consideration within education or the workplace. Not all interns will have additional 'learning' needs but all those on a Supported Internship will have an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP).

Will we have to pay the Intern?

- No, the interns are on a full-time education (FTE) programme, which is just taking place within the workplace rather than an educational establishment.

Will we be able to meet the intern before they start?

- Definitely. The interview / matching process is very important for all concerned. The provider will have already discussed your requirements and the potential intern prior to the interview to give you the time to prepare the interview and take into consideration any environmental needs.

How long is the placement?

- A placement is usually between 2 - 3 days a week - the hours can fit around you - for example you might wish that Interns are in for a whole or half-day, or perhaps evenings should you perhaps operate like a theatre might - the hours are up to you

What happens if we think it isn't working?

- If you think it isn't working, please speak to your Job Coach when you first have concerns. Very often these can be addressed, and the placement can go on successfully. However, if that is not the case the placement will cease.

Who will support us?

- The job coach will support employer, intern and staff. These is no cost as it is funded by Access to Work.

Will the job coach stay all the time?

- The job coach will stay for as long as is required. The job coach will liaise with you in planning a phased withdrawal.

If we don't have a suitable job at the end of the placement what will happen to the Intern?

- If you do not have a vacancy the job coach/provider will work with the intern to seek alternative employment.
- My staff are worried about working with someone with additional needs, they are worried they will say something wrong. Free familiarisation training can be provided or, if needed, specific training to address an individual's needs. The job coach will be there, or can be contacted, to answer any questions.

James Drage

Voi Scooter



James has just completed the Portsmouth City Council Supported Internship, in partnership with City of Portsmouth College and Minstead Trust.

James completed a placement at Voi Scooters in their warehouse in Fareham.

Programme

- Supported Internship 2023/2024
- Functional Skills Maths and English
- Employability Skills

Skills learnt

- Scooter repair
- Teamworking
- Health and safety
- Manual handling

Employer feedback

"Having James as part of our team has been good for everyone. It gives them an insight of the work, helping them adapt to another environment outside of being in a college.

It is also helping them to become independent and learn new skills and fain friendships. It is helping them to gain responsibility by encouraging them to get themselves to and from the workplace."

Where next?

An apprenticeship with Voi Scooters in Fareham.

James will begin an apprenticeship with the team at Voi, starting full time employment.

EMPOWERING EMPLOYMENT

MINSTEAD TRUST

Portsmouth CITY COUNCIL



You can request this information in large print, Braille, audio or in another language by emailing amanda.percy@portsmouthcc.gov.uk or portsmouthlocaloffer@portsmouthcc.gov.uk

Produced by: **marketing@portsmouthcc.gov.uk** • Published: **February 2025** • Ref: **1.454**