

## Pear Tree Cluster (Lancashire) Making what works, work for everyone



Real experiences in real settings - pathways to work and independence

### About us

We are a new partnership brought together by our desire to work with other organisations in our local area to extend the opportunities for the young people as they move towards fulfilling adult lives. Our cluster brings together two specialist schools, a supported employment service, a Further Education college; a work based learning provider and a Children's Centre. We believe the rich mix of perspectives, backgrounds and experience within our cluster is making a positive contribution to the outcomes of our development work and is opening up new ways of working and supporting more creative thinking.

### Our aim and aspirations

Creating opportunities for **all** young people to discover and explore diverse options is our primary focus. We set ourselves the goal to seek out and develop high quality experiences of the workplace for a number of young people with complex and multiple needs. We wanted to:

- challenge assumptions (ours and others) that not all young people are able to be employed due to their specific needs, particularly those using sensory communication
- use proven approaches in developing pathways to work to set up and 'test' new opportunities, matching learners interests and needs with that of the work place- a person centred approach!
- develop practical tools and resources that we could use in flexible ways with employers, placement providers, practitioners and support staff.

### Motoring ahead...taster programmes in a motorvehicle workshop and beyond



4TechMoto offers a range of learning opportunities related to **car and motorcycle repairs**. As a cluster, we 'interrogated' the various possibilities open to us to create real experiences that could benefit 'sensory learners' as they moved towards employment and independence. 8 learners from Highfurlong School and Pear Tree Specialist School are due to start a 6-week 'taster' programme in the summer term.

As part of our preparation, we have worked closely together to co-create;

- A series of **session plans** detailing relevant learning activities linked to the Motor workshop- each session contains individual outcomes for each learner with simple, practical instructions of exactly what the 4Tech trainers need to do.
- **Joint planning and training sessions** – we have worked hard to establish an open and honest atmosphere, creating a safe space for staff from all providers to ask what we refer to as the 'questions you always wanted to ask but felt you couldn't'
- A 'crib sheet' that **details practical examples of learning outcomes** from milestone 1 - 4 (contextualised to a range of vocational areas)

- Sample activities and sessions within **wider vocational areas** including a hairdressing salon and garden centre- to help open up thinking around what learners with profound and multiple learning needs might contribute to....more are planned!

## Personally speaking...this is me!



H is one of the 8 learners taking part in the 'Garage' experience at 4TechMoto. This isn't just because it's her turn or it's the only placement available - we have all thought carefully about her interests and how she might benefit. H has developed her own **personal profile** to share with the staff at 4Tech to help them get to know her and how they can help her get the most out of the placement...

Deciding what information to share, how and with who took us down an interesting path! In our 'honest and open' forum, we soon realised that we all spoke completely different languages and that it would be a positive move to spend some time unpacking the implications of this for all of us...especially the learners!

Jointly developing an '**Employer Toolkit**' has helped us work through things like how we speak with employers / potential placement providers and helped us challenge and develop our own perceptions and practices. We see the 'toolkit' as a growing resource that we can work on together, each contributing our specific expertise and learning from each other.

*The process of developing the 'toolkit' has been as important as the 'product'. Keeping an open mind about what it should look like and **really listening to each other** has helped us enhance and widen our partnership working*

Developing the early versions of the toolkit helped form new links between Pear Tree Children's Centre and Cardinal Newman College including:

- Offering **work placements in Pear Tree's holiday club**
- Establishing links with a specialist school outside the cluster who will be **trialsing the placement profile**.

## Building on strengths...the difference that makes the difference to learning and earning

Commitment to a sustainable and integrated approach presented an opportunity to be creative around how we maximise the services and resource within the cluster. Progress Recruitment (Supported Employment Service) is:

- Providing a **clear and proven framework/pathway to work**. Adopting a targeted and 'bite sized' approach aims to change practice to do more of what works and shed anything that doesn't benefit the desired outcome.
- Supporting local capacity building through joint development sessions, training through tailored workshop sessions or "live" training / coaching (e.g. on job sites, employer engagement/ visits etc).
- Working closely with Cardinal Newman College Social Enterprises, **developing internal capacity around job analysis and producing sample practice materials** to help model the process.

Making the best use of the expertise held locally is assisting colleagues to share and learn from each other whilst acknowledging the benefit of invited external intervention.