



PURE INNOVATIONS/CENTRAL MANCHESTER UNIVERSITY HOSPITALS
NHS FOUNDATION TRUST/ THE MANCHESTER COLLEGE

PROJECT SEARCH

DEVELOPING EMPLOYABILITY OF YOUNG PEOPLE WITH LEARNING DIFFICULTIES IN CENTRAL MANCHESTER

SUMMARY

Project SEARCH is an innovative employment focused education programme designed to give young people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities opportunities to develop employability skills in a real work place, surrounded by other working people.

In Manchester, Project SEARCH is a partnership between Central Manchester University Hospitals Trust, Manchester College and Pure Innovations.

Central Manchester University Hospitals Trust has provided a range of different jobs including reception work; pharmacy porter roles, theatre stock assistant, medical laboratory runner and dental laboratory roles.

The Manchester College provides a tutor responsible for delivering classroom based learning within the hospital Pure Innovations provide dedicated coaches responsible for 'on the job' support to trainees, employees and managers.

As Jody, the College tutor, stated **"the students never cease to amaze you"**

"The scheme has been very popular with our line managers who have hosted students under the Project Search initiative, and it is clear that both the Trust as an organisation, and the students themselves, have taken great benefit from this initiative, and the Trust looks forward to continuing its support to Project Search in the future" - John

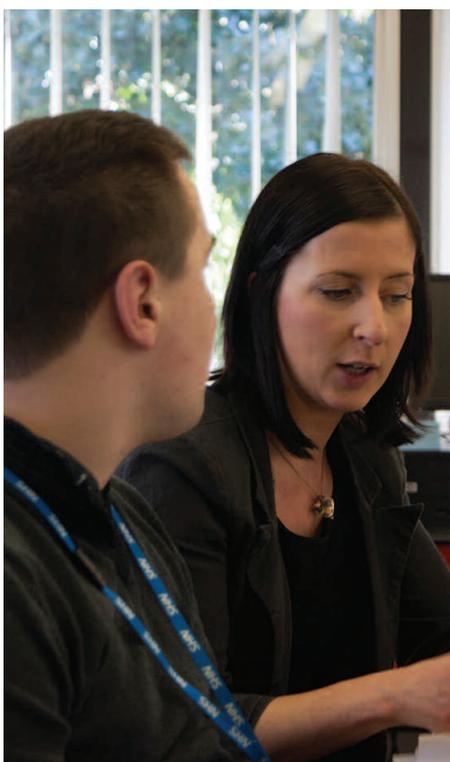
Harwood, HR Manager, Central Manchester University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust





KEY OUTCOMES

- Only 6 months in to the project one of the trainees is highly regarded by their manager who has said that they would like to employ them.
- All trainees have been assessed as being capable of fulfilling a job role
- A parent commented that if the trainees were not working on the project they would be attending day centres
- All trainees will achieve a qualification Entry 3 level City and Guilds in July 2011
- All trainees have shown a significant increase in confidence and communication based on feedback from the Project Search team, parents, patients and work colleagues



BACKGROUND

Whilst it is currently in its first year in Manchester, Project SEARCH has been successful for over 14 years in America where it began. It has been running in the UK since September 2009 on selected pilot sites including Bath, Leicester and Norfolk. All these sites have achieved real paid job outcomes for the learners and in recognition of the success of this model, all sites have opted to continue the project. There are currently 14 sites in the UK who deliver the Project SEARCH Programme.

In July 2010 the project was launched with the recruitment of 10 learners who have been accepted for the 1 year Project Search programme in Manchester. All are between 18 and 24 years old and have Learning difficulties, 5 moderate and 5 severe. The 'trainees' work 5 days each week at Central Manchester Hospitals, combined with daily on-site classroom sessions working towards an Entry 3 City and Guilds qualification. At the end of their year the 10 trainees will have obtained their qualification and either gained employment or will receive support to continue their job search. At this point, in July 2011 there will be a new intake of 10 trainees.

Pure Innovations Ltd is a national not-for-profit company, with over 20 years experience delivering innovative and high quality services as part of Stockport Metropolitan Borough Council. Pure Innovations became an independent company following a TUPE Transfer in July 2005, enabling services to be offered to other local authorities within the UK. Pure has a reputation for obtaining sustainable employment with the most disabled and disadvantaged people who are furthest away from the labour market.

Central Manchester University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust is the leading provider of tertiary and specialist healthcare services in Manchester, treating more than a million patients every year in its five specialist hospitals, all located within a new £500m complex on Manchester's Oxford Road.

The Manchester College is based at many sites across the city of Manchester. Each site has its own specialist, cutting edge facilities and resources within a friendly and supportive atmosphere. The college is ideally placed to offer a huge range of opportunities for students and learners of all ages. The College offers young people with learning difficulties (16- 25 years) the opportunity to develop independence and work skills that will benefit them in adult life.

Pure Innovations had a wealth of experience in supporting people with learning difficulties into work and they contacted the Hospital through the Greater Manchester Employers Coalition with the Project Search proposal. After getting The Manchester College on board a steering group was established with support from the NHS North West. This group took the project forward and continue to oversee its progress and development.

PURPOSE

Paid work is the ultimate goal of Project Search, and trainees may be offered employment at any time during the year. All time spent on the project is designed to prepare trainees for future work. If no employment is offered as a result of the traineeship, staff will work with trainees to identify and apply for suitable jobs with alternative employers.

The project, with the support of the College, also aims to equip these young people with an 'Entry 3' qualification to supplement the work experience and contribute to job readiness.

The Hospital Trust is committed to equality and diversity in employment and aims to make the workforce more representative of the local community. It also recognises the importance of paid employment on the health and wellbeing of the population. A project that enables local young people with learning disabilities to experience 'real' jobs and helps them gain the skills and knowledge required for employment is valued by this large public sector employer.

KEY STAGES OF SET-UP

- Commitment from the 3 parties, Pure Innovations, the Hospital and the College led to a steering group being set up to oversee the project
- Training for members of the steering group from the Project Search national team including visits to other project sites
- A hospital Equality and Diversity conference included a presentation on Project Search which resulted in over 30 managers supporting the project
- Pure Innovations carried out a job analysis and risk assessments on a selection of the areas put forward by managers

HOW IT WORKS

Throughout the year each trainee will complete 3 different work rotations. During this time, trainees work alongside and learn from their hospital colleagues and managers. Additional support through class-based sessions, progress monitoring, and job coaching is provided by the 2 Project Search team coaches.

Trainees spend the first hour of the day and the last half hour in the classroom where they work towards their qualification, supported by the Project Search College tutor. This is also an important time for trainees to talk through their work experiences and any issues they may have. The majority of trainees are able to make their way to their placements alone but others need to be accompanied by the Project Search team coaches. This structured daily routine is an important factor for the trainees.

A partnership approach is key in the scheme operating successfully, as is the willingness of trainees and departments. The natural support provided by workplace colleagues through buddying and mentoring has also proved vital.

- Classroom and equipment identified and set up close to the Hospital
- Trainees were recruited to the project. There are no 'eligibility criteria' for entry into this programme
- The Project team profiled the trainees and allocated them to suitable placements
- Events were held to get to know the trainees including a picnic with parents invited
- Induction was held over a 2 week period run by the Project team and Trust managers
- The Hospital provides some training including induction, uniforms, Protective clothing (PPE)
- Pure Innovations supports the salary costs of the co-ordinator/job coach and a further job coach.

An application has been made to the Local Authority (Education) for future funding to secure the salary costs of the job coaches in the future.

RESOURCES

- The College is able to obtain funding for the tutor and classroom and also provide IT equipment, stationery and qualifications
- The Local Authority covers the transport costs of those trainees aged under 19 with the College picking up the cost of those who are older.



KEY CHALLENGES

- Finding and funding a Project Search classroom close to the Hospital campus was initially difficult and temporary accommodation was used to get the project off the ground. However an empty classroom on the University campus has been secured and funded by The Manchester College
- Securing on-going funding for the job coaches has also been an issue and remains so at this point in time
- The Trust HR lead for employment projects worked closely with the Project Search team as part of the steering group but left 4 months into the project. There are Trust plans to replace this post and the links have been maintained through a senior HR manager in the interim but the team recognise the important role played by their link at the Trust and the need for continuity
- Pure Innovations play an essential role in the project. They have a wealth of experience and systems including clear quality assurance models
- Learning from each other and being flexible as the project progresses
- Project Search has been invaluable in identifying roles that may be suitable for the trainees
- Managers at the Trust have shown enthusiasm and support for the project offering up 30 placements and have been impressed by the contribution of the trainees in their roles

SUSTAINABILITY

- The project has now been running for over 6 months. The trainees have been accepted in the Hospital and there has been very positive feedback
- Funding of the job coaches remains uncertain for the future but the team are looking at alternative sources and remain confident that the project will be sustainable

- Learning outcomes of the trainees have met College expectations and the project offers an excellent approach to gaining employability qualifications for these young people
- The steering group continue to manage the project in a true partnership approach where all parties play a unique and essential role in achieving the aims of Project Search

Although the project did not set out to make cost savings for the employer, it is evident that there could be derived benefits of creating a role for the trainees that covers a number of less skilled tasks which then frees up the technician or other health professional to develop a role that better utilises their skills. This skill mix change has the potential to improve productivity, make cost savings or source resources for trainee employment.

NEXT STEPS

- Secure continued funding for the job coaches
- Recruit for 2011/12
- Consider rolling out the project to other employers in the area
- Publicise the project

KEY LEARNING

- The Project Search team have worked to make the project successful and believe that anyone working in this field needs to be proactive and can make things happen





GOOD PRACTICE CASE STUDY



Western Cheshire

CASE STUDY

THE STORY OF JW

JW is a young man with severe learning disabilities. He has autism, tourettes, dyslexia, dyscalculia and dyspraxia. Prior to starting the Project Search programme JW had completed a level 1 at The Manchester College.

During the summer of 2010 a Project Search job coach met with JW and completed a work development plan. The work development plan is specifically focused on the individual - highlighting previous work experience, qualifications, skills, hobbies and work preferences. During the profiling process it was identified that JW is a quiet, introverted person who prefers not to engage in conversation and likes routine. From the information and time spent with JW the coach carefully identified a department to suit his skills.

The coach analysed numerous job opportunities across different departments within the hospital, looking at different tasks undertaken, equipment used, the team he would be working with, and any risks. Together with the profiling process the coach was then able to identify a role to suit JW's skills, a technician support assistant in the dental labs - a practical role requiring a person who thrives on routine, maintains good concentration levels, and is adept at tasks of a repetitive nature. The coach then produced a training plan, breaking down tasks to enable effective job training using TSI (training in systematic instruction).

JW began his placement/rotation at the end of September with intensive support from his coach. Some of JW's tasks included daily stock checks (and re-stocking where necessary), recycling materials such as mouth moulds, and removing plaster from dental equipment.

JW took his tasks on board very quickly, allowing the coach to withdraw the intensive support and use the natural support provided by the dental lab

team. JW soon became integrated within the dental lab team carrying out all his tasks independently and joining colleagues on their regular Friday lunchtime outing.

As JW had picked up tasks so quickly, he then took on additional ones such as distributing medical boxes to different areas in the dental hospital and making new wax moulds for the technicians to use. A lot the tasks JW was doing would usually be carried out by the technicians when they could fit in the time to do them, so having JW doing them continuously meant they could get on with their specific jobs.

JW became so efficient at the tasks he was given that he managed to get through a back log of thousands of moulds, again freeing up time for technicians. This is a perfect example of customised employment and how having a student from Project Search has benefited this department.

As all of the tasks JW had carried out had been of a practical nature, JW was then given some basic filing to do, a task which JW said he couldn't do. With some additional training done in an accessible format for JW to follow, he overcame this and was then able to carry out this task independently.

The change in JW even throughout his first placement has been immense. This has become evident in the classroom based sessions through his increased contribution and at work in his confidence not only in carrying out tasks independently but in social situations. His parents have commented

on the difference in his confidence. JW has enjoyed this placement so much that he has requested to stay there for his next rotation.

Quote from John Harwood, HR Manager, Central Manchester University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust.

"This Trust is committed to supporting local regeneration and to improving economic prosperity in the neighbourhood.

As part of this, the trust works hard to identify key issues and to implement new initiatives designed to address the barriers that local minority groups can sometimes face in securing employment.

A particular focus is around valuing diversity and continuing to operate as a true employer of choice, representative of our local community and service users. We are proud to support Project Search in order to provide diverse and sustainable opportunities that support young people with disabilities through skills training and potential employment.

FURTHER LINKS

<http://odi.dwp.gov.uk/odi-projects/jobs-for-people-with-learning-disabilities/project-search.php>

<http://www.themanchestercollege.ac.uk/department/learning-difficulties>

<http://www.pureinnovations.co.uk/>



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