

# Effective Practice case study: Supported Internships in Manchester

## Summary

Manchester's vision is for children and young people to be 'happy, healthy, safe, and successful and for disabled children and young people to be independent and have choices.' Manchester's aim is to provide work for all disabled young people and young people with Special Educational Needs (SEN), and support them to enter paid employment where possible. To help achieve this, Manchester has a strong focus and long-term commitment to the Preparing for Adulthood pathways - supporting disabled children and young people and children and young people with SEN into independent adulthood. In 2022-23 Manchester's largest supported internship provider enrolled 61 young people onto the Supported Internship programme and 56% of the young people gained paid employment, a further 39% went into other positive destinations – volunteering, supported employment, further education.

The SEND Effective Practice Evidence Framework considers that the "strength of evidence" of this case study is **good** – the work has been evaluated and shared internally, and has been sustained for more than 12 months. The "breadth of impact" of this case study is **good** – there is evidence of impact in three of the four broad areas of impact considered by the Framework.<sup>1</sup>



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<sup>1</sup> The SEND Effective Practice Evidence Framework uses two "signal strength" indicators to present the strength of evidence and the breadth of impact of a case study. Each indicator has four bars – emerging, promising, good and robust. The "strength of evidence" indicator is based on how the project has been evaluated and the length of time it has been sustained. The "breadth of impact" indicator is based on whether the case study can demonstrate impact in four broad areas – the more areas of impact, the higher the signal strength indicator.

## Why was this work undertaken? What did the work aim to do?

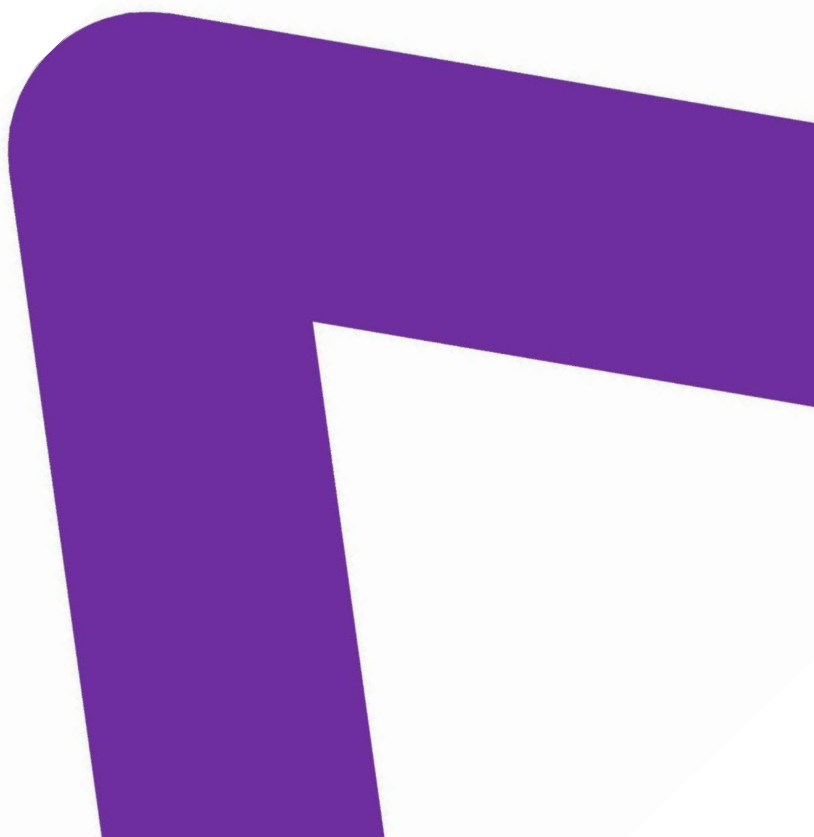
Manchester has delivered a Supported Internships programme since 2008 – first becoming a demonstration site for the Getting a Life programme and building on this experience as a Preparing for Adulthood Pathfinder in 2012, which fed into the 2014 SEND reforms on the Children and Families Act 2014.

In Manchester, although many disabled young people were attending college, they felt they did not have next steps mapped out beyond this. Parent carers and staff often had low aspirations for disabled young people and those with SEN because they did not have many examples of disabled people and those with SEN in employment, and were unaware of the processes for securing employment for this group of young people. However, young people say that they want to be like their peers: able to have fun, be independent and have a job. Barriers to employment include: parental fear, low aspirations, education and social care staff being unaware of available pathways, and a lack of confidence from employers. Consequently, a limited number of disabled young people and those with SEN were entering into paid employment.

Manchester's aim is to provide work for all disabled young people and young people with SEN, and support them to enter paid employment where possible. To help achieve this, Manchester:

- ✦ Places an emphasis on the Preparing for Adulthood outcomes in EHC plans;
- ✦ Embeds a culture of person-centred planning;
- ✦ Ensures co-production is central to work with families.

In 2009, at the start of the Supported Internship programme there were 10 young people in the first cohort, this has increased to 90 young people in 2023.



## What was the impact?



- ✓ Lived experience of children and young people with SEND and their families
- ✓ Education, health and wellbeing outcomes for children and young people
- Feedback from professionals
- ✓ Long term outcomes for children and young people

The project has been able to demonstrate impact in three of the four areas captured by the SEND Effective Practice Evidence Framework. The project has significantly increased the number of young people accessing supported internships - 10 in 2009, 90 in 2023. The project has also demonstrated an increase in the number of young people moving into paid employment - from the original provider - 7 in 2009 and 34 in 2023, as well as an increase in the number of young people who have achieved positive outcomes - 8 in 2009, 58 in 2023. Some interns that did not move into paid employment returned for a further term on the Supported Internship or went onto a Supported Employment programme as they needed longer to achieve paid employment, therefore the percentage of young people in paid employment will increase.

Over 50 young people are travel trained each year - providing young people with the skills and confidence to travel independently to work. The number of disabled young people and young people with SEN moving into work is increasing and Supported Internships continue to be a highly successful route - 134 young people have gained paid employment over the last 5 years and 1 young person has remained in employment for 10 years. Examples of employment that young people have progressed into include: catering, construction, airport support and dental laboratory work.

The project has been evaluated with data on impact, outcomes and experiences for disabled young people and those with SEN, and examples of good practice. The impact of Supported Internships is also assessed through individual EHCP annual reviews as well as through case studies provided by employers. Regular feedback is sought from parent carers, post-16 settings and Supported Internship providers. Supported Internship providers complete the Supported Internship Quality Assurance Framework self-assessment tool to determine the quality and success of their supported internships - it is used to highlight strengths and as an annual continuous improvement tool. Manchester also conducts an annual survey to ensure data on outcomes are gathered consistently.

## What were the key actions and practices involved?

There were 4 main elements to Manchester's Supported Internship Programme.

### 1. Person-centred planning

Training was developed specifically on person-centred planning and this has been rolled out to education, health and care professionals. Manchester also established a Preparing for Adulthood (Transition) team with person-centred planners to help families better navigate the transition from children's services to adult services. To ensure young people are placed into supported internships that match their career aspirations, job coaches complete vocational profiles and contact external employers who can offer roles that match the interns' interests and are likely to lead to paid work.

### 2. Strong focus on the Preparing for Adulthood outcomes in EHC plans

Manchester places an emphasis on the Preparing for Adulthood outcomes in EHC plans from age 11, this ensures annual reviews are future focused and holistic - by placing an emphasis on aspirations earlier, this improves outcomes for employment. Manchester also facilitates termly Preparing for Adulthood networks for all staff working with young people aged 14-25, this provides the opportunity to share best practice, resources and ensures cross-agency/sector working relating to Preparing for Adulthood. Travel training also ensures young people become independent in their community and can move into employment.

### 3. Building employment opportunities

Having employers onboard is key to the success of this work, initially starting with the public sector and then engaging with smaller organisations. Their earliest adopter was a hospital, followed by Manchester City Council. As the SEND Lead described it *"it doesn't work unless you have big public sector organisations – we could not persuade others if we were not doing it ourselves."* Year on year, other employers joined the programme. Manchester have shifted the balance away from college courses to supported internships, demonstrating to young people and parent carers that this is a viable route. For the first Supported Internship programme, Manchester brought The Manchester College and the supported employment provider [Pure Innovations](#) onboard. The college and Pure Innovations manage the process of seeking additional employers and opportunities for the Supported Internships programme. Since that original programme, many other providers have established successful internship programmes in Manchester.

### 4. Involving special schools

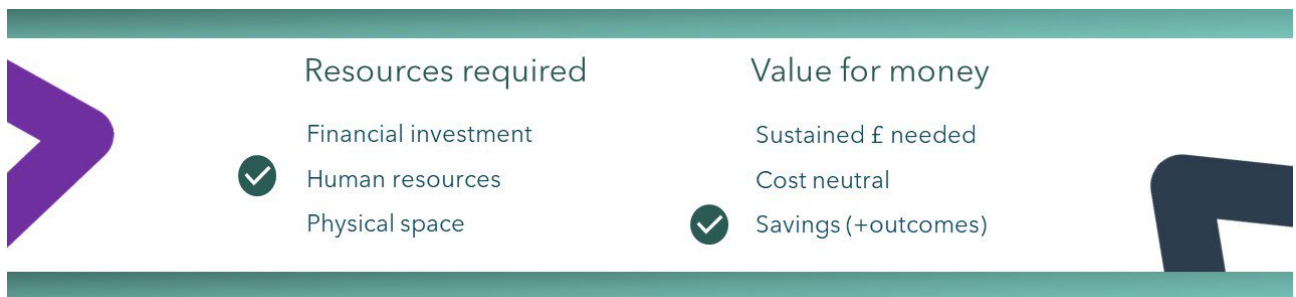
Manchester reported that there is strong buy-in from special schools as they are keen for young people to enter the Supported Internship pathway. Special schools have established strong careers and work-related learning programmes which meet Gatsby benchmarks.



## Has the work been sustained?

The work has been sustained over a period of 15 years. It is very much now business-as-usual, and the Supported Internships model is well established within Local Authorities across the Country. This work would be relevant to any local area wishing to adopt a Supported Internship model to support disabled young people and young people with SEN into employment.

Manchester utilises High Needs funding to shape the Supported Internships provision. The High Needs Budget funds individual Supported Internship places as young people accessing the Supported Internships programme are enrolled students.

Full data is not available regarding financial impact, however national evidence of the impact of supported internships highlights that investing in an internship will save money over a person's lifetime as they will be less dependent on public services and state benefits. Cost-benefit analysis indicates that progressing from a Supported Internship into paid employment accrues savings for the economy. The Supported Internship programme also diverts young people from needing adult social care, saving additional costs.



	<h3>Resources required</h3> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Financial investment</li> <li>Human resources</li> <li>Physical space</li> </ul>	<h3>Value for money</h3> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Sustained £ needed</li> <li>Cost neutral</li> <li>✓ Savings (+outcomes)</li> </ul>	
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## Finding out more

Contact to find out more	Julie Hicklin – SEND Lead: <a href="mailto:julie.hicklin@manchester.gov.uk">julie.hicklin@manchester.gov.uk</a>
Useful resources and links	<a href="#">Callum's story</a> <a href="#">Lift-Off as six interns graduate from Manchester Airport</a>