



Case study: Project SEARCH

Overview

Project SEARCH is an international programme that helps young people with learning difficulties to gain skills and experience to assist them in securing paid employment.

We – Derbyshire Education Business Partnership - are very happy to be involved in this programme in partnership with the University Hospitals of Derby and Burton NHS Foundation Trust, ISS, Horizons 6th Form at St Martins School, Royal School for the Deaf and Fountains High School.

In September 2019, nine Project SEARCH interns were welcomed to Royal Derby Hospital. The interns have enrolled on a full academic year programme and will participate in three placements across catering, administration, receipt and distribution and pathology to name but a few. The interns are assigned a mentor from the Trust and are supported by a Job Coach and Tutor based on site.

Individual case studies

Jack

Jack was previously a student at Horizons 6th Form and Access Training where he completed some practical based courses including brick laying, painting and decorating and outdoor skills. Jack knew he wanted a job that involved hands on work as he really enjoys being active and busy.

Jack applied to Project SEARCH and was delighted to be offered a place. Jack is full of life and doesn't let his barriers to learning and work get in his way. He is a pro-active and well-liked member of the group. It was clear from the beginning that he wanted to do his rotations at the Hospital in areas that would give him a variety of skills and experience.

The Facilities Management department at the hospital is vast, and covers everything from car parking and grounds maintenance, broken door handles and

fire safety right up to maintaining medical equipment and doing ward audits. The team were delighted to have Jack on board and his weeks are split between various teams, including one day a week at London Road Community Hospital where he is involved in receipt of deliveries, domestic cleaning room audits, restocking and general duties to keep communal areas safe.

Jack has learnt so much and he is determined to secure employment ideally within the Facilities Management team either at London Road or Royal Derby Hospital.



Feedback on Jack's journey so far is fantastic:

"Throughout his time with us Jack has shown consistent high levels of enthusiasm and engagement and I have received nothing but good reports from the team members he has worked with. He has adapted to each area of the service with ease and has shown excellent levels of interaction with everyone in the department. It has been a true pleasure to have Jack working with us."

Jack is now at the stage where he is perfecting his CV, applying for jobs and preparing for interviews with the support of both his Job Coach and Tutor. He has

developed an impressive amount of transferable skills, his attitude to both work and learning is commendable and he will without a doubt be an asset and an inspiration to his future employer.

Imogen

Imogen, ex-student from Royal School for the Deaf, started her Project SEARCH work placement with the Patient Experience team carrying out a range of tasks including office administration, promoting the team's new patient pledges and even teaching her colleagues some basic sign language.

Upon joining the team, Imogen was mentored by Judith Payne, Patient and Public Engagement Lead at University Hospitals of Derby and Burton.

Judith said: "Imogen has been a delight to have in our team - very friendly, polite and always smiling. Imogen's confidence has grown throughout her time with us and it's been fantastic to see. She is an asset to the team."

Imogen and her twin sister were born at Derby City General Hospital (now the Royal Derby Hospital) 26 weeks premature. Her mum, Sarah said: "As the girls were growing up, it was difficult to imagine what sort of future Imogen might have. Before Project SEARCH she was bored out of her mind and didn't know where she was going in life which had a big impact on her health and wellbeing. She was experiencing low moods and constant headaches and it was really difficult to see her upset. Project SEARCH has been life changing for Imogen - we can finally picture a possible future for her."



Paul, Imogen's Dad said: Imogen has spent a lot of time at the hospital receiving treatment. She had always wanted to work there and it's amazing to see her

achieving her ambitions. We've already seen such an improvement in her health and wellbeing; she's waking up with a smile and has found a purpose in life."

Imogen has now started her second placement as a Ward Hostess, serving drinks and food to patients on the Renal Ward.

Ryan

Ryan, a student from Royal School for the Deaf, started his Project SEARCH work placement with the Restaurant Team. Unlike some of the other students, Ryan also has the additional barrier of being Deaf.

Ryan said: "I was so nervous on my first day, but the team have really helped my confidence grow. This is my dream job and goal to work here. Everything about the role has been brilliant!"

The team supporting Ryan on his placement in the restaurant have helped build his confidence when interacting with customers and the Job Coach and Tutor have created picture aids and resources to support communication. These picture aids help both the customers and Ryan as they not only include prompts for the orders they would like to place, but also basic sign language on them.

Within the Restaurant Team, Ryan has been partnered up with mentor, Jennifer Dennis, Catering Assistant. Jennifer will support Ryan through his journey at the Royal Derby Hospital.



Jennifer said: "Ryan's attitude towards work and learning is fantastic; he has bags of enthusiasm and motivation. He is in his element working on the jacket

potato stand. Before having Ryan in the department, I had never heard of Project Search, I think it is a brilliant idea. Ryan has been an absolute pleasure and joy to work with and get to know. I hope other establishments and businesses across Derbyshire consider getting in touch with Project SEARCH. Everybody deserves a chance.”

Sarah Cutler, Project SEARCH Job Coach, said: “Ryan never fails to impress us with his positive attitude towards work. Ryan joined not knowing any of the other students and quickly made friends with everyone. We are so proud of how far he has come in such a short space of time. He has made such a fabulous impression on the catering team and seeing how much he is loving his role is just inspirational.”

Impact

Disabled young adults are significantly underrepresented in the nation’s workforce and are far less likely to secure employment than the general population. Only 3.5% of young adults with a learning disability known to their local authority in Derby are in paid work.

The project has been successful in other NHS Trusts and at Barts Healthcare, 52% of students who completed the internship went on to secure paid employment.

Future plans

All of the students have now begun their second placement and are embracing their new responsibilities with positivity and enthusiasm.

The Trust became the first business in the city to sign up to the scheme but it is hoped it will also be embraced by other businesses.

More information

DEBP are a Social Enterprise and work with employers to develop bespoke programmes to support young people. For more information on DEBP and Project Search please follow:

- [Twitter company account](#)
- [Project Search twitter account](#)

- [LinkedIN company page](#)
- [Instagram company page](#)

For more information about Project Search please email sarah.cutler@@debp.org