

LEARNING VISIT REPORT

Muscular Dystrophy Group of Great Britain and Northern Ireland 12845

1.1 Date of visit: July 19 th 2017	1.2 Name of visiting Grants Officer: Kate Moralee	1.3 People met with: Rianna Davis, Intern; Peter Sutton, Project Manager; Tom Osborne, Fundraiser; Isabel Baylis, Project Officer
1.4 Programme Area & Outcomes: Making London More Inclusive Work supporting young disabled people (aged 16-25) in the transition to adulthood		
1.5 Purpose of the award: £113,000 over three years towards the salary costs of a Project Lead Officer and running costs for delivering the Moving Up work-experience project for Londoners.		
MONITORING INFORMATION		
2.1 Project Outcome 1: 45 young people will be more confident in their abilities and be in a better position to find paid employment thanks to better CV, interview skills and office working experience. Progress made: Over the first 18 months of your funding, Moving Up has hosted 24 young disabled people for work experience across the charity, making excellent progress towards its target of 45. Placements are generally between one week and two months (part-time) depending on health and education needs. Participants were offered a work experience opportunity in the most relevant department to them, including: Digital and Social Media, Care and Advocacy, Campaigns, and Corporate Fundraising. During the placement they are assigned a mentor who offers specialised CV and Careers Advice. MDUK has created its first ever paid internship position at the charity. Your grants officer met the intern, Rianna, on the visit, who talked about how confident, valued and more independent she now feels. She explained how there is a great difference between knowing that you are capable of working and actually experiencing work in a meaningful and real way. The placement and internship have opened up a new world of working opportunities for her. She also talked about the on-going difficulties and challenges she and others face in terms of securing and maintaining permanent employment, not least the difficulty of public transport and accessibility.		
2.2 Project Outcome 2: 15 corporate, charities or public sector organisations will take part in the project and will be in a position to offer placements to young disabled people in the future. Progress made: MDUK has built successful relationships with over 14 corporate organisations which has led to five external placements: one at Santander; one at ING; two at TfL and one at Parallel.		

There have been challenges with corporate engagement including the small numbers of Moving Up participants MDUK can offer large businesses. The Moving Up team is working in partnership with the organisation's Corporate Partnerships team to build relationships and maximise opportunities. They are setting up a mentoring scheme and developing 'small asks' of corporates in the hope of developing longer term relationships. Your officer suggested that MDUK develops an "offer" to corporates to facilitate a more equal two-way relationship.

2.3 Project Outcome 3:

3 London clinics and centres are signposting young people to the work experience project regularly

Progress made:

In year 1 the project had a pre-existing pool of participants from the group involved in pilot work. Year 2 has required a more creative approach to recruitment. Moving Up has built links with clinics to increase the number of people signposted to the project. To date there have been 10 referrals from the clinics but only 2 have been eligible. Of these young people 1 has taken up the opportunity and the other is awaiting a diagnosis and does not yet feel ready.

2.4 Project Outcome 4:

3 Universities in London signpost young disabled people to the project.

Progress made:

MDUK has links with universities across London, notably Middlesex, LSE and Brunel. The organisation attends careers fairs and places adverts for the project on university careers portals. This has resulted in a lot of interest including the placement of one participant from a careers fair and one through the online careers portals.

2.5 Project Outcome 5:

Build relationships with transition clinics and universities across London so that they may signpost young disabled people to our programme.

Progress made:

See above.

GRANT OFFICER COMMENTS

The visit showed that good progress is being made in helping disabled people into work experience and also into longer term, paid, employment. The organisation has been able to use your funding over time to constantly learn, reflect, refine and improve its model of engagement and working, identifying and matching challenges faced on the way. The project and organisation has grown over the period of CBT's relationship with them, and has received a Bridge to Work grant to enable the project to increase in scale.

MDUK has learnt from and responded to the project participants and their experiences. Participants have highlighted gaps in support and this has been picked up through social media, blogs, events and discussion forums. This project has also adapted its recruitment process to include new questions, for example, on work related support provided. Participants have highlighted the additional social care needs which need to be taken into consideration, not just accessibility and reasonable adaptations.

Social media has been a key means of communication for participants. Many wider employment issues have been discussed via this medium, and it has influenced MDUK's wider policy and influencing work. For example, a gap was identified of understanding of rights in the workplace. This is now covered during the Moving Up placement and informed MDUK's response to the Government's 2016 Work, health and disability green paper: improving lives.

Whilst the focus of the project remains providing opportunities to gain work experience, the additional funding through CBT's Bridge to Work fund will enable MDUK to set up forums with young people to identify the main barriers to employment, including social care issues, personal care at work, transport to work and other issues. As well as informing MDUK's wider policy and influencing work, this will inform and support relationships with businesses and corporate employees.

Your officer discussed methods of collecting qualitative and quantitative data to evidence impact of the project. The organisation is going to explore using a Distance Travelled (Outcomes Star) based model to improve the evidence base for specific interventions and the project.

MDUK reported a supportive relationship with CBT, not just in terms of the project but as an organisation. An example was given of CBT participating in a Parliamentary round table with them, which helped increase the organisation's voice. MDUK said: "it is rare to find a funder being so engaged in an issue". Moving forward, the organisation suggested that they could benefit more from the networks and influence of the City of London Corporation to leverage placement opportunities, build relationships with corporates and businesses in the City, access mentoring opportunities and speakers for events.