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[Department
for Education](#)

Guidance

Supported internships

Updated 1 February 2022

Applies to England

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This publication is available at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/supported-internships-for-young-people-with-learning-difficulties/supported-internships>

This guidance sets out what education providers need to know in order to set up a supported internship programme. It provides practical guidance on developing and delivering supported internships, including information on:

- funding
- programme design
- staffing
- the various partnerships on which supported internships are founded

The guidance draws on the [2020 Cooper Gibson research on supported internships](http://www.coopergibson.co.uk/portfolio/supported-internships-research-project/) (<http://www.coopergibson.co.uk/portfolio/supported-internships-research-project/>) as well as the experiences of providers and local authorities who have been running successful supported internships programmes to support young people with education, health and care plans into employment.

Introduction

The [National Disability Strategy](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-disability-strategy) (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-disability-strategy>) sets out the actions the government will take to improve the everyday lives of all disabled people. We want all children and young people, no matter what their special educational needs or disability (SEND), to be able to reach their full potential and receive the right support to succeed in their education and as they move into adult life.

With the right preparation, the overwhelming majority of young people with SEND are capable of sustainable paid employment. All professionals working with them should share that presumption and provide the career advice and support that help young people to develop the skills and experience that they need to succeed in their careers. However, evidence in [post-16 education and labour market activities, pathways and outcomes](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/post-16-education-and-labour-market-activities-pathways-and-outcomes) (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/post-16-education-and-labour-market-activities-pathways-and-outcomes>) shows that pupils with SEND are less likely to be in sustained employment 15 years after key stage 4 than their peers.

Supported internships are a great opportunity to improve the life chances of young people with SEND by supporting them into sustained, paid employment. Achieving paid employment not only brings young people financial independence, but it can be key to:

- building confidence and self-esteem
- increasing health and well-being
- gaining friendships and a social life

There are also benefits for the economy, employers, families, the local community and wider society.

What's involved

Supported internships are a structured, work-based study programme for 16 to 24-year-olds with SEND, who have an education, health and care (EHC) plan. The core aim of a supported internship study programme is a substantial work placement, facilitated by the support of an expert job coach.

Supported interns are enrolled and supported by a learning provider, for example, a school or college, but spend most of their learning time - typically around 70% - in a workplace.

The internships provide the opportunity for young people to achieve sustained, paid employment by equipping them with the skills they need for work, through learning in the workplace.

Supported interns are in full-time education and their supported internship work placements are part of their course. There is no legal requirement or expectation that the supported intern will be paid. Supported internships are exempt from the National Minimum Wage regulation.

Supported internships last for a minimum of 6 months, and up to a year.

The supported internship should contribute to the long-term career goals of the young person and match their capabilities. Alongside their time with the employer, supported interns complete a personalised study programme delivered by the school or college, which includes the chance to study for relevant qualifications, if appropriate, and English and maths at an appropriate level.

Every young person is supported in the work placement by a trained job coach, put in place by their education provider. The job coach provides in-work support that tapers off, if appropriate, as the supported intern becomes familiar with their role. Job coaches also work with employers, increasing their confidence in employing individuals with additional needs and helping them to create and support a diverse workforce.

Aims of a supported internship

The aim of supported internships is to support young people with EHC plans to gain paid employment by:

- supporting them to develop the skills valued by employers
- enabling them to demonstrate their value in the workplace
- developing confidence in their own abilities to perform successfully at work.

The measure of success of a supported internship is a transition to sustained and paid employment.

Difference between a supported internship and a traineeship or apprenticeship

Supported internships and traineeships are work-based study programmes that aim to support young people into employment. Apprenticeships are paid jobs that include off-the-job training.

Supported internships are specifically for young people with an EHC plan, and as such, they are expected to require a different level of support compared to a trainee or apprentice. They will have a job coach to support them in their workplace learning.

Supported interns are expected to need a longer programme than a trainee. Traineeships usually last between 6 weeks and 6 months with the aim of progressing people to an apprenticeship or employment as quickly as possible. Supported internships last for at least 6 months, and up to a year.

There are no entry or completion requirements for supported internships, and each learning provider will work with their supported interns to develop a personalised programme that meets their needs and provides progression and stretch.

Benefits of offering supported internships

Offering supported internships to young people with EHC plans, can help learning providers to:

- offer a positive progression route to employment from their existing provision in order to support young people with SEND into paid, sustainable work
- evidence that their provision is personalised and outcome-focused, in line with Ofsted expectations
- demonstrate their responsiveness to the full range of learners in the local community
- address the issue of 'learner churn' or 'revolving door syndrome', where learners complete one programme and re-enrol on another programme at the same level, rather than achieving positive progression
- show their commitment to equality and diversity

The Children and Families Act 2014 required local authorities to work in co-production with children and young people with SEND and their parents and carers to develop a Local Offer of the services they expect to be available. This means that local authorities must find out what children, young people and parents want from the Local Offer. The Local Offer sets out the range of services available and supported internships are expected to be a key part of this.

Planning and designing supported internships

Key principles

Education providers are free to design their supported internship programme to fit their local circumstances and to meet the needs of their learners. However, we have set out the following principles, which should be followed.

Principle 1

A significant majority of the supported intern's time is spent at the employer's premises in a work placement. Whilst at the employer, the young person will be expected to comply with real job conditions, such as timekeeping, shift patterns and dress code.

Principle 2

Supported interns follow a personalised study curriculum alongside their time at the employer, including relevant aspects of English and maths.

This will be a bespoke package that is delivered by the provider and should support their progression to paid employment. It should give the supported intern the opportunity to reflect on their learning journey.

Principle 3

Job coaches are central to the study programme and provide support to both the young person and employer. They should be trained in line with the [national occupational standards for supported employment \(https://www.base-uk.org/nos\)](https://www.base-uk.org/nos).

Principle 4

The primary goal of the programme for the young person is paid employment. Work placements must work for both the young person and the employer.

For the young person, the job must fit with their vocational profile, contribute to their long-term career goal and be flexible enough to address barriers where necessary.

For the employer, they should meet a real business need. The employer should be committed to supporting the young person towards paid employment.

Laying the foundations for a successful supported internship

Successful completion of a supported internship should lead to paid employment, and therefore the ceasing of the EHC plan. It is therefore important that the supported internship follows on from high-quality education provision with a focus on preparation for employment, including tailored advice and guidance, and prior experience of the world of work.

The statutory [careers guidance \(https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/careers-guidance-provision-for-young-people-in-schools\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/careers-guidance-provision-for-young-people-in-schools) sets out that all young people in secondary school get a programme of careers advice and guidance that is stable, structured and delivered by individuals with the right skills and experience. This includes those with special educational needs and disabilities. We recognise the importance of work placements in supporting all young people to prepare for employment.

The [SEND code of practice \(https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/send-code-of-practice-0-to-25\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/send-code-of-practice-0-to-25) explicitly states that all children and young people with SEND should be prepared for adulthood and that this preparation should start early. This includes preparing for employment, but also for:

- independent living, including choice and control over:
 - housing options
 - good health in adult life
- participating in society, including:
 - having friends and supportive relationships
 - contributing to the local community

For this to happen, there needs to be an explicit focus on preparation for adulthood within the EHC plan from year 9 annual reviews onwards.

Key planning considerations and delivery models

This section focuses on the key issues providers will need to think through when shaping the supported internship programme.

Length of programme

A supported internship normally lasts for at least 6 months, and up to a year. Providers will not be penalised if supported interns complete a supported internship earlier than originally planned to take up paid employment.

The first supported internship principle requires interns to spend a substantial majority of their learning time in the workplace.

Number of placements and employer involvement

The number of work placements and the number of employers involved can vary for each supported internship. Providers can operate a variety of models to fit their local circumstances, as long as they meet the [4 principles](#). Ideally, the work placement will be with an offsite employer.

Providers should agree the start and end dates of the placements with the employer, as well as whether the young person will be available during the holidays.

A supported intern can rotate between work placements. This could mean a provider works with a single, large employer who can offer internships to several young people by rotating them between different placements. Or supported interns can move from a placement with one employer to a placement at a different employer. Supported interns can also stay in a single placement, with one employer, which may be developed and extended over the period of the supported internship.

A key consideration for providers should be matching the needs of the intern to a suitable employer and placement. Whatever your model, it is about securing work placements of substantial duration and that are appropriate for the needs of the supported interns, who spend the majority of their time with the employer.

A personalised study curriculum

The second supported internship principle requires providers to offer supported interns a personalised study curriculum outside their workplace, which should start from the beginning of the study programme. This learning is most valuable and best engages interns when it:

- clearly complements their learning in the workplace
- is personalised to their specific needs and aspirations
- supports them to achieve paid sustained employment

Learning will typically include employability skills and, as per the 16 to 19 condition of funding, must include study towards English and maths qualifications at the appropriate level for the individual. Some students with EHC plans are exempt from the condition of funding. This must be assessed and agreed by the provider. These students should still have appropriate and relevant literacy and numeracy in their study programme.

Off-the-job employability learning may also include specific areas of vocational learning that have been identified by employers as increasing the supported intern's employability in a specific sector. This may include small qualifications in areas such as food hygiene, health and safety, lifting and handling, or pesticide handling. It can also focus on improving independence and teamwork skills.

Providers should also utilise this time to complete any actions that would enable supported interns to take up employment on completion, such as setting up a bank account or applying for a passport. Off-the-job employability learning can be delivered at the employer, a community venue or at the learning provider.

Learning outside the workplace can also enable supported interns to come together and build up a group identity and this peer support helps to prevent them from feeling isolated in their separate workplaces. This can also be a good opportunity for interns to reflect on their learning journey as they progress in their internship.

Effective ways of ensuring that the personalised study curriculum complements workplace learning include:

- responding to employer requests for specific skills to be addressed
- involving the job coach in some of the planning and delivery of the non-workplace learning
- running workshops based on issues and challenges that have arisen at work
- offering tutorial sessions in which learners can reflect on progress in the workplace and help identify learning needs

Supported employment agencies

Some learning providers may also choose to engage external agencies, such as supported employment agencies, to support the delivery of their programme. Supported employment agencies can provide both employer engagement and liaison and job coaching services.

Learning providers who have entered into a partnership with a supported employment agency do so for a number of reasons including:

- access to trained, experienced job coaches with established sources of support
- access to the supported employment agency's existing employer network
- the ability to buy in just the coaching hours needed and hence keep down costs
- the flexibility to respond to the varying need for job coaching (for example, high need at the beginning of a programme to support multiple, simultaneous starts)

Supported employment agencies may also be able to offer support to interns after their internship.

Staffing and job coaching

Staffing

Providers need to ensure that all staff share a can-do attitude and a strong belief in the young people's ability and right to work. This enables the team to engage with and inspire supported interns and their families to aspire to paid work and demonstrate to employers the value of these young people in their paid workforce.

The supported internship team should have a designated member of the senior leadership team with responsibility for the programme, to ensure that they are properly resourced, trained and supported.

Providers will need to ensure that all core functions are met by their supported internship team to provide effective support for young people during their internships.

These functions include, but are not limited to:

- coordination, for example:
 - employer engagement and liaison

- liaison with parents, carers or agencies
- administrative roles such as:
 - record keeping
 - learner tracking
 - supporting Access to Work applications and related processes
- job coaching including:
 - mentoring
 - in-work support
 - job matching
 - progress reviews
- out-of-work employability learning from a tutor or learning support assistant

The job coach

The core role of the job coach is to provide tailored support to both the supported intern and employers so that the young person can make a positive progression to paid employment. It is a distinct role within the team that requires specialised training. Job coaches should be trained in supported employment and systematic instruction, a structured approach to teaching decision-making and new skills to people with intellectual disabilities

The job coach will support the intern to learn from, develop in and maintain their supported internship work placement.

The job coach will support the employer to offer meaningful work placements that match the skills and needs of interns, adapting roles and tasks where possible and appropriate. They will also help employers to develop their confidence in employing people with a disability.

[Access to Work funding](#) is available for job coach support, to support interns directly in their work placements. Where job coaches are also involved in the pre-placement activity and off-the-job learning, this activity should be funded using study programme funds (or high needs funding, if appropriate).

Pre-work placement activity

The pre-work placement activity is best delivered by job coaches, given their training. This work falls under the following categories:

- [vocational profiling](#) and assessment
- sourcing potential employers and identifying possible internship placements
- creating productive links between the intern and employer through job analysis, job matches, negotiating and 'carving' job roles^{[\[footnote 1\]](#)}
- practical support such as sourcing and gathering relevant documentation for work, understanding the dress code and workplace culture

- helping interns to sort out travel arrangements (for example, planning routes or getting bus passes) and accompanying them on visits to the workplace prior to starting a job

Workplace support

The support a job coach provides for a supported intern in the workplace includes:

- learning the job role in readiness for training the supported intern, and attending workplace inductions
- training the supported intern to master tasks by breaking them down and applying systematic instruction techniques
- checking supported interns' understanding of tasks and re-phrasing or repeating employer instructions when necessary
- producing visual or written aids (for example, a step-by-step task list) and ensuring any assistive technology is provided
- encouraging supported intern self-assessment and reflection as part of target-setting, monitoring and reviewing progress
- modelling workplace behaviours
- mentoring and confidence-building, including supporting interns to try out new ways to do things if they are not successful at first
- negotiating an increase in responsibilities or new activities
- trouble-shooting or advocating for supported interns when things go wrong
- identifying skills development needs and either addressing them or referring to other staff
- if the need for support tapers off, regular workplace visits and observation of supported interns

Support for employers

A job coach can support an employer by:

- explaining a supported intern's strengths, support needs and successful communication strategies
- providing information about a particular condition or impairment and advising on reasonable adjustments
- suggesting appropriate ways to explain tasks, developing supporting accessible resources of use to the wider workforce
- introducing the supported intern to their colleagues and offering colleagues advice on how to best support and include the intern
- being a first point of call if issues or problems arise and negotiating solutions
- identifying additional or more challenging tasks or roles that a supported intern could take on
- ensuring supported interns are on task and meeting workplace standards and expectations (for example, time-keeping and attendance)

Supporting positive progression

During the course of the supported internship, the job coach plays an important role in helping the supported intern to secure paid employment or meaningful progression by:

- negotiating opportunities for paid employment with the employer providing internship
- where that is not possible, supporting interns with job searches and signposting to other work opportunities
- supporting job applications, including CV development and revisions
- helping interns prepare for and accompanying them to job interviews
- signposting interns to other services (for example, Access to Work or local supported employment services) and if necessary, liaising with these agencies

Recruiting and engaging supported interns

Eligibility

To be eligible for a supported internship, a young person must be aged between 16 and 24 and have an education health and care plan.

Suitability

Supported interns should have already experienced the world of work through their careers provision in secondary and post-16 education. They should have a strong motivation to work and want to spend the majority of their time in the workplace. Parents and carers sharing their aspirations for employment is also an important factor.

During the course of the programme, providers can work on:

- raising parental and carer aspirations
- parents and carers understanding of what the young person can achieve
- removing barriers such as concerns about family income loss

The section on [working with parents and carers](#) provides more details.

Young people should also be reassured that full support will be available to them to help them succeed on the programme.

Recruitment and engagement practices

Providers need to work closely with the following key partners:

- local SEND employment forums (also known as supported internship forums)
- other learning providers such as neighbouring 16+ providers and feeder schools

- parent and carer groups
- progression partners such as:
 - Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) advisors
 - adult services
 - the Disability Employment Advisor at Jobcentre Plus

Local authorities should ensure that the supported internship programme is clearly described as an option within their Local Offer, so young people are aware of this pathway to employment.

Early discussion of supported internships as a pathway allows for preparation and learning of essential skills that increase the likelihood of a successful internship, such as independent travel. When speaking to prospective supported interns and discussing the course with parents and carers, providers will need to:

- determine the young person's commitment to achieving employment
- make it clear that they will be required to comply with workplace conditions, for example:
 - attendance
 - time-keeping
 - appropriate workplace behaviours
 - dress code

Providing support to interns

The high level of individualised support provided to supported interns is a key distinguishing feature of the supported internship programme. The amount and nature of the support provided will differ from one supported intern to the next, depending on their needs. However, as a general principle, the support provided should enable the supported intern to be as independent as possible.

The level of support required may change if:

- there is a change in the supported intern's responsibilities
- they move to another role as part of a rotation
- other factors in the workplace change, for example, a new manager, colleagues or rota
- there is a change in their personal circumstances

Most supported interns will need intensive support at the start of their supported internship, decreasing over time as the supported intern becomes more confident in the workplace.

For many supported interns, direct job coach support may have been withdrawn altogether in the latter stages of their supported internship and they will be successfully supported by their line manager and colleagues. In these cases, providers can consider supporting interns into paid employment earlier, rather than keeping them on the programme.

For other supported interns, formal support may always be needed and it will be a case of reducing that to the minimal level required by the young person in order to do their job effectively.

The job coach will normally be the key provider of support to interns, although learning support staff, personal care staff and professionals with specific expertise (such as an interpreter, counsellor or speech and language therapist) may also be providing complementary forms of support. Supported interns may also need support in the form of specialist equipment, including assistive technology that may reduce their need for support from job coaches or other people.

Examples of some of the [different kinds of support provided by job coaches](#) are available.

Reviewing progress and support needs

Providers should operate a formal review process to check whether the:

- supported intern is making progress in their job role
- supported intern is increasing their employability and independence skills
- support package is appropriate
- the supported internship placement continues to meet the supported intern's and employer's requirements

Progress checks should happen at regular intervals and involve all the key partners:

- the intern
- the employer
- the job coach
- relevant provider staff

It can also be helpful to invite parents and carers to participate in a review, with the supported intern's permission.

Findings from a progress check can help providers and interns to:

- recognise and celebrate progress and achievement
- identify skills that they need to work on
- identify barriers to progress and work out together how to address them
- reshape the support package (to include different support strategies or to reduce or increase support)
- negotiate new responsibilities at work for the supported intern
- identify if further health and social care support is needed to support their placement
- help parents and carers understand how they can support their young person

Working with parents and carers

As the supported interns will be approaching adulthood or already be young adults, providers should seek their permission to involve their parents and carers.

It is important that parent or carer involvement is not perceived by the young people as undermining their independence or diminishing their role in the decision-making process, as set out in the [SEND code of practice](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/send-code-of-practice-0-to-25) (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/send-code-of-practice-0-to-25>).

If you are concerned that the young person lacks the capacity to make all or some decisions for themselves, you should speak to the local authority's SEND team in accordance with the Mental Capacity Act 2005.

At the start of the programme

Parents and carers can be involved, with the supported intern's agreement, from the start of their programme.

Inviting them to participate at the engagement and recruitment stage can help ensure they understand that the primary aim of the programme is to find paid employment.

Providers can hold open evenings, invite parents and carers in for sessions at the provider or even arrange home visits. This gives providers the chance to refer parents and carers to other agencies or sources of information for benefits eligibility advice if this is a concern for them.

Parents and carers can also be invited to discussions in the induction and initial assessment stage, where they can set out their hopes and ambitions for their young person.

During the programme

Throughout the programme, parents and carers can be kept informed, with the young person's permission, of the young person's progress. This could be through a formal review process or more informal communication.

Towards a positive progression

Parents and carers can sometimes offer support in job search and application and interview preparation.

Where a young person has not been able to gain paid employment following an internship or where they need continued in-work support, they, and their parents and carers if appropriate, should be informed about agencies that can provide further support. Providers can broker meetings where appropriate.

Working with employers

Successful internship programmes are dependent on the learning provider working in partnership with one or more employers across a number of key stages:

- engagement with and gaining the commitment of employers
- job matching, including job carving
- induction and 'settling in' (including finding a workplace mentor)
- securing sustainable paid employment for the supported intern

Engagement and recruitment of employers

Effective employer engagement is a key success factor in establishing a supported internship programme. Promoting the business case of supported internships to employers is critical to securing their engagement.

Resources are available that set out the evidence base relating to the benefits of employing disabled people that can help conversations with employers as part of the engagement process, for example, DWP's guidance on [employing disabled people and people with health conditions](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/employing-disabled-people-and-people-with-health-conditions/employing-disabled-people-and-people-with-health-conditions) (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/employing-disabled-people-and-people-with-health-conditions/employing-disabled-people-and-people-with-health-conditions>).

Other successful strategies for targeting employers include:

- working with employers who already have a relationship with the college and extending that to include supported internships
- engagement via local supported employment forums
- identifying employers who have experience of working with people with SEND, or who are Disability Confident employers
- working in partnership with other learning providers and liaising within their own organisation to share the load and to prevent the same employers from being approached repeatedly
- approaching employer groups (for example, through presenting at an existing meeting) and using provider membership on existing groups
- setting up business breakfasts
- creating and distributing marketing material to promote supported internships
- once the supported internship programme is established, drawing on success stories - this can include inviting employers to meet interns who are now employed and employers who have benefitted from taking part

It is also helpful to be prepared to address an employer's potential concerns, some of which may be based on misunderstandings about employing people with disabilities. Sharing all insights gained through good vocational profiling of the young person with the employer is helpful here.

Employer engagement is often a 2-tier process, where the learning provider begins by securing the interest and willingness to be involved from a wide range of employers before negotiating specific internships for particular young people.

Job matching

Key to the success of an individual internship is the business of getting the right young person into the right work placement with the right employer.

Job matching enables providers to ensure that the individual supported intern is placed in a job role that matches their abilities, interests and ambitions in a working environment that suits their needs. Successful job matching relies on the effective vocational profiling of the young person as well as thorough job analysis of the potential role. This process is usually [undertaken by the job coach](#).

Vocational profiling

Vocational profiling is a young-person centred approach to gathering information specifically related to work. It is a way of understanding what a young person's experience, skills, abilities, interests, aspirations and needs are to support them to find a job. It is an active process that involves:

- observation of the young person in different environments
- supportive conversations
- bringing in information from a variety of sources and perspectives

Vocational profiling will identify areas for development as well as the support a young person may need in the workplace. It also identifies any financial factors that need consideration, such as travel costs or workplace adjustments.

Preparing for Adulthood has guidance on [creating a vocational profile](https://www.preparingforadulthood.org.uk/downloads/person-centred-planning/vocational-profile.htm) (<https://www.preparingforadulthood.org.uk/downloads/person-centred-planning/vocational-profile.htm>).

Job analysis

Job analysis will include:

- an investigation of the job description
- understanding the tasks involved
- understanding the workplace context such as:
 - the extent to which a role is customer-facing
 - what interactions with colleagues are required
 - the physical environment
 - the workplace culture

Providers will need to use their findings from the job analysis and vocational profiling to determine the fit between a specific job role and an individual. This may

involve an element of job carving, whereby the learning provider works with the employer to shape a role for a particular individual which is suited to their strengths with consideration of reasonable adjustments that may be needed. This process will result in greater productivity, ability to offer more flexibility to other staff or to free them up from tasks they are ill-suited to.

Providers should assure themselves that work placements:

- are high-quality
- offer sufficient hours
- provide the supported intern with opportunities to develop the skills needed to progress into paid employment

Induction and settling in

The job coach should agree an induction and settling in period to the workplace, where both the supported intern and employer are offered extensive support. It is often appropriate to begin the induction period before a supported intern formally starts their work placement.

Induction activities can include:

- a visit by the supported intern with a job coach to show them around the work environment
- face-to-face meetings between employer, college staff and job coach to discuss the structure of the programme and the needs of the individual supported intern (with or without the intern present)
- the supported intern attending the workplace to shadow a colleague in a similar job role for 1 or 2 days
- the employer's standard induction process for all staff, adapted to ensure accessibility if needed

The job coach will have to ensure that all induction and training is accessible for the supported intern. They may support the intern through a training programme led by the employer or undertake the training themselves and devise an approach to deliver it to the supported intern.

During this induction period, the job coach will also play an important role in negotiating between the employer and supported intern if any 'teething problems' occur.

While any reasonable adjustments will have been determined at the job matching stage, the job coach may need to provide the employer with support in implementing these in the first few weeks of a placement. This also provides the opportunity for the job coach to support the intern's colleagues and manager to understand the needs and abilities of the supported intern.

Job coaches should remind employers of any other expectations - such as a monthly contribution to a progress review and employer-specific health and safety

briefings - during the first few weeks, and ensure processes are in place from the start.

During the supported internship

Employers will be supported by the learning provider throughout the supported internship.

Employers should be involved in reflecting on a supported intern's progress, both informally through conversations with a job coach and by more formal contributions to a review process.

Supporting the development of the supported intern is a shared responsibility between staff from the learning provider, including the job coach, and the employer and relies on effective communication.

Job coaches may need to negotiate with employers where they feel that a supported intern needs new challenges and could be offered greater responsibilities. Equally, it may be necessary for a job coach to agree on a reduced or different role for a supported intern where appropriate. Employers are encouraged to flag learning opportunities that would enable the supported intern to extend their range of responsibilities.

Securing employment for the intern

The primary goal of a supported internship is to secure paid employment for the supported intern. This may be with the host employer if a suitable vacancy is available. However, if this is not possible, host employers can still play an important part in helping a supported intern to achieve employment elsewhere.

Positive actions an employer can take include:

- using contact and networks to recommend a supported intern to other businesses with vacancies
- providing supported interns with references
- offering mock interviews
- keeping an intern's details on file and inviting them to interview when future vacancies arise

Achieving positive progression

Achieving sustainable paid employment for the supported intern is the primary goal of a supported internship.

While soft skills and independence development are welcome gains, where paid employment with the host employer is not achieved, the provider should support the young person to an alternative destination, and ideally paid employment.

Providers should build in time throughout a supported internship to ensure a positive transition occurs.

Planning for progression: recruitment

Providers should plan early for a positive outcome by:

- recruiting suitable interns who understand that the goal is paid, sustained employment
- selecting employers and placements that have the real possibility of leading to paid employment, as far as possible
- tackling low aspirations early, including those of parents and carers
- using vocational profiling and job analysis techniques to identify jobs that draw on the strengths of a supported intern
- appointing staff, including job coaches who are trained in supported employment, who believe in the programme and its values, including the right and ability of disabled people to work
- drawing on the employers' experience to understand the key skills and knowledge a supported intern will need to secure paid employment in their sector

Planning for progression: during the internship

Providers should build in time throughout a supported internship to ensure a positive transition occurs by:

- developing skills within the supported internship that are transferable to a variety of job roles and work settings
- tailoring the support so that the supported intern can gradually grow more independent
- identifying and addressing potential barriers to achieving employment, with a focus on resilience and communication skills
- identifying other agencies that can offer continuing support or funding to help supported interns maintain paid employment

Planning for progression: moving into employment

Providers should work with the supported intern to ensure that a transition plan is in place so that each young person has a positive progression route planned.

This will include:

- facilitating a conversation with the host employer to establish if there is a suitable vacancy and how to apply for that
- developing the skills supported interns need to apply for jobs, including:
 - job searching

- building CVs
- filling in application forms
- interview skills
- practising these skills

Funding

Supported internships are funded as a 16 to 19 study programme, and as such the main source of funding is from the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA).

Supported interns can also apply for Access to Work funding to cover the costs of practical support in the workplace.

High needs funding arrangements may also apply where the support costs of establishing and running the supported internship in line with this guidance exceed £6000 (avoiding double funding with Access to Work). Local authorities have the prime responsibility for planning and commissioning funding for high needs students. Further information on the [funding system for 16 to 25 high needs students](https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/high-needs-funding) (<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/high-needs-funding>) is available.

It is essential that learning providers currently delivering supported internships, and those considering doing so, discuss their plans at the earliest opportunity with commissioning local authorities. This will enable authorities to:

- agree and plan their budgets for young people with high needs
- consider changes in demand for and supply of new and emerging provision

Local authorities can record supported internship participation on their SEN2 data return.

Education and Skills Funding Agency funding

A supported internship is a full-time study programme, with a substantial work placement as the core aim.

To attract ESFA funding, the provider needs to timetable at least 540 planned learning hours.

The [English and maths condition of funding](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/16-to-19-funding-maths-and-english-condition-of-funding) (<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/16-to-19-funding-maths-and-english-condition-of-funding>) applies to students on supported internships. Providers should ensure study towards an English and maths qualification at the appropriate level is included, such as:

- GCSE
- Functional Skills qualification level 2
- an accepted stepping stone qualification

If a student is exempt from the English and maths condition of funding, they should still pursue appropriate literacy and numeracy.

Providers should indicate on the individualised learning record (ILR) that the young person is on a supported internship programme.

Access to Work

[Access to Work \(https://www.gov.uk/access-to-work\)](https://www.gov.uk/access-to-work) is a discretionary grant scheme delivered by DWP which can assist in paying for practical support to enable disabled people or those with health conditions to overcome workplace barriers.

Access to Work can pay for things such as:

- specialist equipment
- adaptations to equipment and workplace
- a support worker or job coach
- communication support
- additional travel costs of getting to work if someone is unable to use public transport or drive themselves
- disability awareness training for employers about the employee's specific condition

For supported interns, this means Access to Work can fund:

- job coaches
- assistance to travel to and from work if the intern cannot use public transport or drive themselves
- specialist equipment for the intern to use at work

Access to Work awards are tailored to the needs of the individual, which means awards will vary depending on the supported interns' circumstances.

How to apply

Supported interns (or their learning provider on their behalf) can get an application form for supported internships by calling the Access to Work helpline number on 0800 121 7479.

It is important all applications are signed, allowing permission for the supported internship team to arrange for a support plan to be sent to the learning provider to complete and return.

Where the supported intern has a DWP appointee, the appointee will need to sign the application form.

Completed paper applications must be signed by the supported intern or their DWP appointee and sent to:

Access to Work
Operational Support Unit
Harrow Jobcentre Plus
Mail Handling Site A
Wolverhampton
WV98 1JE

16 to 19 Bursary fund

The [16 to 19 Bursary Fund \(https://www.gov.uk/1619-bursary-fund\)](https://www.gov.uk/1619-bursary-fund) is to support 16 to 19-year-olds who are the most financially disadvantaged and those who most need help with the costs of staying in education. Students aged over 19 can apply for the discretionary bursary if they have an EHC plan.

Providers can use the bursary as a source of funding to help meet costs for travel, meals and equipment for young people participating in supported internships.

Free meals for disadvantaged young people

To be eligible for a free meal, young people must have enrolled in further education provision funded via ESFA.

Exactly what an institution provides for the free meal is a decision for the individual institution. The expectation is that a meal, voucher or credit will be provided to eligible students. Where this is not practical, institutions will be able to offer cash in certain exceptional circumstances.

Funding for free meals is allocated directly to institutions. More information is in the [free meals guidance \(https://www.gov.uk/guidance/free-meals-in-further-education-funded-institutions-guide-for-the-2021-to-2022-academic-year\)](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/free-meals-in-further-education-funded-institutions-guide-for-the-2021-to-2022-academic-year).

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1. [Job carving \(http://base-uk.org/employers-recruitment-jobcarving\)](http://base-uk.org/employers-recruitment-jobcarving) is a term for tailoring a job so it is suitable for a particular worker and their skills. This approach generates employment opportunities for young people with SEND and can lead to improved productivity for the employer.

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