



# FUELLING FUTURES

## Employer toolkit

Working with  
special educational needs  
and disability (SEND) schools.

THE CAREERS &  
ENTERPRISE  
COMPANY

nationalgrid

# FUELLING FUTURES



**We would like to thank:**  
Mencap, Morethan7 and Mark McGill  
for their contributions.

This toolkit is a practical guide to help employers provide workplace experiences that include supported internships and supported apprenticeships for young people with SEND. It also includes advice to help these young people with their transition into employment.



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# PREPARED

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Corporate Property



**At The Careers & Enterprise Company, we want every young person to feel inspired and prepared for the world of work.**

We know that all young people face challenges in finding employment, but for young people with special educational needs and disabilities, finding a job is even more complicated. Just 6% are in paid employment despite the fact that 65% want to work\*.

National Grid's work in this space is world class. We are delighted to partner with them on this toolkit. It explores the many ways businesses, schools and colleges can work together to help prepare young people with SEND for the world of work – from providing enterprise opportunities in schools to creating supported internships in the workplace.

We hope this toolkit provides businesses, schools and colleges with support and inspiration to provide these crucial opportunities for young people.

**Claudia Harris**  
Chief Executive  
The Careers & Enterprise Company



**WE WANT  
EVERY YOUNG  
PERSON TO  
FEEL INSPIRED**



\*Health & Social Care Information Centre, Annual Report 2015/16

# EVERYONE CAN REACH THEIR FULL POTENTIAL



## FOREWORD



At National Grid, we are building a workforce that meets the needs of our business, and also helps to create a fairer and more inclusive society where everyone can reach their full potential.

We established our “EmployAbility – Let’s work together” programme in 2013 and offer supported internships to young people with learning disabilities; it has transformed young people’s lives, engaged our workforce and brought real benefits to the company.

After completing the programme, **60%** of our interns have gone into paid employment, compared with a national average of only **6%**.

I would encourage all employers to consider how they can support young people with special education needs and disabilities to realise their full potential.

**John Pettigrew**  
Chief Executive  
National Grid





Employing someone with a disability doesn't just benefit the person, it also benefits the employer.

By hiring people with learning disabilities, employers can access the widest pool of talent and be more inclusive. This can help the business engage with a wider consumer base and reflect the communities they serve. People with disabilities can be skilled, loyal (staying with employers longer than most employees) and hardworking, with an enthusiasm that can be infectious. 77% of the public think more highly of companies\* that make an extra effort to employ people with a disability.

Working in a diverse team can also be good for other employees and increase their morale and commitment, as well as overcome any misconceptions they have about people with disabilities. Overall performance has been known to improve in teams employing someone with a learning disability.



**1 IN 50**  
people in the UK have a learning disability.

Source: Mencap



**JUST 6%**  
of people with a learning disability are in paid employment.

Source: Mencap



**YET MORE THAN 65%**

of people with a learning disability want to, and are able to work.

Source: HM Government, Valuing Employment Now



**11 MILLION PEOPLE**

in the UK live with a disability.

Source: Office for Disability Issues

# BUSINESS CASE AND BENEFITS

\*Charity Awareness Monitor, September 2004

# WHAT GOOD LOOKS LIKE



The following pages give a brief summary of what works to improve careers provisions for young people with SEND and provides examples of possible activities



The Gatsby Benchmarks give schools a framework for improving careers provision, based on what works for students. This toolkit is a practical guide to support ‘encounters with employers and employees’ (Gatsby benchmark five) and ‘experiences of workplaces’ (Gatsby benchmark six).

The aim of the toolkit is to encourage employers to work with SEND schools and colleges in the same way that many already work with mainstream schools, offering employer encounters and workplace experiences, contributing to the transition to employment for young people with SEND.

The Careers & Enterprise Company is building an evidence base into what works to improve young people’s careers provision and in October 2017 launched a new report called ‘Transition programmes for young adults with special education needs and disabilities (SEND): What works?’

The report makes five recommendations:

1. Start young and maintain support across the life course/until the young person is established in the labour market.
2. Provide encounters and experience with employers, working people and workplaces.
3. Ensure access to support and relevant developmental activities (this can include career guidance, teacher support, agency support, specific skills training).
4. Involve families in the transition.
5. Ensure that career and employability learning and support continues in the workplace.





**National Grid’s successful “EmployAbility – Let’s work together” programme is an employee-led programme for young people with SEND that aligns to these five recommendations. It is a tried and tested model to create successful pathways into employment for young people with SEND and is a great precursor to developing supported apprenticeships.**

Supported internships are for young people (aged 16-24) with learning difficulties and/or disabilities – a statement of educational needs, a learning difficulty or an education, health and care plan (EHCP) – who want to move into employment and need extra support to do so.

National Grid’s programme began in 2013 as a partnership between the company and Round Oak School, a special educational needs school, in Warwick. Its purpose is to raise aspirations and significantly improve the likelihood of a young person with learning disabilities achieving paid employment through the provision of supported work placements.

National Grid’s approach aligns with the five recommendations of ‘The Careers & Enterprise Company’s [SEND research](#).

- National Grid first got involved with just one local special educational needs school by running enterprise days with younger students.
- This was followed by one week’s work experience for the younger students and then supported internships for older students.
- National Grid works in partnership with the school’s careers leads, teachers and local employment support teams to deliver the best possible outcomes for the interns on the programme.
- Parents/carers are involved in the programme from the beginning.
- The interns also complete a BTEC qualification during their internships, as well as receiving support around job applications, CV writing and interview skills.

## Overview – Activities: Encounters with employers (for young people with SEND)

Gatsby Benchmark	Category	Activity	Description	Tips to help
5. Encounters with employers and employees	Awareness of local businesses	Presentation	An employee visits a school and delivers a presentation about their business, what they do and what types of roles they employ.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Think about aspects of your business that might interest the pupils.</li> <li>– Ask the school what would most help their students, are there any links that could be made to the curriculum?</li> </ul>
		Business game	An employee runs a business game or an activity that involves pupils making decisions/undertaking an activity that is relevant to their business.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– If you do not have anything to hand, think of a creative activity. For example, National Grid asks students to build an electricity pylon/tower or do an exercise that gets the students to think about their local area and what would need to be considered if a new gas pipeline was laid nearby.</li> </ul>
	Curriculum/preparing pupils for work	School senior leaders and teachers visit business	An employee hosts a visit to their business for school leaders/staff so that they have visibility of the types of roles and skills required and can consider whether they should adapt any aspects of the curriculum.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– It can be very helpful for teachers to understand what types of roles you employ and the skills that are required. For example, National Grid has found that whilst students may have excellent IT skills they have often not been trained in Excel.</li> </ul>
	Employer-delivered classroom learning	Employer-led career learning	An employee delivers a lesson(s) as part of the curriculum, making it relevant to business by using real examples.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– If possible, have a discussion with the teacher about what they are doing in the curriculum and try to find a link with something your business does. Making the curriculum ‘come alive’ is very helpful for both students and teachers.</li> </ul>
CV skills		CV writing	A business HR team visits the school and gives advice on how to write a CV.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– This could be your HR team or an expert from a recruitment agency. For example, National Grid’s business partner, Pertemps, has been actively involved in our programme and has provided coaching and tuition on CV writing.</li> <li>– It is also worth asking your HR/recruitment team how they approach disability recruitment and the level of flexibility they would show in reviewing CVs from candidates with learning disabilities.</li> </ul>

## Overview – Activities: Encounters with employers (for young people with SEND) continued

Gatsby Benchmark	Category	Activity	Description	Tips to help
5. Encounters with employers continued	Interview confidence	Mock interviews	Employees visit the school and demonstrate, by role play, an interview (good and bad). Undertake mock interviews with the pupils.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- This could be your HR team or an expert from a recruitment agency. National Grid's business partner, Pertemps, has been actively involved in our programme and has provided coaching and tuition on interview skills.</li> <li>- Interviews can be particularly challenging for a students with SEND. Help them to relax by building some fun into it.</li> <li>- If students are successful in getting an interview ask whether they can be accompanied by a job coach or teacher. Or, if they have any work experience, ask whether the interviewer is willing to see them in their workplace or internship.</li> </ul>
	Mentoring	Mentoring	School leader/teacher and business manager/employee form a mentoring relationship.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Teaching staff can feel isolated from the business world, so having the opportunity of perhaps even 1 hour a month to discuss matters with a mentor in a local company can be very helpful. The mentor will also gain value and the links may lead to a greater partnership between the school and business as mutual opportunities are explored.</li> </ul>
	Enterprise	Enterprise day	Employer supports pupils undertaking an activity to make a product that can be sold (in the business or externally).	<p>Think about what your business could do to support this:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Do you make any products or have any 'waste' products that could be used to make goods for a craft stall?</li> <li>- What happens to your used personal protective equipment – could it be recycled or rejuvenated by the pupils and sold?</li> <li>- Could your employee go to the school and help them make garden products like hanging baskets or soap which could then be sold in your office?</li> </ul>

## Overview – Activities: Encounters with employers (for young people with SEND) continued

Gatsby Benchmark	Category	Activity	Description	Tips to help
5. Encounters with employers continued	Enterprise continued	Enterprise activity (enduring)	Employer sponsors a school to undertake an ongoing enterprise activity (for example, horticulture, recycling etc.). Employer provides funding for a poly tunnel, for example, and/or volunteers to erect it, create a garden area etc.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Do you have any funds available in your business to support Corporate Social Responsibility initiatives or can you make gifts to local 'charities'? How could your local school make best use of this?</li> <li>- and can your employee help to install equipment, or create a new garden or sensory area?</li> </ul>
6. Experiences of workplaces	Workplace visits	Business visit	An employee hosts a visit to their office or operation and shows the pupils what they do.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Think about aspects of your business which will interest the pupils.</li> <li>- Ask the school what would most help their students, for example, are there any links that could be made to the curriculum?</li> </ul>
		1-2 week work experience	A pupil enters the workplace to experience the day to day role of an employee.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Partner an employee with a student for a day. The student will find it a real privilege.</li> <li>- Offer a range of activities including a tour of the workplace, as well as helping with specific tasks.</li> </ul>
		Work inspiration	Employers offer the opportunity for a group of students to spend a few days in their business undertaking games, activities and visits. Can be arranged by employee volunteers or as part of a graduate development programme etc.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- This can be organised by a small group of volunteers in your business. For example, National Grid's graduates organise this as part of their development programme.</li> <li>- This helps to expand the horizons of the students, many of whom may not have had the opportunity to visit a business before.</li> </ul>
	Workplace experience	Voluntary working	A pupil works for a local charity for a limited number of hours per week.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Charities are often very good at helping students with disabilities when approached.</li> </ul>
Part-time working		A pupil works a limited number of hours per week local to their home/school.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- This can be in a range of local businesses or retail, for example, coffee shops and garden centres, but do not limit it to just exploring these opportunities.</li> </ul>	

## Overview – Activities: Experiences of workplaces (for young people with SEND) continued

Gatsby Benchmark	Category	Activity	Description	Tips to help
6. Experiences of workplaces continued	Enterprise activity	School set up a business or retail enterprise on their site	A school establishes a business or retail activity that supports the school – e.g. an administration bureau or a coffee shop. Support or sponsorship sought from local business.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– This is an excellent way of helping students start the journey to job readiness.</li> <li>– Can your school run a coffee shop on the school premises?</li> <li>– Can the school pool administration activities like printing/copying in a way that involves the students taking responsibility? Can it be done at a linked facility so that the students actually leave the school premises to ‘go to work’ there, for even a few hours a week?</li> </ul>
		School set up a business or retail enterprise on their site to support the local community or businesses (Micro business)	A school establishes a business or retail activity that serves external customers – e.g. a print shop or uniform branding/embroidery etc. Can be supported by local employees/volunteers.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– There are lots of opportunities with the right idea and support.</li> <li>– Can you establish a retail operation selling crafts, hanging baskets, flowers, etc. (all of which have been made/grown at the school)?</li> </ul>
		School set up a business or retail enterprise offsite – in a local shopping centre or business park (Micro business)	A school establishes a business or retail activity offsite – e.g. sandwiches/baked potatoes unit on a business park, or a retail unit in a shopping centre (or for specific events like a fete, country show etc.). Can be supported by local employees/volunteers.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Do you have a local retail park nearby? Are there any vacant premises?</li> <li>– Can you identify a suitable location and then buy a used catering trailer from which to serve customers with sandwiches, pasties, cakes, coffee, tea, etc.? (all produce made by the students as much as possible).</li> </ul>
	Supported internship (small scale)	An employer, or group of employers, provides placements. Suited for pupils aged 16+	School/third sector provide job coach(es). Business provides placements of two or three months’ duration, which enable the students to develop confidence and job readiness skills.	<a href="#">See supported internship case studies in this toolkit</a>
	Supported internship	An employer, or group of employers provide placements over the whole of an academic year. Suited for pupils aged 17+	School/third sector provide job coach(es). Business provides 2 or 3 placements over the academic year with Level 1 BTEC curriculum delivered by school in the workplace. Enables the pupils to develop confidence, self-belief and job readiness skills.	<a href="#">See supported internship case studies in this toolkit</a>

## Overview – Activities: Experiences of workplaces (for young people with SEND) continued

Gatsby Benchmark	Category	Activity	Description	Tips to help
6. Experiences of workplaces continued	Job carving	Job carving	An employer identifies activities in the workplace that can be delivered by someone with SEND. Activities are grouped into a role, recruitment is targeted at SEND pupils and training is provided. Enables the employer to focus on other business priorities.	<a href="#">EmployAbility toolkit</a>
	Supported apprenticeship	An employer identifies roles which can be fulfilled by SEND pupils and offers an apprenticeship scheme with job coach support	An employer identifies roles that can be fulfilled by SEND pupils and offers a specifically designed apprenticeship scheme which leads, on successful completion, to employment with them. Enables the pupils to develop confidence, self-belief and job readiness skills.	<a href="#">Supported apprenticeship case study (Interserve) in this toolkit</a>

# ENCOUNTERS WITH EMPLOYERS AND EMPLOYEES



Encounters with employers and employees create opportunities for young adults that help to get them into employment. They are also one of the Gatsby Benchmarks (number 5) and a recommendation from the report Transition Programmes for Young Adults with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND): What Works?

Work experience, supported internships and supported apprenticeships are all ways of helping young people with SEND to move from education into employment. A young person who has four or more encounters with an employer is 86%\* less likely to be unemployed or not in education or training. More information can be found on [The Careers & Enterprise website](https://www.careersandenterprise.co.uk/enterprise-adviser-network).

## Interview skills

[National Grid case study](#)

## Enterprise activities

[Brookfields School case study](#)

[Addington School case study](#)

## Work experience

[Catcote Academy case study](#)

## Supported internships

[National Grid case study](#)

[Siemens case study](#)

[Amey case study](#)

[Yorkshire Water case study](#)

[Whitefriars case study](#)

Young people with SEND should have the opportunity to progress from a supported internship (which is completed while they are in full-time education) to a supported/inclusive apprenticeship and in some cases to an apprenticeship, without the need for support.

## Supported apprenticeships

[Interserve case study](#)



\*<https://www.careersandenterprise.co.uk/enterprise-adviser-network>

# BUSINESS ENTERPRISE



## 'Shuters' project – young entrepreneurs Addington School case study

### What is the 'Shuters' project?

The 'Shuters' project is a joint initiative between Wokingham Borough Council and Addington School that has been running since 2014.

A group of six further education students have taken responsibility for running the café at the borough council for one day a week under the supervision of school staff.

The young entrepreneurs make and sell a range of filled rolls, cakes and tray bakes, as well as serving and operating the till. The standard of service and the quality of food served is much appreciated by customers.

The students and staff work extremely hard and carry out various roles on a rota basis. Some students from a previous year group also mentor and support new students, which provides further opportunities for them to develop.



### What students learn from the project

The students need very good communication skills while serving customers and working together as a team. They develop literacy skills by following recipes, ordering food, following rotas and procedures. They develop numeracy skills when pricing their produce, using the till and calculating profit and takings. They also develop a real-life appreciation and understanding of health and safety issues, especially those associated with allergens.

The school believes that this project has helped their students to grow in confidence and develop independent work skills to add to their CVs. Students have also gained a Level 1 City & Guilds qualification in hospitality.



### What the students say

"I have found that it takes a lot of work to run a café but I have enjoyed it very much. It has made me think that I might like to work in a café in the future."

"I think that working in the café will look very good on my CV and I like tasting the produce. I have learned how to work the industrial dishwasher and how to talk to and serve the customers."

### What the customers say

"I think it's great! The young people are really friendly, helpful and the cakes taste great. It's just a shame it isn't every day!!"

"The lemon drizzle cake is amazing and I am very much looking forward to my ham roll at lunchtime – Thursdays may have to be my regular 'skip the diet' day."





LEARN

# SUPPORTED INTERNSHIPS



## National Grid – our ingredient for success

Finding new ways to inspire, recruit, retain and engage employees is vital for all businesses.

At National Grid, we want to share a ‘secret ingredient’ that is good for your business. It boosts employee engagement, raises your business profile, and provides you with trustworthy, reliable employees. It also provides excellent connections with your community.

The ingredient that can achieve all this is the impact of bringing young people with learning disabilities into your business.

Many of these students want to work, so can you imagine how appreciative, committed and loyal a young person is when offered a supported internship?

Nearly every business has roles that are suitable for a young person with a disability, which may free up employees to focus on other business priorities.

### Supported internships are good for your business because:

- young people with disabilities are loyal, committed employees;
- employee engagement rises – helping others brings the best out of people;
- customers are inspired and value what you contribute to their community;
- stakeholders view you favourably and your business reputation is increased;
- employees have increased disability confidence and disability awareness;
- there are more leadership and coaching skills opportunities; and
- you will discover skill levels that don’t exist in normal talent pools.



*“I developed a new level of respect for people with special needs and their abilities.”*



Our statistics tell their own story. **92%** of employee volunteers for EmployAbility stated in a survey that volunteering had contributed to their professional development. And **95%** said they felt more positive about National Grid. We have a **100%** retention rate for National Grid intern recruits.

**Now read on to find out how you can build a similar model in your own business and enjoy the benefits it can bring.**

# NATIONAL GRID'S ROADMAP TO SUPPORTED INTERNSHIPS



We started by offering young people with SEND short-term work experience opportunities in the workplace and enterprise opportunities at school. We then went on to offer supported internships and found this approach to be a highly effective way of supporting young people with SEND getting into the workplace.

Our 'EmployAbility – Let's work together' programme roadmap provides a tried-and-trusted way to set up your own supported internship programme.

It has three distinct phases:

- Planning – Content from the planning phase is included in this toolkit. This will help you get your supported internship programme off to the best possible start.
- Pre go-live – More details can be found on the [EmployAbility website](#) where we have developed a detailed toolkit that summarises the main activities.
- Post launch – More details can be found on the [EmployAbility website](#) where we have developed a detailed toolkit that summarises the main activities.

Visit [employabilityletsworktogether.com](https://employabilityletsworktogether.com) for guidance on pre go-live and post launch of running your own supported internship.

[Jump to Planning content](#)



The planning phase is absolutely vital to the long-term success of your programme. It's the point at which you can start to generate interest in, and knowledge about, the programme – do it well and you'll win the hearts and minds of your audience.

Our step-by-step guide covering the following topic areas:

[National Grid's model for supported internships](#)

[Finding an education partner](#)

[Building a relationship with your education partner](#)

[Enabling positive consequences with special schools](#)

[Seeing is believing](#)

[Senior leadership support](#)

[Checklist for delivering your plan](#)

Visit [employabilityletsworktogether.com](https://employabilityletsworktogether.com) for guidance on pre go-live and post launch phases.

## MODEL FOR SUPPORTED INTERNSHIPS



Alongside time with the employer, young people complete a personalised study programme, which includes the chance to study for substantial qualifications, if appropriate, as well as English and maths. They can also apply to the Department for Work & Pensions for an Access to Work fund. This can cover the additional support a young person may need for the in-work element of supported internships, examples are:

- job coaches;
- specialist equipment that a young person needs at the employer's premises; and
- any extra fares to work if the person is unable to use public transport.



### What are supported internships?

They are structured study and development programmes located at an employer's premises.

They are aimed at young people aged 16 to 24 who have a statement of special educational needs (SEN) or an education, health and care plan (EHCP).

Supported internships are unpaid – because the student is in full-time education – and last for a minimum of six months. Wherever possible, they support the young person to move into paid employment at the end of the programme.

# MODEL FOR SUPPORTED INTERNSHIPS



## Our core model

Our supported internship delivery model is based on a partnership approach between businesses and local SEN schools/colleges.

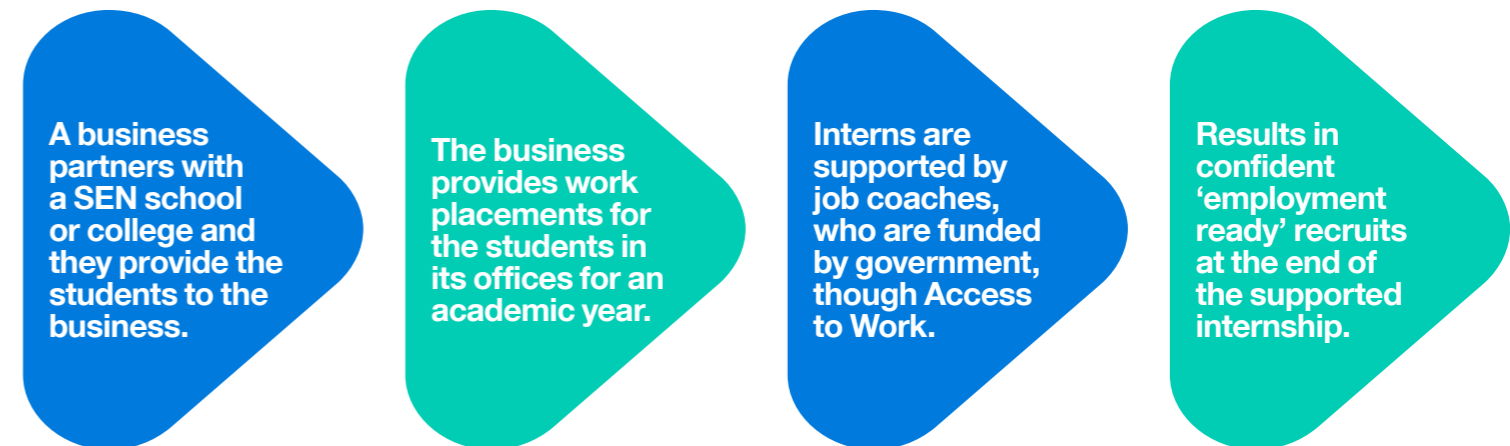
Financial support for job coaches, who provide individually tailored support to the interns, is provided by the Department for Work & Pensions through Access to Work funding.

We offer an 11-month internship with three placements that mirror school terms. Interns complete BTEC Work Skills and Functional Skills qualifications in the morning before attending their placements in the business, from 10:30am to 3pm.

We also have support from employee volunteers and strong partnerships with our supply-chain providers and local government employment support teams to help deliver the programme.



## How our supported internship model works



EmployAbility aims to help students gain confidence and build skills through worthwhile work placements, leading to permanent jobs. Interns discover new talents, build their confidence, develop social skills and overcome barriers. They're supported at every stage of the process – from school to eventually finding a job and beyond.

## Flexible model

We recognise that every company and every intern is different. So, while we have a model that we follow for each internship, it is very flexible. For instance, in a larger organisation there is likely to be an EmployAbility job coach for every three interns, but the model can be adapted for smaller companies so that one job coach can look after three interns in three different small organisations.

# FINDING AN EDUCATION PARTNER



that tend to have their own established work placement schemes, but don't discount local SEN colleges or mainstream colleges that have SEN provision.

Check that the school has a further education unit or a sixth form – interns will be students who are in their last year of education. This means when they finish their internships they will be ready for work; going back to school after a work placement could be seen as a step backwards for these young people.

The school should be state funded and have a well-defined careers agenda for the students. It's also important that there is a supportive and proactive leadership team with individuals fully committed to EmployAbility. Ideally, there will be someone who manages placements as part of their job – designated people within the school to liaise with makes the whole process much easier.

The Careers & Enterprise Company's Enterprise Adviser Network pairs business volunteers with schools/colleges and can offer support in developing relationships. Contact your local [Enterprise Coordinator](#) for support.

**Get information about schools**  
Visit [gov.uk](http://gov.uk) to search for educational establishments in England and Wales. You can search for schools near you.



## What to look for

A business interested in offering EmployAbility placements for students with learning difficulties needs a local education partner – a school or college – to work with.

Ideally, your partner school or college will be no more than 10 miles from your premises, so students will be able to get to work by themselves.

Look for a school that caters for young people with moderate learning difficulties, as they will be the most suited to the work placement scheme. EmployAbility usually works with schools

# BUILDING A RELATIONSHIP WITH YOUR EDUCATION PARTNER



It's important to gain a good understanding about your partner at an early stage. Find out about things like the size of the school or college, the age of the students, the range of learning difficulties, and how the students are supported.

For the school or college, this would mean learning about the size of the business, its industry sector and locations, its activities and the types of roles people have within the organisation.

This knowledge will prove enormously helpful to both partners when it comes to selecting the most appropriate interns for particular roles in the business. Where a school or college has partnerships with a number of businesses, it can even help match the right intern to the right business. This will help achieve the best outcome for all parties.



National Grid's EmployAbility model for supported internships is very much based on the development of a strong partnership between the school or college and the business.

For this model to be effective and sustainable, all partners should share the same ambitions and values. The relationship you build together should be founded on mutual trust and respect.

Taking this approach from the outset will help to make sure that your supported internship starts off on the right footing and will contribute to its success.



# BUILDING A RELATIONSHIP WITH YOUR EDUCATION PARTNER



## Getting to know each other

A successful partnership is based on strong personal relationships that are rooted in trust and can be developed through regular interactions between the school or college and the business. This will result in more students becoming aware of the programme and more employees volunteering to support it.

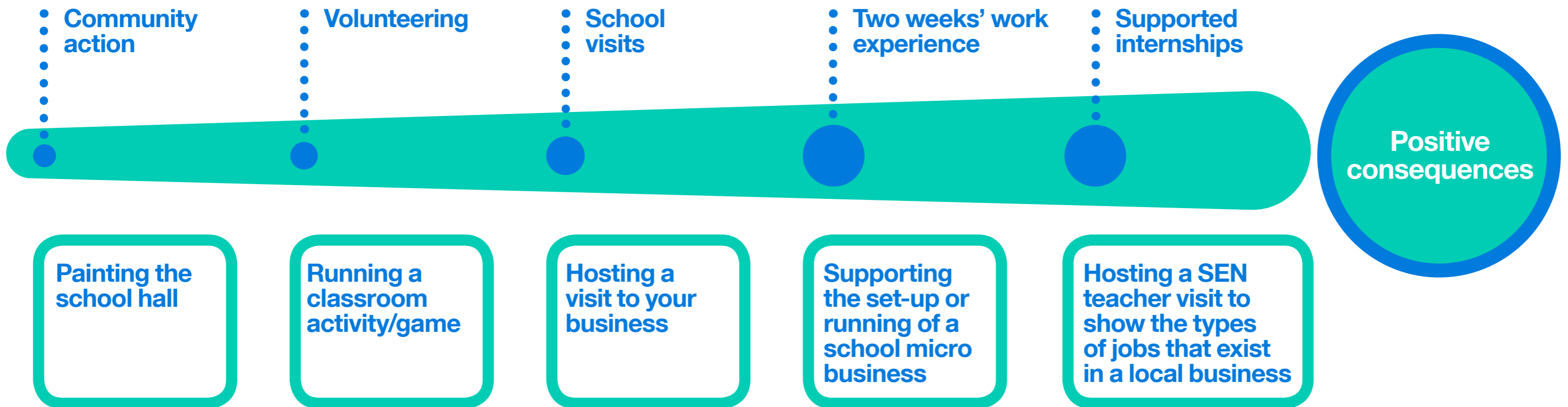
To get to know each other better we recommend that you run a series of 'ice-breaker' activities – some located at the school or college, and others at the business site.

Schools and colleges should include school curriculum and careers leads in these activities, as well as potential future interns. These activities provide a fantastic opportunity for employees who will be involved in the programme to meet up with school personnel and potential future interns.

Remember that any interaction between businesses and special schools is positive. If you are unable to provide supported internships, are you able to do small initiatives?

It can work well to start with a team-based 'community' activity, like painting school buildings, tidying up the school grounds or supporting an enterprise day.

# ENABLING POSITIVE CONSEQUENCES WITH SPECIAL SCHOOLS



# SEEING IS BELIEVING



**The best way to learn about the benefits of EmployAbility is to see it in action. Like other host companies running EmployAbility, we welcome visitors from schools and businesses who would like to talk to us and our intern students to find out how EmployAbility works.**

We started EmployAbility after an inspirational visit to Bath University Hospital, where students with disabilities were being given opportunities to work.

We were impressed by the fact that the young people were realising their potential and contributing to the success of the hospital.

We were so inspired that we wanted to offer our own supported internships to students with learning difficulties. We launched 'EmployAbility - Let's work together' in September 2013 and we hope that we can encourage you to join in too.

Many other companies, schools and colleges are now involved and have set up similar programmes. They are also happy to tell you about their experiences. The young interns will be equally pleased to tell you what a difference EmployAbility is making to their lives.

You can see for yourself how regular and meaningful work really benefits these young people, broadening their horizons and giving them confidence in themselves and in the future.

Work helps them see opportunities and possibilities for their future after school and learn skills that will be with them for life. They meet new people and enjoy becoming part of a team. You'll also see how businesses benefit; because EmployAbility matches young people with appropriate jobs, they are a real asset to the companies they work for.

# SEEING IS BELIEVING



## Arrange a visit

If you'd like to arrange a visit or find out more, email [box.employability@nationalgrid.com](mailto:box.employability@nationalgrid.com)

Links to The Careers & Enterprise Company videos:

[Programme overview](#)

[Schools](#)

[Employers](#)



*“We visited the National Grid office before setting up our scheme at Yorkshire Water. It was extremely useful to see the scheme working up close and meet some of the interns in person.”*

*Rebecca McDonnell, Head of Talent, Yorkshire Water*



If you're a business, depending on your geographic location, these school or college contacts could also be potential partners for your own supported internship programme. In fact, many of our partner schools and colleges are seeking additional new business partners, so they can offer more opportunities and a greater variety of internships to their students. Partnering with a school or college that already has experience of supported internships with other companies is usually easier than starting the programme from scratch.

# SENIOR LEADERSHIP SUPPORT



For businesses, senior leadership involvement in the programme will inspire employees to get involved and managers to consider offering placements and job opportunities to the interns.

The nature and degree of this high-profile support will of course vary from one senior leader to another. However, it often includes encouraging functions within the business to provide supported internships and host external stakeholder events, with people giving up their own personal time to talk to the interns about their job roles.

If you're considering embarking on a supported internship programme, why not take one of your senior managers or directors along with you to visit a business that already has a programme up and running?

This will allow them to see for themselves how the programme can transform young people's lives. In our experience, these opportunities often act as a catalyst to kick-starting a programme.



**Visible, senior-level backing for the supported internship programme from both the education and business partners is vital to the programme's long-term success.**

This support by senior leaders (including directors of the business) underlines the programme's importance to staff and students at the school or college, and to all employees at the business organisation.

It sends out a strong message: this programme matters. This in turn will encourage students, school or college staff and employees within the business to find out more and get involved.

# CHECKLIST FOR YOUR PLAN - EMPLOYER



- You are knowledgeable and confident about the supported internship model – you've already researched it and/or been to see it operating successfully elsewhere.
- You believe your supported internship programme ambitions can be realised – you're convinced about the value of the programme and are committed to making it happen.
- Your senior leadership team is fully on board – you've achieved top-level buy-in to the programme and you've been asked to lead the implementation on behalf of your school or college.
- You have built internal competence and 'know-how' – you're already developing the in-house skills and capabilities.



- You have contacted your local Enterprise Coordinator – to find out where the nearest special needs school or college is in your area, meet up and explore options to support students.
- You have found a suitable and willing partner – they are local, share your values and commitment, and are large enough to deliver a successful and sustainable programme.
- You have started meeting regularly with your prospective partner – you're already working as a team.
- Your site is prepped and ready for the arrival of the interns – you have allocated a base room for the interns.



- You have invited the students and their parents or carers to tour the site – you're doing all you can to familiarise students, parents and carers with the site and reassure them that the supported internship will be a positive experience for all those involved.
- You have allocated the first placements to the students – you have worked with the job coaches and the school to match the right students to the right departments.
- You're ready for go-live – everything's all set for the programme to start in September.

# CHECKLIST FOR YOUR PLAN - SCHOOLS AND COLLEGES



- You have identified your job coaches and are planning to train them up – you'll equip them with the skills they'll need to help run the programme (for example, you have booked systematic instruction techniques training to be conducted by an external provider).
- You have started to map your curriculum offer – you've begun to establish your tracking systems.
- You have already identified enough suitable and willing students with EHCPs (education, health and care plans) to start your pilot scheme.



- You are confident that all the necessary funding mechanisms will be in place – you've investigated and applied for the education and pre-employment support available and are happy that it will be in place when the programme goes live.
- You're ready for go-live – everything's all set for the programme to start in September.



- You have organised the opening ceremony and launch event – you've invited everyone involved in setting up the programme, as well as students, parents and carers.

# WHAT SUCCESS LOOKS LIKE



The following case studies showcase programmes by companies such as:

- Cadent
- Siemens
- Amey
- Interserve plc
- Yorkshire Water
- Whitefriars Housing



# WALEN

# CASE STUDY 1

## Cadent

Your Gas Network



Employees freely volunteer to support the programme which gives them inspiration, personal reward and satisfaction and helps their professional development in many cases.

Our onsite supply chain partners (CBRE, 14Forty, Canon) have provided invaluable placement opportunities and Pertemps, our recruitment partner, as well as providing placements, has supported interns with practical advice on CV writing, interview skills and applying for jobs.

Working with our supply chain partners enables us to offer a variety of practical and customer-facing work placements, for example in reception, the staff restaurant, facilities support and building maintenance, as well as computer-based roles.

Since launching the scheme, **74%** of our interns have gone on to paid employment either with us, our supply chain or other external businesses. This is something we're immensely proud of. To ensure our programme remains sustainable, we are now focused on building relationships with local employers to encourage them to host external placements in the hope these will lead to paid employment at the end of the internship.



**We launched the scheme at Hinckley in 2014, whilst still part of National Grid. We have continued with the scheme as Cadent and expanded to our Ashbrook Court office, in Coventry, from September 2017. The purpose of the scheme is to raise aspirations and significantly improve the likelihood of a young person with learning disabilities achieving paid employment by the provision of supported work placements.**

Here at Cadent, we partner with Dorothy Goodman School (Hinckley) and Oak Wood School (Nuneaton) at our Hinckley site and, over in Coventry, we partner with Exhall Grange School (Coventry) and Woodlands School (Coleshill).



**Contact**  
[sophie.woolham@cadentgas.com](mailto:sophie.woolham@cadentgas.com)

# CASE STUDY 2

## SIEMENS



Siemens has been working with the Pathway Plus programme to support a group of young people, with the aim of securing full-time employment.

The young people (aged 16 and 19) visit Siemens' Hull Blade Factory where they spend one day a week on work placements in reception, office, catering, cleaning and security roles, with Siemens. They move around roles to establish which are most suitable. These students then progress onto supported internships, with the prospect of full employment a year later.

Siemens has worked with the University of Hull to bring in volunteers studying towards careers in social care and special needs education to mentor the interns.

“PATHWAY PLUS IS A REALLY GREAT PROGRAMME”

### Testimonials

**Carolyn Woolway**  
Siemens' Head of Human Resources in Hull

“These young people may have learning difficulties, but they also have skills and talents that are sometimes hidden. This programme is about unlocking their potential.”

**Mr Chell**  
Manager of Pathways Plus

“What is so special and impressive about the programme is the significant, long-term commitment of Siemens and their suppliers. We hope to build on this and make a positive impact.”

**Councillor Phil Webster**  
Hull City Council's Portfolio Holder for Learning, Skills and Safeguarding

“Pathway Plus is a really great programme. The council's Hull Training and Adult Education team have been working with partners over the past couple of years to bring it to fruition.”

“To see one of the city's newest employers supporting young people with SEND is really heartening. I hope other local employers look at similar ways they can support young people with SEND.”



**Contact**  
Carolyn Woolway  
[carolyn.woolway@siemens.com](mailto:carolyn.woolway@siemens.com)

[Siemens news story](#)

# CASE STUDY 3



Amey's 'Streets Ahead' team in Sheffield collaborated with Sheffield College to take six young people on a supported internship programme in 2016/17.

These young people, aged between 16 and 24, all had learning and/or physical disabilities. They joined Amey in January 2017 to gain skills and experience in a variety of areas including commercial, office support, IT, fleet maintenance and stores.

The interns worked in their job roles every morning and had maths and English tuition and EmployAbility training in the afternoon. The EmployAbility course included communication skills, customer services, health and safety, interview skills and mock interviews. They also received careers advice, attended jobs fairs and learnt about traineeship and apprenticeship schemes.

The programme was highly successful; the interns grew in confidence and self-esteem and gained lots of new skills. They graduated in July 2017 and since then two interns have gained jobs with Amey, one as an apprentice and another as a trainee.

Amey is now entering the second year of the programme in partnership with Sheffield College and Sheaf Training and five new interns joined Amey's Streets Ahead contract in November 2017.

## Testimonials

**Helen Johnson**  
Streets Ahead's Community and Employee Engagement Officer

"It was fantastic to see the interns making such a valuable contribution and overcoming individual challenges, not just in a working environment, but also within social situations. This is an excellent programme that makes a real difference to lives."

**Darren Butt**  
Amey Account Director

"This programme benefits the whole workforce. The interns deliver real jobs and are an inspiration to our managers and employees."

**David Lincoln**  
Job Coach from Sheffield College

"It was great to see the interns gaining confidence and learning new skills. Their experiences from the programme will hopefully help them to secure employment in the future."



**Contact**  
**Helen Johnson**  
[helen.johnson@amey.co.uk](mailto:helen.johnson@amey.co.uk)

"I NOW HAVE A PURPOSE"

# CASE STUDY 4



Interserve plc, partnering with The Westminster School in Sandwell and TSI Learn, ran a successful supported internship programme in 2016/17 and then started their first supported apprenticeship for two young people with special educational needs.

They are completing a Level 2 Apprenticeship in Facilities Services as employees of Interserve plc. Support has been provided by a job coach, who helped them through the application process, including completing the application form and the interview.

They are working within the Sandwell Building Schools for the Future (BSF) programme, providing facilities management for schools across the local area of Sandwell in the West Midlands.

The Westminster School and MORETHAN7 social enterprise are helping to lead the way, in conjunction with many other organisations in Sandwell, by providing opportunities for young people to gain entry onto 'inclusive apprenticeships', building on the success of supported internships.



Contact  
**Mark McGill**  
[mcgillicuddymh@gmail.com](mailto:mcgillicuddymh@gmail.com)

[MORETHAN7.org](http://MORETHAN7.org)

# CASE STUDY 5



Kelda Group (parent company of Yorkshire Water) and The Lighthouse Futures Trust in Leeds started their supported internship programme for students with an autistic spectrum condition in September 2016. They welcomed seven interns from the Lighthouse School and Leeds City College.

The students worked in various parts of the business, including IT, finance and payroll. Each had a job coach from the charity to support them. The interns also completed a BTEC qualification with modules that covered preparation for work, working in a team and searching for a job.

The Lighthouse Futures Trust is a charity, which creates employment opportunities for young people with an autistic spectrum condition and additional needs; it works with students from Lighthouse School, Leeds City College and other schools in the city.

## Testimonials

**Rebecca McDonnell**

Head of Talent, Yorkshire Water

“In partnership with The Lighthouse Futures Trust, we aim to recognise the hidden talents we know our young people have.”

**Katie Parlett**

Founder of The Lighthouse Futures Trust and Lighthouse School

“We hope this programme will recognise, value and use the talents our young people have, and its success will help us to expand and work with other companies in the future to give more young adults these opportunities.”



## Contacts

**Jodie Williams**

[Jodie.Williams@yorkshirewater.co.uk](mailto:Jodie.Williams@yorkshirewater.co.uk)

**Rebecca McDonnell**

[Rebecca.McDonnell@yorkshirewater.co.uk](mailto:Rebecca.McDonnell@yorkshirewater.co.uk)

# “GIVE MORE YOUNG ADULTS THESE OPPORTUNITIES”

# CASE STUDY



Whitefriars Housing in Coventry supported three interns from Hereward College on a supported internship programme, which started in September 2016.

Interns from the programme carried out cleaning duties at Whitefriars' sites; they worked for up to 30 hours a week, gaining valuable experience with the support of a job coach.

One day a week the interns returned to the college to gain a City & Guilds qualification in Employability Skills, and also had the chance to take maths and English qualifications.

Luke Elson, an intern from Hereward College, secured permanent paid employment at Whitefriars Housing following his internship.



## Testimonials

Clive Rose  
CleanWorks supervisor at  
Whitefriars Housing

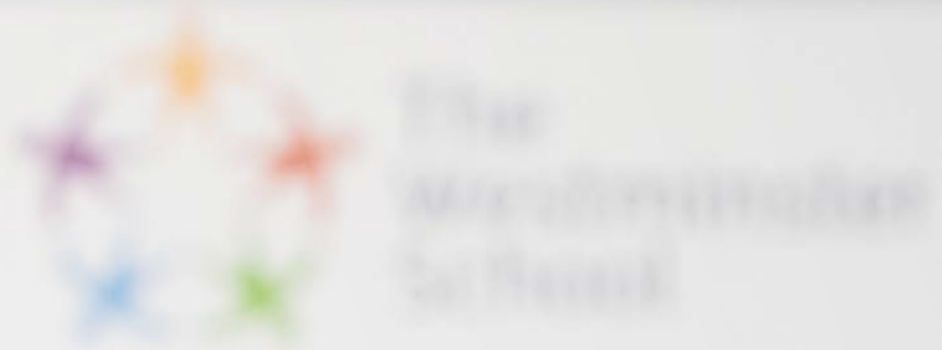
"All the interns were shy to start with, so we have enjoyed watching their confidence grow over the months."

"The internship programme has been a great success and we're very pleased that we have been able to give these young people this opportunity at the start of their working lives."

"It has been a pleasure working with Luke and we're thrilled he is now a permanent member of the team."

[Hereward college video \(May 17\)](#)

**"WE HAVE ENJOYED WATCHING THEIR CONFIDENCE GROW"**



The  
Mathematics  
School

Welcome  
to our school

Autogr  
PED BY ENTHU

# SUPPORT



# A GUIDE TO SUPPORTING SEND FOR SMALL AND MEDIUM-SIZED ENTERPRISES (SMEs)



**Remember, one size does not fit all. Each supported internship is unique – a combination of factors that include the size and nature of the prospective employer, the education provider partner and the capabilities, skills and interests of the interns.**

There are different types of supported internship pathways to suit different sizes of business:

**Main business sponsor** – one main business sponsor (for example, National Grid along with its suppliers) or a local authority committed to adopting an EmployAbility model.

**Business cluster** – more than one employer, all clustered around a particular geographic site, e.g. a town centre, out-of-town shopping centre, retail park or industrial estate.

**Business brand** – with one main employer at multiple branches within a region, e.g. different Co-operative retail stores within a particular area.

**Micro-business ventures** – one main education provider hosting a number of smaller start-up businesses, e.g. Lighthouse School.

## **Part time 1-2-1 support worker**

- More traditional 1-2-1 part-time support worker who is available to support the student 'on-site' for half a day each week.
- Training/education – largely provided 'off-site' at a specialist school/further education college.
- Scale and generally shorter duration is better suited to an SME new to the concept.

## **Job coach ratio options**

The **intern : job coach ratio** is dictated by the size of the employer:

- **1:1** – suitable for a small to medium-sized enterprise (using a part-time job coach).
- **3:1** – suitable for a medium to large employer, like a hotel or on a business park where multiple businesses share one job coach and each business has one intern each.
- **6:2** – suitable for a large employer (this is the National Grid EmployAbility model).
- **12:3** – suitable for a large and diverse employer, like a hospital (visit [www.pluss.org.uk/services/project-search](http://www.pluss.org.uk/services/project-search) to read about the work of Project Search in Plymouth, Barnstaple and Torbay).

# TOP TIPS FOR ENGAGING EMPLOYERS



## Building a successful partnership between employers and SEN schools/colleges

A successful partnership is based on strong personal relationships that are rooted in trust.

### Top tips for taking the first steps

Contact your local Enterprise Adviser Network via The Careers & Enterprise Company and locate your local Enterprise Coordinator.

1. Work with your local Enterprise Coordinator, to find out where the nearest special needs school or college is in your area, meet up and explore options to support students.
2. Remember that any encounter between businesses and special schools is positive. If you are unable to provide supported internships, are you able to provide smaller initiatives?
3. It often works well to start with a team-based 'community' activity at the school or college; like painting school buildings, tidying up the school grounds or supporting an enterprise day.

## Top tips for getting started in your business with a supported internship

1. Get commitment and involvement from the top by presenting to your executive team and securing a sponsor.
2. Remember that individuals make this a success, so mobilise colleagues who have actively volunteered in the past.
3. Visit the school to see the skills range of the pupils and attend 'seeing is believing' showcase events.
4. View the [supported internships guidance document](#) to get answers to many common employer concerns.

Remember that every intern is unique. Match up the skills, aptitudes and capabilities of the intern with the needs of the business.

Most of National Grid's supported internships are hosted by teams from within the organisation, but one intern works as a barista in a coffee shop run by the company's supplier.

Internships at National Grid usually fall into two categories: practical or business-focused (usually office tasks). Visit the [EmployAbility toolkit](#) for more details.

## Randy Lewis



"We haven't found a disability we can't employ."

Randy Lewis grew Walgreens (America's largest drug-store chain) from 1,600 to 8,000 outlets.



Having an autistic son motivated him to give job opportunities to thousands of disabled people.



Today, on average 35% of Walgreens' workforce is comprised of people with disabilities, with a target to make sure one in every 10 in-store staff appointments is a disabled person.



This model has also been adopted and rolled out by British retailers, including Boots and Marks & Spencer.

[Watch this video](#) to hear Randy talk about how to become truly diverse, and his frustration that more companies aren't trying.

# SOURCES OF SUPPORT FOR EMPLOYERS



## The Careers & Enterprise Company

The National Enterprise Adviser Network connects schools, colleges and employers with careers programme providers, so that they can work together to create meaningful encounters with the world of work for young people.

The network is comprised of trained, professional enterprise coordinators who they co-fund with a Local Enterprise Partnership. Check out [The Careers & Enterprise company](#) to find out more about the network.

## Department for Work and Pensions (DWP)

[Employing disabled people and people with health conditions](#)

### Access to Work

The Access to Work grant from the DWP is designed to help pay for practical support, so disabled people can do their jobs. It is also available for supported internships. The grant is provided where someone needs support or adaptations beyond the reasonable adjustments that an employer is legally obliged to provide under the Equality Act 2010.

The partner school/college would normally apply for supported internships. To apply for funding, complete the Access to Work form. You'll find it by searching for 'form' at [www.preparingforadulthood.org.uk/](http://www.preparingforadulthood.org.uk/)

For more information, visit the [NG toolkit guide](#).

## Disability Confident scheme

The Disability Confident scheme aims to help employers make the most of the opportunities provided by employing disabled people. It is voluntary and has been developed by employers and disabled people's representatives. The scheme has three levels that have been designed to support employers on their Disability Confident journey. Employers must complete each level before moving on to the next.

Offering work experience and supported internships is promoted by the DWP as a great way for employers to develop their disability confidence and to progress through the levels.

# SOURCES OF SUPPORT FOR EMPLOYERS



**Department for Education**  
[Supported internships – Guidance – revised June 2017](#)  
[Planning transition to adulthood for care leavers](#)

**Mencap**  
[Resources for employers](#)

**Remploy**  
[Remploy Disability Guide](#)

**Disability Rights UK**  
[Disability Rights UK](#)

**Preparing for Adulthood**  
[Preparing for Adulthood](#)

**National Development Team for Inclusion**  
[NDTi](#)

**Autism and neurodiversity**  
[Department for Work & Pensions' Autism and Neurodiversity Toolkit](#)  
[The National Autistic Society](#)  
[Autism West Midlands](#)

**Disability awareness training providers**  
[Business Disability Forum](#)  
[Remploy](#)  
[Disability Rights UK](#)

**Learning disability training providers**

[British Institute of Learning Disabilities](#)  
[The National Autistic Society](#)  
[Autism Connect](#)  
[Adjust](#)  
[Aspident](#)  
[Business Disability Forum](#)

**Employment support providers**  
[British Association for Supported Employment](#)

**Inclusive communications**  
[DWP and Chartered Institute of PR](#)

# GLOSSARY



**ADD**

Attention deficit disorder

**ADHD**

Attention deficit and hyperactivity disorder

**ASD**

Autism spectrum disorder

**EP**

Educational psychologist

**EHCIP**

Educational Health Care Plan

**HI**

Hearing impairment

**LDD**

Learning difficulties or disabilities

**MLD**

Moderate learning difficulties

**OT**

Occupational therapist

**PD**

Physical disability

**PMLD**

Profound and multiple learning disability

**SALT/SLT**

Speech and language therapist



**SEMH**

Social, emotional and mental health

**SEND**

Special educational needs and disabilities

**SLCN**

Speech, language and communication needs

**SPLD**

Specific learning difficulties

**VI**

Visual impairment

## **Learning disabilities**

[Mencap; learning disabilities explained](#)

## **Reports/research papers**

[Gatsby Good Careers guidance](#)

[The Careers & Enterprise Company; Transition Programmes for Young Adults with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities \(SEND\): What Works?](#)

[Remploy in collaboration with Mencap; Raising Aspirations: Widening Participation in supported internships](#)

[Department for Education; Supported internships for Young People with an EHC](#)

[Diversity in the Workplace: an Overview registration required](#)



# FUELLING FUTURES

The Careers &  
Enterprise Company  
2-7 Clerkenwell Green  
Clerkenwell  
London EC1R 0DE

National Grid  
Warwick Technology Park  
Gallows Hill  
Warwick CV34 6DA