

CAREERS EDUCATION:

The **SEND** in Mainstream Toolkit



A toolkit for career leaders, teachers and inclusion leaders to support students with SEND in mainstream settings



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Introduction and Background



Current context for SEND students and career leaders in mainstream

Over the last twelve months, Liverpool Hope University has been working in partnership with Liverpool City Region Careers Hub to explore the barriers encountered by young people with SEND when accessing career support in mainstream school. With the right preparation and support all young people can have access to fulfilling jobs and careers (1).

However students with SEND face many obstacles when transitioning out of education, especially those in mainstream school who are less likely to be in employment, education or training when compared to their non-disabled peers (2). The numbers of young people identified as having additional needs who attend mainstream provisions is growing and it is essential that we work together to find ways to support all students. This research project aimed

to identify barriers experienced by staff and young people in mainstream provisions to highlight best practice when supporting young people to transition from school. SEND students are unlikely to pursue subjects or opportunities that facilitate career progression as they often feel they are unable to achieve their potential. Time constraints, lack of pupil voice, accessibility restrictions, and uncertainty surrounding change exacerbate these feelings.

This toolkit has been co-produced with young people. It was considered vital that the voices of both young people and those working to support them were heard throughout the process of creating this toolkit. We started the project by speaking with career leaders from across the region to help us identify what the key issues are.

From these conversations and a questionnaire that was distributed, the following issues were highlighted:

Time constraints



“Time restraints don’t always allow for tailored intervention. All students receive 1:1 guidance and we revisit but it can be difficult to support more with the volume of SEND students we have.”

(Career leader questionnaire)

“Taking time to research journey and specific needs of each student takes longer. I may not have had previous contact with them.”

(Career leader questionnaire)

Lack of funding



“Funding for materials or transport for visits.”

(Career leader event feedback)

“How much future support/resource/funding will be available for SEND in mainstream.”

(Career leader event feedback)

Lack of awareness of support available



“Progression routes at all levels. What support is available at University or college. How to access Disabled Student Allowances.”

(Career leader event feedback)

“Careers for SEND - I’d like more on this to find out further opportunities for students.”

(Career leader event feedback)

Lack of accessible resources



“Difficulty accessing/understanding a wealth of information”

(Career leader event feedback)

“A lot of resources are not designed to meet individual needs”

(Career leader event feedback)

Purpose of the Toolkit

The purpose of the toolkit is to provide support and further guidance for professionals working with young people. Whilst we seek to highlight the barriers experienced which can hinder the quality of CEIAG delivered, we also hope to provide approaches to overcome some of these challenges.

Throughout the toolkit, a wide range of pathways, opportunities and resources will be made available to career leaders to utilise with SEND students, putting the experiences of these young people at the forefront of future career guidance and practice. The toolkit will also highlight research pilots which have been conducted throughout this project including, a buddying pilot between a mainstream career leader and specialist career leader and case studies.

We hope this toolkit will provide a range of accessible and inclusive resources to enable staff to support students better as they transition towards their post-16 and post-18 options. Co-production has been central to this project. Young people, career leaders, post-16 providers, and organisations that support disabled people with career education have all been pivotal in advising and providing information to develop this work.



SECTION 2:

Working with Young People



Working with Young People

Guidance on how best to support young people

Working with young people was central to this project. We hoped to gain a deeper insight into how they experience career support and be led by them in terms of what they feel they need to successfully transition from school. We worked with one group of year 10 young people who attend a mainstream school to design this section of the toolkit.

Government legislation such as the SEND Code of Practice (2014) highlights the importance of listening to young people and giving them the opportunity to be part of all decision-making processes (1). In addition, there is a plethora of research which emphasises the many benefits of listening to young people, and it is an important skill that young people develop when they can articulate their needs.

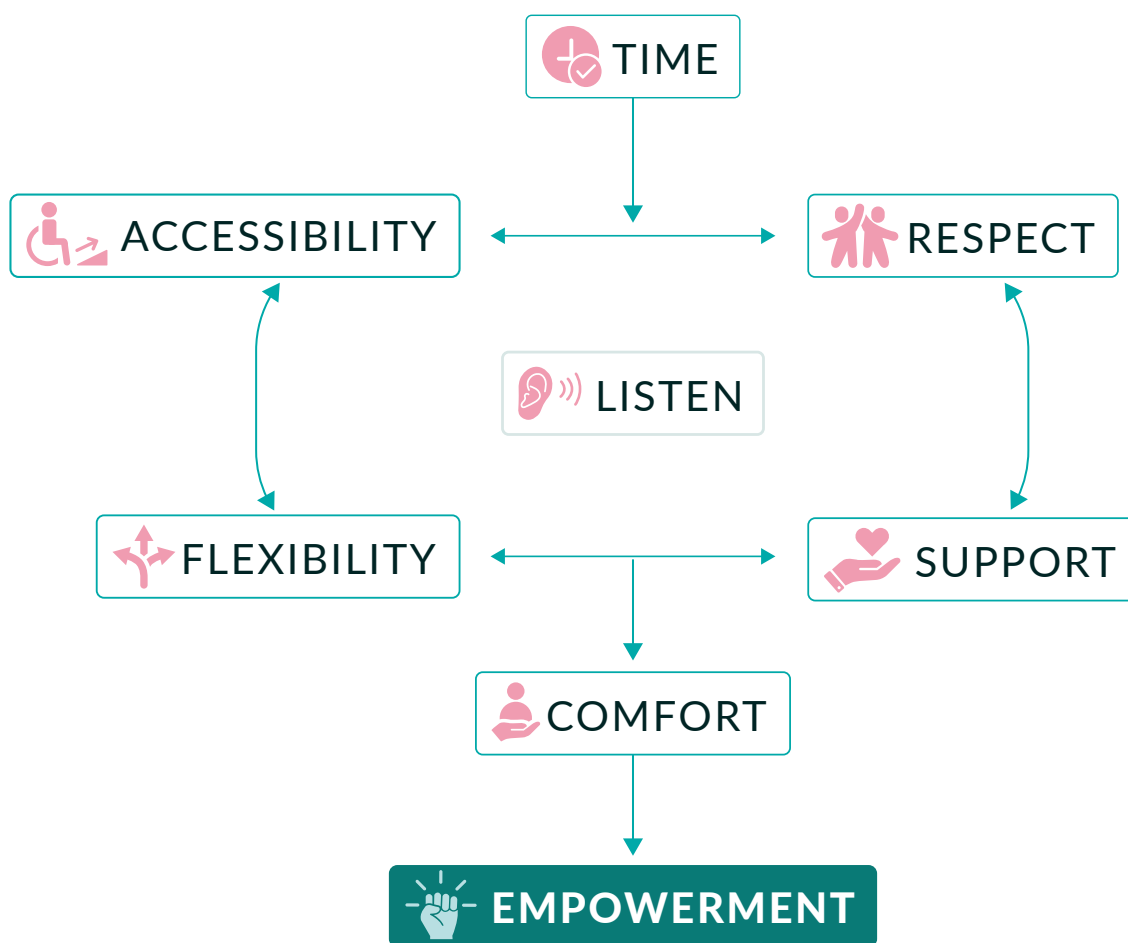
As young people begin to transition out of school, they will be expected to self advocate and share what support they need. With the key principles developed, we hope to provide professionals with the opportunity to reflect on how they can provide space for young people to be heard. Indeed, discussions around the significance of young people's knowledge about these issues give rise to the possibility of agency. Regarding career education, facilitating young people's rights allows them to voice their opinions to change the realities of their future.

This part of the toolkit will be divided into three sections:

1. Principles for working with young people
2. Priorities for young people when engaging with careers
3. The Career and Aspiration Forms – these forms were designed by young people to help capture their career journey throughout education

Principles for working with young people

(1) The young people started by identifying a list of principles for professionals to consider when supporting young people with SEND:





Time

For young people, having time to explore their career options was vital. They also emphasised the importance of having time to understand the different routes they can take. They felt they were sometimes rushed during sessions, and it would be helpful to ensure everyone understood by checking in with young people.



Accessibility

Young people felt it was important for staff to understand their needs and to take into consideration the different ways in which young people might engage with a session, for example considering the language that you use to ensure you are being inclusive.



Flexibility

The young people felt that a one-size-fits-all approach would not work and that teachers should be prepared to adapt materials to the class's specific needs.



Listen

Young people really value having their voices heard and it is important for them to be recognised as an expert in what they need to successfully transition.



Support

Feeling supported to make decisions regarding their career choices helped young people to navigate and make sense of the different routes that are available to them.



Respect

Although young people recognise the importance of respecting their teachers, they also felt it was important that teachers respect their needs.



Comfort

Young people highlighted the importance of feeling comfortable expressing what they need and to be able to let people know when they do not understand something.



Empowerment

By listening to young people and considering their needs, it was felt this would lead to them being empowered to make decisions about their future career.

Key priorities for young people



Access to work experience

All young people should have access to work experience as part of their curriculum. Young people would also like additional opportunities to explore the world of work for example, day visits to different work settings.

Guest speakers

Young people enjoy having the opportunity to hear from a wide range of professionals, including those working in industry and higher education. This was deemed particularly helpful in allowing young people to gain an insight into the different routes available to them.



Extra curricular activities

Young people would like the opportunity to engage with extra curricular activities which could help develop their career skills, such as working with a community organisation or Cadets.

Connect careers to all subjects

Young people really like being able to make the links between the subjects they are studying and potential career routes for example, learning about the practical application in the real world of STEM subjects.

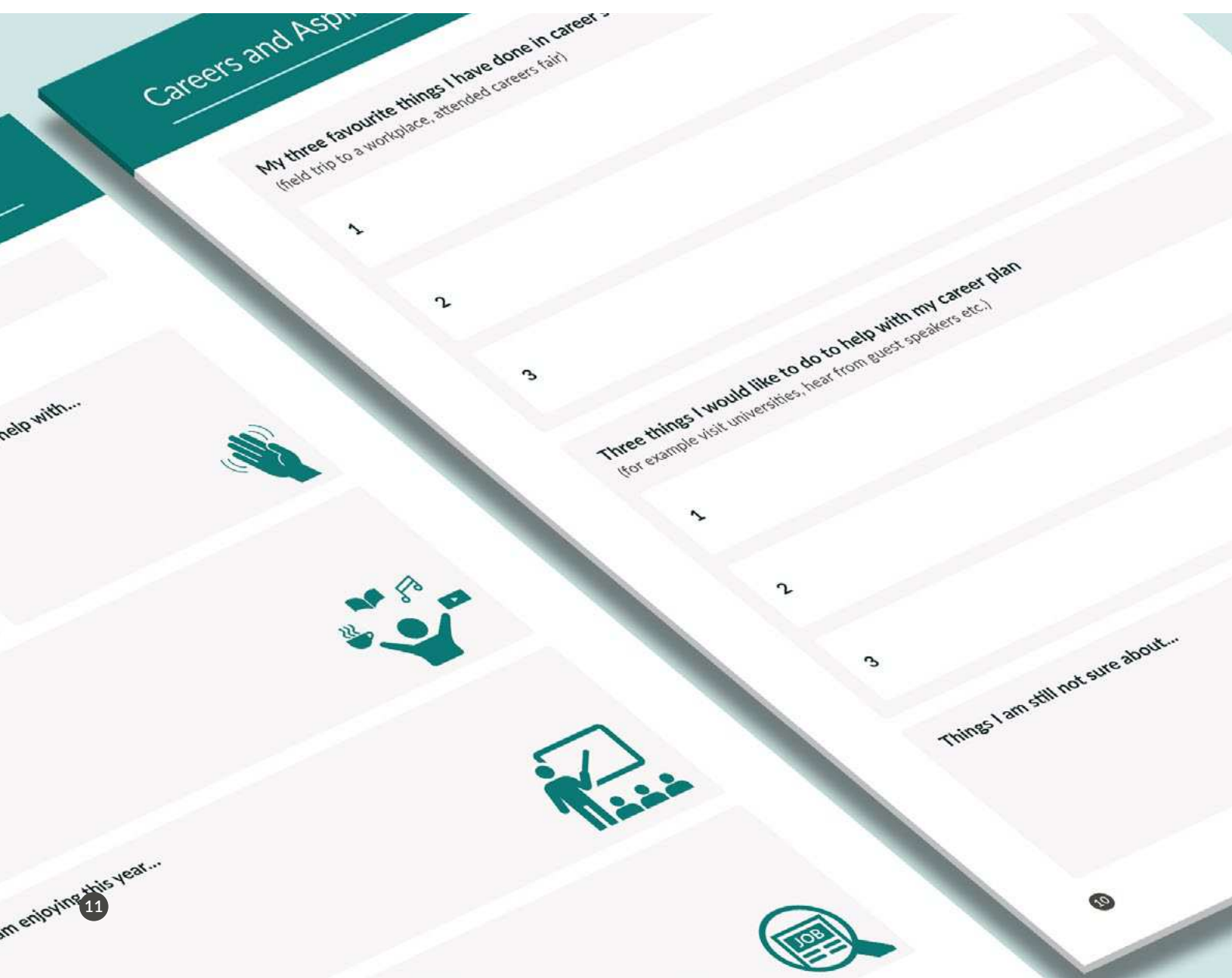


Regular career sessions

Young people like having the opportunity to regularly engage with career activities throughout each stage of their educational journey.

Careers & Aspirations Support Plans

During the project, we hoped to find ways for career leaders to capture the work they do with young people throughout their career journey in school. In collaboration with young people we have designed a series of forms. These forms are to be completed by the young person (with support if needed) each year whilst in secondary school. As the students progress the forms get a bit longer and will require input from the school Special Educational Needs and Disability Co-ordinator (SENDCO) and young person's parent/carer to help prepare them for their transitions.



Careers and Aspirations Support Plan

For Schools
- add your
logo here

Your Name

What am I good at...



What do I need help with...



Interests and hobbies



Subjects I am enjoying this year...



Jobs/Careers I am interested in...



Careers and Aspirations Support Plan

My three favourite things I have done in career sessions this year

(field trip to a workplace, attended careers fair)

1

2

3

Three things I would like to do to help with my career plan

(for example visit universities, hear from guest speakers etc.)

1

2

3

Things I am still not sure about...




Careers and Aspirations Support Plan


For Schools
- add your
logo here

Your Name


What am I good at...




What do I need help with...



Subjects I am hoping to choose as my options...



How do these subjects link to the further study or jobs I would like to do...



Careers and Aspirations Support Plan

My three favourite things I have done in career sessions this year

(field trip to a workplace, attended careers fair)

1

2

3

Three things I would like to do to help with my career plan

(for example visit universities, hear from guest speakers etc.)

1

2

3

Things I am still not sure about...



Careers and Aspirations Support Plan

For Schools
- add your
logo here

Your Name

What skills/attributes do I have (team work, enthusiasm, commitment etc.)...



What skills/attributes do I need help to develop...



My work experience plans...



Jobs I would like to know more about...



Careers and Aspirations Support Plan

My three favourite things I have done in career sessions this year

(field trip to a workplace, attended careers fair)

1

2

3

Three tasks I would like to do in career sessions to help develop my career plan

(for example, research potential courses or jobs, what support is available)

1

2

3

Things I am still not sure about...



Careers and Aspirations Support Plan

Can you identify any support the young person needs now and how this may also be needed in the next provision/setting? Are you aware of any reasonable adjustments we need to consider to support the young person in their next steps?

Career Leader/SENDSCO Comments:

Parent/Carer Comments:

Careers and Aspirations Support Plan

For Schools
- add your
logo here

Your Name

Employability skills I have developed...



Employability skills I need help to develop...



My three favourite things I have done in career sessions this year

(field trip to a workplace, attended careers fair)

1

2

3

Careers and Aspirations Support Plan

Three things I would like to do to help prepare me for my next steps

1

2

3

Where am I going next...



What I would like my employer/college/training provider to know about me, and is there anything they can do to best support me?



Things I am still not sure about...



Careers and Aspirations Support Plan

Can you identify any support this young person may need in the next provision/setting. Is there anything the young person may need guidance with from the next provision/setting? Are there any particular requirements specific to the young person that the following provision/setting must do?

Career Leader/SENDSCO Comments:

Parent/Carer Comments:

SECTION 3:

Support in school



A key aspect of this project was to consider ways to share best practice across the Liverpool City Region. We know there are lots of schools and career leaders doing fantastic work to support young people with SEND. Indeed, there are some great examples of innovative and creative ways of ensuring all young people have access to a quality careers provision.

This section of the toolkit will begin with an overview of a pilot study involving professionals working in career delivery across Liverpool City Region. This is followed by two case study examples of good practice from the Region. The final part of this section includes activities and resources to support career leaders to develop their career curriculum.

Buddying Pilot

We paired careers specialists based across a range of provisions including mainstream schools, special schools and organisations who specialise in supporting young people with SEND. Eight professionals took part in the pilot and were asked to meet at least three times over the course of the spring and summer term. The participants completed a buddying log to capture their experiences of being part of the pilot and agreed on a list of actions to explore together, for example building new contacts for careers programmes and developing visual aids to support students with SEND with their transition options.

All of the professionals who took part in the pilot felt it had a positive impact on their role as it was an opportunity to reflect on their own practice and what happens within the provision they work in. They were able to recognise the good practice they are already doing and the ways in which they may develop as professionals to better support young people.



Throughout the pilot, the buddies discovered that across the different settings they encountered similar challenges. These are highlighted below:

Time

There are lots of time constraints placed on professionals working within education. All of our buddies had a wide range of responsibilities, so being able to find space to not only take part in the pilot but also ways to develop their practice to support all young people with the career transitions was a challenge.

“I think I’ve realised that I really have got to make that ring fenced time to continue this work in the future. It is very hard to try and commit the time, but it’s certainly been an opportunity for me to extend my knowledge.”

“I think I could have gotten even more out of it if I had more time because I think in practice it is really good. It has opened my eyes into what we should be offering our SEND students. It’s started the ball rolling because now I’m talking to leadership and the SEND department here about how we can work together.”

“For another school, a large school, because they have so many young people that they’re working with, how do they prioritise their time. Even though ours is a small school and I do it full time. There are still not enough hours in the day.”

Parents/Carers


Working with parents and managing parents expectations was a further challenge experienced by all the buddies. Although there were some great examples of how different provisions are working to support families with their child’s transitions, ensuring parents have an understanding of the routes available was difficult.

“Where parents keep coming back to you and when they don’t like something; they then knock it as an option. And I think that is really hard because you’re thinking, actually, I think the child would do really well. And that’s the important independent advice bit. But at the same time, you have to respect the parents’ wishes, so it’s very hard.”

“There’s a lot of parents who are quite scared. I think people are just afraid of losing the nurture settings and they don’t feel like post 16 or post 19 has still got the same things that schools can offer. They’re trying to make the decisions on the child’s behalf.”

Accessing opportunities for young people

All of the buddies are passionate about ensuring all young people have access to opportunities however, finding suitable provisions and work experience can be challenging. It was felt that there was more work to be done in challenging some of the negative perceptions surrounding the capabilities of young people with SEND.




“We do find it extremely difficult to find work placements. That is an incredibly difficult job to do, especially with the sheer numbers of students.”

“We both agreed that the work experience is getting harder. It can be difficult to get employers on board and so we recognise that was a shared issue but we’ve got one opportunity that’s a group work placement and that seems to work well so I suggested that might work well for her as well. It’s nice being able to share your ideas and issues and then think about how we can overcome these together.”

Funding

A key barrier to ensuring all young people have opportunities to engage with careers was a lack of funding. This is something that has been highlighted throughout this project. Here, building connections was seen as one way of addressing this.



“I think we all have the same constraints. I know ours is financial, I have a budget of zero. So everything is done in favour by either begging or borrowing. It is goodwill of employees engaging with you and working on that networking to get the best for our students.”

Recommendations

Working closely with the buddies provided the opportunity to gain an insight into the daily challenges they encounter in their role. From these conversations we have also been able to identify a series of key recommendations to enable career leaders to work together to develop their practice to ensure their career programmes are inclusive and accessible to all students. The recommendations are outlined below:

Sharing resources

For the buddies who took part in the project, one of the biggest benefits to their practice was the opportunity to share resources.

“The sharing of resources would make the whole city a better place in terms of career pathway support for students of all abilities.”

“I think any partnership like this is invaluable. The fact that there is a project for buddying up providers and organisations, I think is really good.”

“I think one of the things that I would like is, sharing of resources. For example, there might be a resource in another school that would be perfect for ours and vice versa. So I’m really keen that the resources that are produced are actually sent out so that everybody could benefit.”

Forum

In addition to sharing resources we would like to develop opportunities for career leaders to share practice and discuss challenges they encounter as part of their practice. Over the next year we hope to work with the Liverpool City Region Careers Hub to consider ways of working together to support career leaders across the region.

“It would be beneficial to share product and service reviews with other career leaders.”

“I think it’s a really useful thing to do. When you’re in school, you can feel quite isolated as often you’re the only member of staff with a focus on careers. So, to have others, to be able to share ideas with is great.”

Recommendations

Develop long term partnerships between provisions

As mentioned throughout this toolkit, we see this as being the starting point for developing work to support all students across Liverpool City Region. We are keen to consider how we can continue the partnerships that have been developed over the course of this project.

“I think it’s just maintaining and building that network so we can continue to work together. It is something that I think I would need to take away from this pilot. It’s a great starting point for something to grow and become better.”

“Even just something as simple as having somebody to talk about careers with because not everyone understands the challenges. Everyone’s got a lot going on. So, having someone who understands my role is helpful.”



Good Practice Case Studies

In this section, we will highlight two examples of good practice in the form of case studies. There is lots of brilliant work going on across the region to support students. The two examples included here highlight specific projects that have been developed to address the barriers that are encountered by students with SEND.



Case Study One - Work Experience in the Classroom

A mainstream secondary school received funding from Liverpool City Region Careers Hub to work with Digital Advantage (for more information please see the link on p. 30) to develop a programme aimed to support the career development of SEND students. A group of nine Year 10 students worked together over the course of one week to design a school website. This project was developed in response to the challenge many schools encounter when trying to find work experience opportunities for young people.

Overview of the programme

Your Digital News Agency (DNA) (for more information about this programme please see the link on p. 30) is a flexible programme of digital making that brings together a range of industry experts and young people to deliver an experiential learning programme over 5 intensive days. By giving students the tools to create a website/film/podcast about subjects close to their heart, they develop confidence, ambition and networks that improve their chances of learning for and working in the digital economy.

This programme was developed to provide students with the following opportunities:

- Develop sector specific digital skills such as photography, web design, filmmaking and podcasting.
- Build core employability skills including problem solving, team working, confidence and communication.
- Gain a deeper understanding of careers in the digital sector and the range of opportunities available to them.

Schools and Colleges can:

- choose from flexible delivery models to suit their needs.
- implement Gatsby Benchmarks 2, 3, 4, 5 & 6.



Case Study One - Work Experience in the Classroom

The young people who participated in this project worked together to design a new school website, they developed the logos, decided on the content and presented the finished website. Throughout the course of the one week programme, the young people developed a range of key skills linked to employability including working as a team, communication skills and their knowledge and understanding of ICT.

What key skills did they learn?

The young people also had the opportunity to explore how they might use the skills developed in their future careers. They were asked to identify the key skills they developed from taking part in the programme, these included:

“Technical skills by editing videos”

“Web design”

“Interviewing”

“I learned how to film and edit videos that I have taken”

“I have developed my skills on Canva”

“Editing”

What did they enjoy?

In addition, the young people were able to highlight their favourite aspects of the programme:

“Writing scripts”

“Designing logos for the school website”

“Web design”

“Creating Logos”

“Engaging more with my classmates & learning something new”

“Interview”

“Filming”

The career leader from the school also highlighted the skills gained by the young people and the importance of young people with SEND having access to opportunities to showcase their skills and capabilities;

- “Promoted independence, problem solving and resilience”.
- “We have a tangible product which I hope will be published alongside the school website illustrating the capabilities of our SEN students”.



Click here for more information about the programmes that are offered by Digital Advantage

Case Study Two - Video CV

In response to the growing concerns surrounding the employability rates for young people with SEND, a career leader based within a special school developed an innovative and creative project to provide young people with an opportunity to showcase what they can do. A typical recruitment process includes submitting a written Curriculum Vitae (CV) followed by a face to face interview. However for some young people, this process adds additional pressure, stress and anxieties, a barrier that could be avoided if alternative options were available such as video upload section or an application on a website where young people can showcase their skills. Young people may have the essential skills and expertise to flourish in the role advertised, however this initial barrier can deter them from even applying.



Why develop video CVs?

- Develop sector specific digital skills, such as photography, web design, filmmaking and podcasting.
- Linking aspirations and preparation for adulthood to outcomes in EHCP.
- Career decisions based on student aspiration.
- Building skills.
- Opportunities and experiences.
- Developing confidence.
- Employment.

What is a video CV?

- A video CV is a short recording used by a candidate to apply for a job.
- Instead of replacing traditional CVs, a video CV is used to supplement a written application.
- They can be either uploaded to a video hosting site, such as YouTube, or sent as a video file directly to employers via email.
- The purpose of a CV in this format is to highlight a candidate's skills and experience while giving employers an insight into their personality.
- Video CVs are usually between one and three minutes long. It's important to grab a recruiter's attention while keeping the running time of the video to a minimum.

Case Study Two - Video CV

Two cohorts of students based within the school have taken part in a video CV project. The young people who took part in the first project were asked for their feedback as part of a research project conducted in partnership with The Comedy Trust (5).

In their words

"It's made me feel inspired"

Student 1

"I think it's a good thing to have all the things I did at the hotel that I can now show people"

Student 2

"It shows what things you've been up to and what kind of thing you'd be doing in a job"

Student 3

"I think it was useful for me going into the workplace in the future because they can see what I can do...Well anything can be written on a cv and you know a video one you can actually see me doing it. You can tell I'm not lying then can't you!"

Student 4

"I liked that video of me in the café, that's good because it's a good set, it had scenes I remembered when you videoed me on your camera making teas. I loved it so much. Really good. Fantastic. Showed me happy and excited about it. I liked everything about it."

Student 5

"It's better having a video CV, because you can see it, it's not just written down"

Student 6

School Resource: My Employment Passport



The founder of this initiative, Richard Lamplough, wrote this programme to give a group of year 10 students, with a variety of support needs, the opportunity to raise their employment aspirations. For further information and guidance on how to make Video CVs please see links:

<https://www.theabilitybridge.com/courses/my-employment-passport-bronze>

<https://www.theabilitybridge.com/courses/take/my-employment-passport-bronze/pdfs/42544889-10-session-plan>

Career Activities Roadmap

The roadmap summarises some of the key activities career leaders can engage in with their students during each stage of their career journey. The activities suggested in the roadmap were developed following discussions with both career leaders and young people. Career leaders will also be looking to incorporate the Gatsby Benchmarks into their career planning. For guidance and practical help please refer to the [SEND Gatsby Benchmark Toolkit](#).

There are two sections within this resource:

Part 1 – explores the wider context, with support for you and young people with SEND

Part 2 – is a larger section that focuses on the Gatsby Benchmarks from a SEND perspective:

- Resource links and case studies
- Top tips for employers
- Top tips for schools
- Information on ‘why this matters’ and ‘what this means in practice’.

Support your work to access world-class, trusted, high-quality resources to help mainstream schools tailor careers provision for pupils with SEND - Welcome to the CEC Resource Directory | CEC Resource Directory (careersandenterprise.co.uk)

Further resources to support your career planning can be found in the [auditing and planning tools for SEND career provision in mainstream](#).



Career Activities Roadmap



SEND Specific Resources for Schools

Exploring careers and pathways resources

- [SEND Gatsby toolkit](#)
- [VR - Let's Explore - Liverpool City Region Careers Hub \(lrcareershubs.co.uk\) - For send students only - free to loan for hub schools.](#)
- [Autism Careers Education Framework: supporting autistic young people from education into employment | Ambitious about Autism](#)
- [Resources - Liverpool City Region Careers Hub \(lrcareershubs.co.uk\)](#)
- [CEC Resource Directory \(careersandenterprise.co.uk\)](#)
- [Introduction to primary career-related learning | Primary Platform \(careersandenterprise.co.uk\)](#)
- [My Skills My Future | CEC Resource Directory \(careersandenterprise.co.uk\)](#)
- [ambitiousaboutautism.org.uk/what-we-do/employment](#)
- [When I grow up: 10 session plans, resources including activity sheets and work profiles for pupils with SEND.](#)
- [My kind of a future workbook A workbook to help young people with learning disabilities prepare for the future](#)

SEND Specific Resources for Schools

Employability resources

Vocational Profiles:

- www.ndti.org.uk/resources/publication/vocational-profile
- [Vocational profile template \(beyondautism.org.uk\)](http://beyondautism.org.uk)
- <https://www.learningdisabilities.org.uk/learning-disabilities/publications>
- <https://www.learningdisabilities.org.uk/learning-disabilities/publications/when-i-grow-editable-work-profile>
- <https://www.learningdisabilities.org.uk/learning-disabilities/publications/when-i-grow-up-wigu-handbook-teachers>
- <https://www.learningdisabilities.org.uk/learning-disabilities/publications/when-i-grow-up-wigu-handbook-teachers>
- <https://www.ndti.org.uk/resources/publication/vocational-profile>

Transition tools and support

- [Shaping Futures Resources for SEND - Liverpool City Region Careers Hub \(lrcareershubs.co.uk\)](http://lrcareershubs.co.uk)
- [Securing Good Transitions: A resource pack to support the next steps of Key Stage 4 pupils with SEND | CEC Resource Directory \(careersandenterprise.co.uk\)](http://careersandenterprise.co.uk)
- **BBC Supported Internship episodes BASE:**
<https://youtu.be/r74MlxaTKf8?si=K0gxGGOGFOgoR0Bu>

SECTION 4:

Post 16 & Post 18 Options



College/Sixth Form

Introduction

This section provides a brief overview of the transition from school to further education and what barriers students may encounter during this process. While there are many different routes that we can expand upon, such as A Levels, T Levels, and accessible apprenticeships, this section provides a collective overview of the transition itself. It highlights the importance of exploring these different routes in collaboration with young people. This section has been developed with the support of a local college based on their experiences of working with young people with SEND.

Barriers to College

Here are the potential barriers that could arise for a young person transitioning from school to further education:

- 1. Reliance on EHCPs:** Even though young people with an EHCP may be given enhanced transition support, it is essential that this process is led by the voice of the person the EHCP supports. This may mean barriers that are important to the young person are less evident in an EHCP. Young people without an EHCP with support requirements may find it increasingly difficult to advocate for the support they need.
- 2. Strategising over course choices:** Many young people who require support adjustments may be put off selecting a course due to concerns around barriers they may encounter. Exploring how adaptive further education can be in providing reasonable adjustments and motivating young people to utilise all available options to meet their course desires and support requirements is essential.
- 3. Adjusting to a new environment:** Students may need to adjust to a larger, more independent working environment. It is important to ensure young people understand the differing support options available compared to the school setting.
- 4. Academic requirements:** Young people with SEND may not know of the different entry levels that some further education providers offer and may dismiss this post-16 option. Ensuring young people are provided with attainable courses that suit their academic abilities can motivate and facilitate a transition into further education.



Working with young people

From the barriers listed, it is clear that young people need to be fully involved in the transition process to further education. It is essential to discuss with young people what they would like their further education provider to know and understand their support requirements or areas of need. For example, even minor adjustments, such as time-out cards, in school may not automatically be available once starting further education. Allowing young people the space to share their requirements and look at the support offered by further education providers can prepare them to articulate these and request meetings to arrange this support, especially for young people without an EHCP.

Collaboration with young people is key for transition planning. This can be an overwhelming period, with the young person not knowing where to begin. As a careers leader, the main priority is getting the course choices right with the young person and researching any adaptability measurements that can be made if required. Here working together with all the people who are supporting the young person including the SENDCO and parent/carer is important as they can help identify what additional support the young person may require. Facilitating discussions about their transition may promote the following ideas to be suggested:

- regular visits to their new school or college
- the opportunity to meet key staff
- visits to their current school or college from staff that will be working with them in the future
- their new timetable so they can talk about any concerns before they start
- a visual timetable if necessary
- the opportunity to try out lunchtime arrangements at their new school or college
- their transport planned, including any travel training they may need



Gatsby Benchmark 7 guide: Includes a list of local FE Colleges training providers and their contact details - [Gatsby Benchmark 7 Guide - Liverpool City Region Careers Hub \(lrcareershub.co.uk\)](https://lcr-careershub.co.uk)

National Careers Service -Careers information, advice and guidance. Support and advice available online, webchat and via telephone. Find further education (FE) courses by course name, provider or subject - <https://nationalcareers.service.gov.uk/>

BeMore is the website and app for skills and career options in Liverpool City Region - <https://lcrbemore.co.uk/>

Skills for Careers - Browse education and training choices available - www.skillsforcareers.education.gov.uk

Apprenticeships

Introduction

An apprenticeship is a combination of employment, training and study, a route different from that of college or university. This is because the knowledge young people gain from studying and training as an apprentice will be put into immediate practice.

Anybody over 16 years old, not in full-time education, and living in England can apply for an apprenticeship. Apprentices are not required to pay any tuition fees. Depending on the apprenticeship chosen, the level of the apprenticeship, and the young person's previous experience, it can take one to six years to complete. It is important to ensure young people are aware that it is possible to take a break from their apprenticeship. However, this would mean the apprenticeship would take longer to complete.

As an apprentice, students will:

- train for the workplace
- get hands-on experience
- earn a salary and get the same rights as employees, including sick leave and holiday pay
- spend at least 20% of their working hours training or studying
- undertake ongoing assessments, including an end-point assessment



Apprenticeship Levels

There are four apprenticeship levels, and each one has an equivalent education level:

Level 2	These apprenticeships provide essential knowledge and skills for specific jobs equal to GCSEs.
Level 3	These apprenticeships offer more specialised knowledge and skills equal to A levels.
Levels 4 to 7	These apprenticeships focus on higher-level professional skills and can equal a foundation degree, a Higher National Certificate (HNC), or a Higher National Diploma (HND).
Levels 6 to 7	These apprenticeships lead to either a full bachelor's or master's degree. Some apprenticeships require specific qualifications, such as GCSE English and maths. Extra training may be offered to meet these qualifications. Young people may also have to meet academic requirements to apply for a higher or degree apprenticeship.

Upon completing an apprenticeship, the student will achieve the equivalent education level. For example, a level 3 apprenticeship is the equivalent of gaining an A level. However, some SEND students may be entitled to inclusive apprenticeships, meaning the traditional maths and English requirements may be exchanged for Entry Level 3 in these subjects or a British Sign Language (BSL) qualification instead of GCSE English. More information about inclusive apprenticeships is available in the 'Signposting' section.

Barriers to Apprenticeships

In a joint publication, the Disabled Apprentice Network and Disability Rights UK have noted numerous distinct barriers young people with SEND may face when applying for an apprenticeship:

- Many parents have a lack of knowledge of the benefits completing an apprenticeship may bring.
- Information on the support and adjustments available to young people with SEND when undertaking an apprenticeship is not clear or accessible.
- Students may need help understanding or being educated on the vast options available through career-education apprenticeships.
- Applying for an apprenticeship is long, overwhelming and complex for some students.
- Because part-time apprenticeships are not promoted, even though they are less widely available, they may appeal more to young people with SEND.

Working with young people and advocating for their support needs

It is important that young people with SEND understand all the options that are available to them, and therefore being able to discuss what an apprenticeship can offer is vital. It is also essential to be aware of the support that is available to young people. One requirement during an apprenticeship is networking. Some students may need additional time and resources during career education to become comfortable with and experiment with networking with both people and organisations.

A mentor is another support stream that may be available to your student. An apprenticeship mentor may support your student with one to one guidance, induction, and networking opportunities. Ensuring a student is aware that a mentor can help them throughout their apprenticeship experience may make this an appealing post-16 option. It may be beneficial to discuss with a young person what support needs they would like to share with their mentor and then liaise with the apprenticeship provider to arrange an introduction between the mentor and your student.

As a careers advisor, students must understand what reasonable adjustments may benefit them and how to share information with the apprenticeship provider about their support needs. Discussions around exam support, changes to the curriculum, off-the-job training, and the availability of reasonable adjustments make a student more confident about being in an apprenticeship environment. The Access to Work scheme is a great tool to introduce to students at an early stage so they can get the support they need.

Signposting

Please use the below links to find out what support is available for apprentices and how apprenticeships can be made even more accessible:



<https://www.dynamictraining.org.uk/apprenticeships-explained/accessible-apprenticeships/>

Support for apprentices with a learning difficulty or disability ([apprenticeships.gov.uk](https://www.apprenticeships.gov.uk))

Inclusive Apprenticeships | [British Association for Supported Employment \(base-uk.org\)](https://www.base-uk.org)

Amazing Apprenticeships - [Disability Rights UK](https://www.disabilityrightsuk.org)

Guide to Accessible Apprenticeships Liverpool City Region has partnered with Dynamic Training to support alternative apprenticeship solutions. Dynamic Training provides inclusive and accessible apprenticeships and training solutions across the UK.

Disabled Apprentice Network | [Disability Rights UK](https://www.disabilityrightsuk.org) The Disabled Apprentice Network (DAN) brings together Disabled apprentices and those who have finished their apprenticeship. The Network is a lively and friendly forum for Disabled apprentices to share their experiences and offer views and proposals on what could improve apprenticeships for Disabled people.

Familiarising yourself with relevant contact details of learning support departments within further education providers may lead to CPD opportunities and further information that you can pass on to young people.

Supported Internships

Introduction

A Supported Internship is a structured, work-based study programme for 16 to 24-year-olds with SEND, who have an EHCP.

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.

Four key principles of Supported Internships

1. Intern spends 4-5 days a week with the employer. Whilst with the employer, the young person will be expected to comply with real job conditions, such as timekeeping, shift patterns and dress code.
2. Supported interns follow a personalised study curriculum alongside their time with the employer. This will be a bespoke package that is delivered by the tutor and supports their progression to paid employment. It can include English & Maths if appropriate.
3. Job coaches provide support to both the young person & the employer. They are central to the internship and are trained in Systematic Instruction in line with National Occupational Standards for Supported Employment.
4. The primary goal of the programme is for the young person to gain paid employment. Work placements must work for both the young person and the employer. The placements should meet a real business need.

Role of the Job coach

- Get to know each intern and complete a vocational profile which allows them to match an intern to a placement/employer.
- Complete a job analysis with the employer and observe/learn the role.
- Support the intern in their placement, this support can be a lot at first then the job coach will taper the support off to allow - intern to become more confident and independent in the role.
- Work with employers to implement reasonable adjustments for the interns.

Example of how Supported Internships Work – DFN Project SEARCH

The Supported Internship at DFN Project SEARCH requires four days on work-based rotations and one day employability work in The Best Unit at Broadgreen Hospital. During their time at The Best Unit young people will have the opportunity to develop employability skills such as working on their CV and how to react in the workplace. The DFN Project SEARCH Supported Internships take place during the college academic year.

Supported Internships with HFT and partners provide the opportunity for people with a learning disability with the chance to work towards sustained, paid employment by equipping them with the skills they need for work, through learning in the workplace. At present, there is no guarantee of a job at the end of a Supported Internship but many interns have gone on to paid employment through the help of the model.



Link to video - Managers mentors and interns talking about their experiences of NHS Supported Internships National Supported Internship Day - Amy and Sharron.
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QHwaWGDgMIY>

We offer placements in various departments including

- Catering
- Estates
- Administration
- Portering
- IT
- Pharmacy



Signposting

[Supported Internship Information Leaflet - Liverpool City Region Careers Hub \(lrcareershub.co.uk\)](#)
[SWRAC Training, Mentoring, Work Experience & Alternative Education Provision](#)

Applying for Supported Internship in Liverpool City Region

Once you have identified learners that have expressed interested in a Supported Internship, contact the relevant provider of Supported Internships in your borough (See page 58).

Contact with young person will be made to chat about their application and then refer onto appropriate education provider for the opportunities (e.g EHCP/Non EHCP).

University

Introduction

This resource, will help you to understand how to inform young people with SEND of university choices available to them, the adjustments to facilitate different ways of study and how to transition to higher education. The recommendations offered in this resource surrounding young people's next stage of education will:

- help improve your knowledge of the support available to share with students.
- develop your understanding of how they access support – this can build students' confidence in understanding their support needs whilst advocating for them.

Barriers to University

Below are some examples of the concerns a young person may have about transitioning to university:

- How far is the university from home? Can I commute in? If I need to move away, can I easily travel back if I need to? Do I need personal assistants to live/study at university?
- What are the accommodation options? Are they accessible?
- Are the entry requirements roughly in line with my predicted grades?
- Can the university meet my support needs?



Support offered by Universities

It is important to discuss with students what support is available to them. Every university will have dedicated teams who specialise in providing support and guidance to students with additional needs which may include:

- Support with managing/organising/planning their work and time.
- Identifying support a student may be eligible for and how to access it, for example DSA.
- Counselling and mental health support.
- Transitions Days: an extra opportunity for students to familiarise with the university and its support options.
- Ensure their learning requirements are appropriately assessed and met.
- Ensure that 'reasonable adjustments' are put in place to enable a student to be an effective and autonomous learner.
- Enable and empower students to live as independently as possible, especially if moving away from home. Disability services will signpost to other teams that may help with certain elements once on campus, such as Money Advise and Wellbeing Services.



<https://www.unitestudents.com/the-common-room/student-living/11-life-skills-to-learn-and-master-in-your-first-year>



Key Differences in educational support – managing expectations

School/College Support:	Higher Education Support:
<p>Highly Structured Environment: Clear routines, frequent teacher/parent communication. Example: daily check-ins, structured lesson plans</p>	<p>Expectation of Independent Study: Self-management of time and tasks. Example: independent research projects, self-paced study</p>
<p>Regular Teacher/Parent Communication: Frequent updates on student progress and needs. Example: weekly meetings or progress reports</p>	<p>Limited Direct Intervention from Staff: Greater autonomy, fewer check-ins. Example: tutors available during office hours but less day-to-day oversight</p>
<p>Frequent Monitoring and Feedback: Close supervision and immediate feedback. Example: teachers regularly checking in on assignments and providing guidance</p>	<p>Emphasis on Student-Initiated Support Requests: Students must proactively seek help. Example: booking appointments with support services, approaching tutors for assistance</p>



Working with young people and advocating for their support needs

Communication is vital between students, academics and support staff in higher education. The aim is to ensure clear expectations for institutions and students. By respecting and following the advice and experiences proposed by young people with SEND, it is much easier for career professionals to provide guidance and signpost students to external support resources.

A good way to work alongside students is to facilitate a time of self-reflection, so you are both clear on what support the student is asking for and why it is important.



Please see pages 6, 11, 12, 13 of *Shaping Futures - Inclusive Transitions* resource

DSA Information

Students who have had or are considering academic support when they study in higher education can apply for Disabled Students' Allowance (DSA). It is important to note that they will need to provide evidence to support their application. This is a non means tested grant and does not need to be repaid. Students will not receive any money (unless they are a student from Scotland) and the grant will go directly towards funding interpreters, equipment, assistive technology or ergonomic equipment. Each university will also review a students' needs if they need to consider any other reasonable adjustments such as exam modifications, modifying seating arrangements, library assistance or note takers. Information from schools and colleges about previous adjustments doesn't automatically transfer to higher education institutes so it's important for a student to make pre-entry contact with Disability Services.



DSA Information

(please see page 8 of Shaping Futures - Inclusive Transitions resource)

Personal care at university

If a student plans to live away from home, a university cannot provide any elements of personal care so they should start planning as far in advance as possible. It is a good idea to start planning 12 to 15 months before the young person plans to go to university. If they have less time, don't worry – it's still possible to get the right support but they will need to take some proactive steps.

Personal assistants are either employed by the local authority or by a student through a 'direct payment'. Personal assistants carry out the care component of the package, which may include:

- domestic duties such as cooking, cleaning and shopping
- personal hygiene
- transport
- basic medical needs, such as, injections

When a student goes to university and moves away from home, the responsibility to fund their personal care package rests with the local authority where they are 'ordinarily resident.' This means deciding where they feel more settled and where they have the strongest ties. For many students this is the local authority they are coming from.

The presumption is that their personal care will be funded by the local authority they are coming from. If, however, they wish to settle in the new local authority area (perhaps a student may wish to stay there after graduation), they will need to contact them instead.

It can be complicated transferring between two local authorities and a student may need to get in contact with [Disability Rights UK](#) and other organisations to provide them with all the information they need.

Ellie's Top Tips

Hi, my name is Ellie. I recently completed my undergraduate degree studying Special Educational Needs & Disability Studies at Liverpool Hope University. The transition from school to university proved ambiguous as I encountered barriers I did not know existed. Ultimately, my transition to university was a hasty one, but one that I expressed great gratitude for! For this reason, I worked as a research assistant, facilitating the production of this toolkit, and I would like to share some of the tips and tricks which may benefit other students.

- 1. Awareness of university support: I was always reluctant to see university as a potential option due to the pressure of secondary education. The reduced classes and the academic support I received made my journey much easier than anticipated.**
- 2. Knowledge of access requirements and potential bursary/funding options for additional equipment or support. Since becoming confident in sharing my access requirements, I received funding and modifications that improved my course experience.**
- 3. Utilise additional time to prepare students for open days. I only went to one open day (Hope!), and there were so many questions I could have asked looking back. Students may need additional time and prompts to prepare adequately for open days to ensure the university is right for them. You could also contact universities directly to request a one-to-one visit for students who might have found big open days overwhelming.**

In collaboration with Dr Marie Caslin, I provided a case study to the House of Lords, and the barriers experienced in career education are discussed in greater detail. Please visit the link below if you would like to read further: <https://committees.parliament.uk/writtenevidence/124949/pdf/>



Signposting

One of the ways in which both young people and careers advisors may provide solutions to barriers is by being signposted to external resources and organisations; Including specific organisations and resources in the school careers curriculum to improve the confidence of young people with SEND and CEIAG delivery. Some examples include:



1

Further information on the overall transition to university and prompts to use when working with students [can be found within this PDF](#)

2

Information about DSA ([PAGE 8 of Shaping Futures](#))



3

Once you know the universities your student is interested in, signpost them to the university student support webpages



Signposting

4

Information about accessible public transport in your local/university area

<https://www.merseytravel.gov.uk/tickets-and-pricing/>

<https://www.disabledpersons-railcard.co.uk/people-with-disabilities/>



5

Working with disability organisations to answer questions proposed by yourself and young people

<https://www.askjules.co.uk/>

<https://www.advancingaccess.ac.uk/blog/supporting-students-with-disabilities-to-access-higher-education>

6

Directing students to their local council to learn about employing and managing personal assistants



Further Information

Students who may be entitled to additional financial support should contact student services from their chosen university as most institutions have their own funding schemes which would be worth exploring.

The Snowdon Award Scheme

<https://www.snowdontrust.org/financial-awards/grants/>

Website: [snowdontrust.org](https://www.snowdontrust.org)

Additional funding options for blind or partially sighted students;

<https://www.pocklington.org.uk/education/university/getting-finance-ready/additional-funding-options/>

Employment

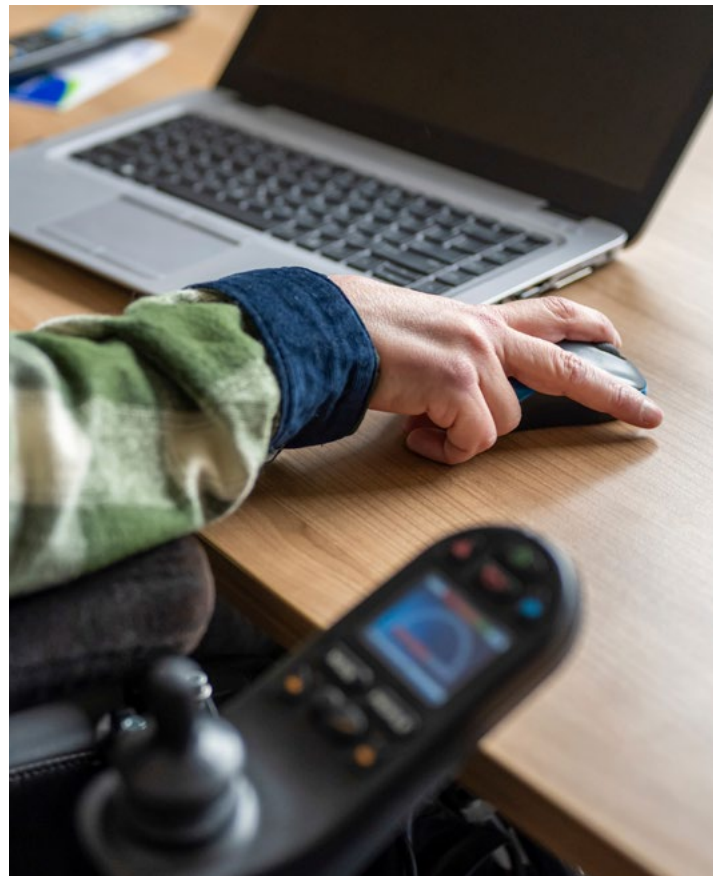
Introduction

According to BASE UK, the employment rate for people with a learning disability between 2022-23 was inadequately low at 4.8%. Disabled jobseekers often face barriers at every stage of employment due to some employers having negative attitudes about what young people can/not do. Undoubtedly, this creates inaccessible workplaces, and this needs to change. To challenge negative stereotypes, a career leader needs to focus on the skills of young people and empower them to be confident in entering the labour market (5). This section outlines:

- **understanding the barriers students may face.**
- **how to change attitudes around disability in your practice and how students may perceive themselves.**
- **how to prepare students to negate access barriers.**

Barriers to Employment

1. Physical inaccessibility (6).
2. How to react to deal with the levels of inflexibility and prejudices held by employers (7).
3. Lack of clarity on how to employ personal assistants to assist them at work.
4. How to navigate employment without losing particular disability benefits.
5. Inadequate work experience: the workplace was either inaccessible or employers undermined the capabilities of the young person.
6. Logistics around accessible transport.
7. How to apply for and self-advocate for reasonable adjustments (8).
8. Attitudinal prejudice in the classroom that hinders the development of professional relationships.



SECTION 4: Post-16 Options - Employment

As a result of the barriers outlined on the previous page, young people with SEND tend to alter their career ambitions based on how demanding a job role is perceived to be. This is called strategising; examples which young people may adopt include:

- Managing a work-life balance that maintains their health: seeking job positions that have part-time or flexible work schedules.
- Not requesting the full accommodations they require in fear of being rejected by employers.
- Practical approaches to selecting jobs: disregarding job descriptions that entail any detail of physicality or that seem overwhelming.
- Timeliness and accessibility of public transport: likely to reject jobs that require long periods of travel or an accessible route is hard to come by.

“I always look at the job requirements, and they say things ... like if it says I need the ability to lift heavy objects, then that’s reasonably within the job description. If you’re carrying around boxes of files, then I know that’s something I can’t do’

(Unemployed Young Person). (8) ”



Working with young people and advocating for their support needs

Giving young people the space to articulate the barriers that they feel are hindering employment opportunities can help career leaders better understand how to best support students.

An example of how to work alongside students with SEND is to listen to their concerns that they have in regards to the world of work. Ensuring that students are aware of the practical, mental health and communication support Access to Work can offer may put them at ease and empower them to pursue a career that fits their interests. Exploring Access to Work alongside students and supporting them through the application process can be helpful.



As for barriers that emanate through education, such as inadequate work experience and attitudinal prejudice affecting professional relationship development, students with SEND may need more time and adjustments to develop the skills required for the workplace:

- Working together with students to find accessible placements that also cater for their ability level and interests
- Extra support, time, and guidance during mock interviews and career fairs. Some students are reluctant to participate in employment-related activities because they do not feel equipped to engage with prospective employers. It is essential to recognise what students are passionate about and give them the confidence and time to figure out how to portray this.

Scope provides Career Pathways sessions and eLearning resources to students, which could be a great partnership to initiate as a careers leader.

Signposting

1

AXS Passport enables you to share your needs and preferences quickly and effectively. Your AXS Passport will support you through education, workplaces, healthcare, and social environments – <https://www.axs-passport.co/>

2

atwsolutions® is a specialist partnership of employment support consultants with extensive experience in the employment support sector across the UK - <https://www.atwsolutions.co.uk/>

3

[Access to work - Gov.uk](#)

4

Scope <https://www.scope.org.uk/employment-services/career-pathways>

5

www3.halton.gov.uk/Pages/business/businesssupport/Employer-Support.aspx

6

[Help finding work | Knowsley Council](#)

7

<https://liverpoolinwork.co.uk/>

8

<https://www.seftonatwork.net/>

9

<https://sthelens.gov.uk/article/3472/Work-jobs-and-advice>

10

[Help finding work | wirral.gov.uk](#)

Voluntary and Community Opportunities

Introduction

This section of the resource will explore the numerous benefits of volunteering for students with SEND and potential volunteer opportunities in surrounding areas. Even though the majority of this toolkit provides information on how to help students transition into education and employment, it is also important to highlight the benefits of uptaking voluntary roles for some students with SEND.

The barriers and benefits to volunteering

Volunteering can host a number of benefits to students with SEND:

1. Many students with SEND lack experience due to organisational prejudice, volunteering is a great way to enhance the CV of your student.
2. Many voluntary roles have a relaxed structure. This may be beneficial for students who wish to acclimate themselves to having roles and responsibilities before committing employment.
3. Students with SEND often have less networking opportunities compared to their peers. Volunteering is a great way to expand social and professional networks that may lead onto other opportunities.
4. The aspect of engaging within a community may improve the emotional wellbeing of some students. Volunteering is a way of contributing to the local community whereby students may develop their confidence and other skills.

It remains critical that the preferences of students are kept central. Some students with SEND may not benefit from transitioning into voluntary work and have the rightful aim of getting into paid employment. Volunteering could be a facilitator in this rather than the end goal. It is clear that numerous barriers may arise for students when accessing voluntary opportunities, accessibility proves a significant factor as mentioned throughout this resource but, the generalisation of many voluntary roles may prove challenging. As there is limited scope for where a student can volunteer, they may feel as though their interests are not catered for. It is critical to explore opportunities that keep students' interests and ambitions central and liaise with voluntary organisations about any access requirements, the AXS Passport is an effective tool to aid this (9, 10, 11).



Signposting



1

Liverpool NHS work experience

<https://careers.liverpoolft.nhs.uk/careers/other-roles/work-experience>

2

Liverpool NHS volunteering

<https://careers.liverpoolft.nhs.uk/careers/other-roles/volunteering>



3

Boccia Sport England volunteering

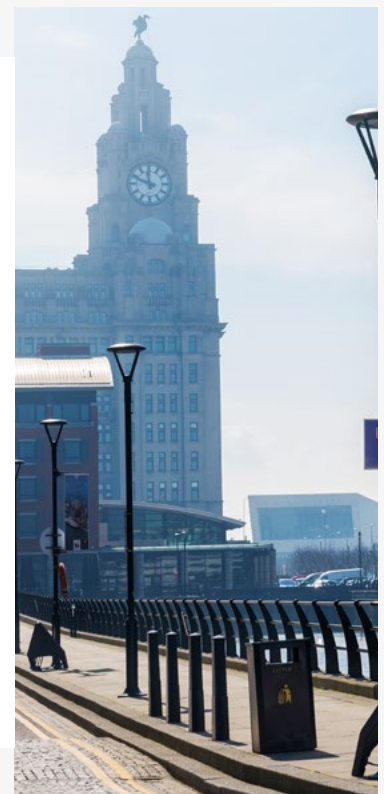
<https://www.bocciaengland.org.uk/Pages/Category/volunteering>

4

Volunteering by local area

Below are the links to each local area CVS volunteering opportunities:

- Halton and St Helens: [Volunteer Centre Halton and St Helens promoting and developing volunteering in your area. A TeamKinetic powered website \(haltonsthelensvca.org.uk\)](http://haltonsthelensvca.org.uk)
- Knowsley: [Innovate Volunteering | The Live Well Directory for Liverpool City Region](#)
- Liverpool CVS: [Liverpool CVS promoting and developing volunteering in your area. A TeamKinetic powered website](#)
- Sefton: [Search Volunteer Opportunities \(teamkinetic.co.uk\)](http://teamkinetic.co.uk)
- Wirral: [Wirral CVS promoting and developing volunteering in your area. A TeamKinetic powered website \(wcvs.org.uk\)](http://wcvs.org.uk)



SECTION 5:

Additional Resources

External organisations to support careers guidance and provision for young people

Local and National Careers organisations

- Understanding rights - Equality Act
- DWP disability employment advisors
- Supported Internships DfE guidelines
- Liverpool in Work
- This is Liverpool Independent Travel Training
- LCR Be More
- Benefits Maximisation Team
- This Is Liverpool Intern to Work
- Create a better future - Career Connect
- Jobcentre Plus
- Career Development Institute
- Education and Training Foundation
- Natspec
- STEM Learning
- Elevate EBP (elevate-ebp.co.uk)
- Mploy (mploysolutions.co.uk)
- Careers Advice, Support & Development
- www.princes-trust.org.uk
- British Association for Supported Employment
- Council for Disabled Children
- Autism Initiatives
- Careers & Enterprise Company SEND Provider directory
- National Careers Service
- Disability Rights UK
- Nasen
- Talentino
- NEET and Destination Data Guide
- CEC - Support Students at risk of NEET

Local Authority Offer for support services & provision:

- Local Offer | Halton's Local Offer (haltonchildrenstrust.co.uk)
- Local Offer - Special Educational Needs and Disabilities | The Sefton Directory
- 16-25 year olds - Becoming an Adult | Knowsley Info
- <https://new.sthelens.gov.uk/SEND>
- Liverpool Family Information & SEND Directory | Young Adults (16 - 25)
- SENDLO Wirral. Wirral's Local Offer of SEND Services

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The **SEND** in Mainstream Toolkit

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Southport Education Group

Ascent College

Liverpool City Region Career Hub

Liverpool Hope University

Shaping Futures

Liverpool University Hospital

Foundation Trust

Calderstones School

Sandfield Park School

Cavendish High Academy

The SEND in mainstream Toolkit



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METROMAYOR
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CAREERS HUB

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