

Committee: Department of Community and Children's Service – For information	Dated: 14/09/2023
Subject: Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) Internship and Employer Forum Project	Public
City Corporation's Corporate Outcomes Contribute to a flourishing society. 1. People are safe and feel safe. 2. People enjoy good health and wellbeing. 3. People have equal opportunities to enrich their lives and reach their full potential. 4. Communities are cohesive and have the facilities they need.	1, 2, 3 and 4
Does this proposal require extra revenue and/or capital spending?	No
If so, how much?	N/A
What is the source of Funding?	Department For Education/National Development Team for Inclusion
Has this Funding Source been agreed with the Chamberlain's Department?	N/A
Report of: Judith Finlay – Director of Community and Children's Services	For Information
Report author: Barbara Hamilton: Department of Community and Children's Services – Adult Skills Education and Apprenticeships	

Summary

This report provides a brief outline of the arrangements in place to support young people between the ages of 16 and 25 with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) including those who have or have had an Education, Health, and Care Plan (EHCP).

The head of the City of London Corporation's SEND team will prepare the EHCPs. The plan is designed to provides details of the young person's needs and level of support. The plan will be discussed with the young person and their parents or Carers.

Each learner will be given a post-16 Study Plan. This plan will focus on their individual learning needs. The actual delivery plan will include the details of the 12-month work placement/internship arrangements. The SEND Internship project will

concentrate on working with young people who have traditionally found it hard to progress into employment.

This report will also include a brief description of the SEND Employer Forum. The role of the forum is to work with employers, specialist departments, parents, and young people to provide guidance on the effectiveness of the different work placement arrangements. The intention is for the Adult Skills team's dedicated officer to work closely with local partners, employers, and some specialist training institutions to cater for the learning and employment needs of the City of London Corporation's young people with SEND. The offer can be made available to residents of other inner London boroughs too.

The project will seek additional funding to support the training and employment of a work placement coach, this is intended to be sought from the Department for Education through the National Development Team for Inclusion. It is the responsibility of the work placement coach to assist the young person during the internship (to support confidence building and help with formal study skills).

Recommendation

Members are asked to:

- Note the report.

Main Report

1. Background

1.1 The Children and Families Act 2014, Children and Young People in England with Special Educational Needs or Disabilities sets out the strategic planning duties on local authorities and other services, in relation to disabled children and young people with special educational needs.

1.2 In 2022 the Government reinforced its commitment to supporting more young people with SEND into employment by the Department for Education (DfE) funding a three-year programme to strengthen Supported Internships.

1.3 The Adult Skills project team submitted a programme delivery plan outlining the delivery model that was to be used to support the agreed number of interns with SEND. The delivery plan also clarified the role of the Employer Forum and the responsibilities of its members.

1.4 There is a three-year contract between the Adult Skills team and the DfE to work with 20 young people between the ages of 16 and 25 who have or have had EHCPs (a legal document setting out a young person's special educational needs, the support they need, and what they would like to achieve). This contract was committed to in October 2022.

1.5 It was agreed that an Employer Forum would be established to support the work placements.

1.6 In April 2023, the first Employer Forum meeting took place. This meeting was attended by partners from several different sectors. For example, health and social care, community youth services, special schools, and neighbouring boroughs with extensive experience of working with young people with SEND.

1.7 The purpose of the Employer Forum is to support the development of a strategic approach and action plan aimed at improving employment outcomes for young people with SEND. The forum brings together all local partners who can assist with the development and delivery of high-quality realistic learning pathways. The Forum is intended to create a practical route that will support young people with SEND into paid employment. It will also develop important assessment, monitoring, and evaluation milestones for all young people.

1.8 The Supported Interns will be encouraged to engage with the programme following discussions with their schoolteachers, medical professional specialist advisers, Social Workers, SEN case officers and parents. The project team will also work with community groups and local Outreach teams to promote the project in local residential settings. The Internship opportunities will be promoted on the City of London Corporation's website. Information about the programme will be included in several local authority newsletters and publications.

1.9 The SEND manager and the Supported Internship Officer will discuss the possibility of offering termly information surgery/advice sessions. This service will be available to anyone seeking advice about the Internship programme. The sessions will be held at easily accessible venues such as local libraries, community centres or at a local Sports Centre

The programme will aim to recruit a minimum of seven interns per annum.

1.10 Supported internships are work-based learning placements within mainstream employment settings and will require a young person to be working for a minimum of 20 hours per week in an employer's premises. The aim is to secure a job or apprenticeship at the end of the 12-month placement.

1.11 The Adult Skills team have prepared an information guide that responds to parents and young people's questions such as: 'How do I know that a supported internship is good?' 'How can I, with a learning disability, get a paid job?' And 'When should I begin to discuss my interest in securing a supported internship?'

1.12 A Post-16 Study Programme will be developed for each intern. This is a study plan for young people with an EHCP, who traditionally have found it challenging to move into employment. This programme is supported by a partnership between an education/training provider, supportive employers, and a local authority.

1.13 The young person (intern) is placed with an employer, usually for a four-day week. They will be allocated a job coach and a tutor. On the fifth day of the week, the intern will attend formal learning and will be encouraged to work towards a qualification as part of their internship. The individual study programme will include subjects such as language support, (if needed), Maths, Digital Skills, and English.

1.14 The City of London Corporation's SEND Internship delivery team is multidisciplinary. It has support arrangements in place to review Individual Learning Plans and assessments for learners with SEND. A qualified and experienced additional support tutor is responsible for assessing individual learning needs. An experienced Internship Placement and Coach officer is identified. The team have so far identified four new employers who are fully committed to working with the City of London interns. The City of London Corporation's Town Clerk has agreed to allocate two internal vacancies to a young person with SEND.

1.15 The Adult Skills team have started by dividing the activities into two priority areas. The first is to continue to develop the Employer Forum and to work closely with members to create internship opportunities to support young people with SEND. The second priority is to support the development of easily accessible learning pathways.

1.16 All local authorities have statutory responsibilities to identify and meet the needs of young people with SEND who are aged 0–25 years old. An important element of the 2014/15 legislation is that it ensures that young people with SEND are prepared for the next stage in their lives through Preparation for Adulthood (PFA).

1.17 PFA has four important outcomes: employment and training; good health; independence; and enabling young people with SEND to fully engage with local community activities. The Adult Skills team will work with internal and external partners to ensure that the four PFA outcomes are achieved.

2.Current Position

2.1 The initial plans required to ensure the success of this programme are now almost in place. There are four new employers who have demonstrated their commitment to support young people with SEND; they intend to sign an internship agreement to confirm their willingness to secure one 12-month internship placement. The employer and the intern will be supported with the assistance of the work placement coach.

2.2 The provision of formal learning to include Maths, English, Digital Skills, and language support will be delivered internally through existing City Corporation arrangements as part of the apprenticeship support programme. The delivery team is waiting for a response from the National Development Team for Inclusion (NDTi) regarding a grant support package for each intern.

2.4 For those young people who may require a more advanced training course, such as higher levels maths or engineering, individual discussions will take place with local Further Education colleges and universities (this will require a separate application for NDTi funding).

2.5 This approach of combining structured training, work experience and learning has been shown to help to bridge the gap between education and employment. It can also enable young people with SEND to develop a sense of independence and achievement, knowing that they have secured a nationally assessed qualification and good quality work experience.

2.6 A specially appointed trained employment coach will be available to provide additional support for the learners during their work placement. This support will ensure that the young person has sufficient time to development their confidence, to fully understand the employer's and their own expectations of the internship.

2.7 The delivery priorities for the City of London's Adult Skills Service are to ensure that, during 2022–2025, the SEND Internship targets agreed with the NDTi are fully met.

The SEND/Internship project delivery plan below outlines the actions taken to secure the achievement of the agreed work placement targets. Please see Appendix 1

3. Options

3.1 The Adult Skills Team is working to support two main activity areas.

3.2 The first is to ensure that a broad range of London-based employers are fully engaged with the Supported Internship programme and that the Adult Skills Team can successfully secure 20 work placement vacancies. The team will facilitate breakfast discussions, one-to-one meetings with employers, information workshops, and seminars. The purpose of these events is to assist employers to develop their understanding of the positive contribution that a young person with SEND can bring to the workplace through Supported Internships.

3.3 The second area of activity is the development of the SEND Employer Forum. The function of the Employer Forum is to provide guidance and support for the work placement activities. Employers will be the main members of the forum; it is their responsibility to identify suitable work placement opportunities in their organisation.

3.4 The cross-sector nature of the forum membership is a key element of success – bringing together expertise, including voices of young people, their families, education representatives, elected members, and champions for this agenda.

4. Proposals

4.1 The aim is for the Adult Skills team to extend its relationships with its apprentice employers and develop a pre-apprenticeship training option to run alongside its standard apprenticeship/training scheme. This will be one progression route for Interns who have completed their learning/work placement arrangement.

4.2 A dedicated Adult Skills team officer will work with groups of employers to secure one-year internship/work placement arrangements for a minimum of 20 young adults. In a similar way to the delivery of the current apprenticeship offer, interns will combine their four days of work placement with one day 'off the job' formal learning activity. This will include enrolling on the in-house accredited Maths, English or Digital Skills courses. Additional support will be made available in accordance with the needs of the young person.

4.3 The NDTi allocated a sum of £50,000 to support project administration. Applications for further grant support have been made to the NDTi to meet the cost of a work placement coach. A grant is also available to support the young person's daily access to work.

5. Key Data

5.1 As evidenced, of 9.58 million people of working age, between 16 to 64 years, some 23% reported that they were disabled in January 2023, (UK Parliament, 2023). This is an increase of 598,000 from the figure for 2022. In the City of London, figures from the latest census show that 919 people stated that they had a disability, equating to one in nine people (Office for National Statistics, 2023). As the numbers continue to increase as people live longer and healthcare treatments and technology improve, the greater the need for support and additional services.

6. Corporate & Strategic Implications

6.1 The SEND Internship and the Employer Forum project is aligned with and will support the delivery of the Corporate Plan. Part 3 of the Children and Families Act 2014 (Children and Young People in England with Special Educational Needs or Disabilities) sets out the strategic planning duties of local authorities and other services, in relation to disabled children and young people with special educational needs.

6.2 Financial implications – None

6.3 Resource implications – None

6.4 Legal implications – None

6.5 Risk implications – None

6.6 Equalities implications – The proposal to support the delivery of the SEND Internship programme complies with the Public Sector Equality Duty 2010 – the proposals will not have any negative impact on people protected by existing legislation – age, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion or beliefs, gender or sexual orientation, marriage and civil partnerships, pregnancy, and maternity.

6.7 Climate implications – None

6.8 Security implications – None

7. Conclusion

7.1 The City of London Corporation's SEND Supported Internship and Employer Forum programme will aim to provide several new employment and learning opportunities for young people with SEND aged between 16 and 24 years old.

7.2 The Forum members will be those people who can have the right conversations about the 'best' training, learning pathways and internships for individual young

people. The forum will be cross-sector in nature, and it will bring together a wealth of expertise and experience of working with young adults with SEND.

7.3 The report has provided a realistic but brief outline of the challenges that young people with SEND are experiencing. The long-term success of this project will be determined by whether there is a strong internal and external working partnership which delivers a minimum of 20 Supported Internships by 2025. The project will work to maximise the available knowledge and expertise that is available in local authority departments.

7.4 DfE reports highlights that young people with SEND are less likely to be in sustained employment 15 years after Key Stage 4 than their non-disabled peers (DfE 2001). Further information from a DfE research paper (2023) confirms that young people with EHCP/SEND in mainstream school after Key Stage 5 were 5.8% less likely to have an overall sustained destination than those students without SEND.

7.5 The Adult Skills team will work towards increasing the number of supported internship places. The team will also work with representatives from the NDTi to provide training to job coaches across the City of London departments. The Employment Forum will work with partners such as the Department for Work and Pensions to provide strategic partnership support and challenge to the implementation of the internships. At the same time, the project team will bring together local partners who can develop and deliver pathways to sustainable employment and promote collaborative working.

Appendices

- Appendix 1

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