

Cheshire West and Chester Supported Internships

Cheshire West and Chester Council are working in partnership with local Colleges and training providers to offer supported internships to young people across the borough.

There are different pathways to getting a job, and supported internships offers one way for those people with Special Educational Needs and/or disabilities, who face the most significant barriers to getting a paid job and a sustainable career.

A Supported Internship is a structured programme of study undertaken by a young person aged 16-24 with Special Educational Needs or disabilities with a current Education Health Care Plan. They must also have a real desire to work.

It is a job specially adapted to meet the skills and ability of an individual whilst fulfilling a genuine business need for the employer.

The Supported Internship programme combines a work placement with an employer and time in College to gain skills such as Maths, English, ICT, health & safety and employability skills. The young person can spend up to four days in placement and one day at College working towards a qualification depending on their individual needs.

A supported internship offers a consistent package of support for the young person, including a job coach who will be on hand at the placement to guide and mentor the young person as appropriate and offer support to the employer.

The overall aim is to equip those young people with the skills they need to progress in the workplace.

A supported internship is distinctive from other forms of college provision because there is a clear focus on achieving sustainable employment.

As well as offering placements within many of our own departments, Cheshire West and Chester Council are working with a wide range of employers to offer young people the opportunity to access a diverse mix of career pathways, ensuring that placements will support their career aspirations.

One such department is the Pensions Department at Cheshire West and Chester who currently has a young man called Sam Corner on placement.

Sam joined West Cheshire College's Supported Internship programme in September 2015, as he really wants to work and has high aspirations for a career in administration. Sam began working at the Pensions Department in October 2015 and is really enjoying it. His role within the team is to carry out many important tasks such as managing all incoming and outgoing mail (and in a busy department like pensions there is a lot of mail!). Sam's IT skills are also highly valued, as he's often asked to input data and gets involved with many projects within the team and often asks for more work above and beyond his own tasks!

Sam has also embraced Cheshire West and Chester's positive culture of flexible working (being happy to hot desk, work across sites and adapt working patterns as and when the business need arises).

The team are very impressed with Sam and his positive attitude, as he's incredibly motivated, committed and hard working.

Sam, in turn, is very happy working at Chester West and Cheshire saying how supportive and caring the environment is and how the team have listened and taken on board his needs, making him feel very valued and confident in his role.

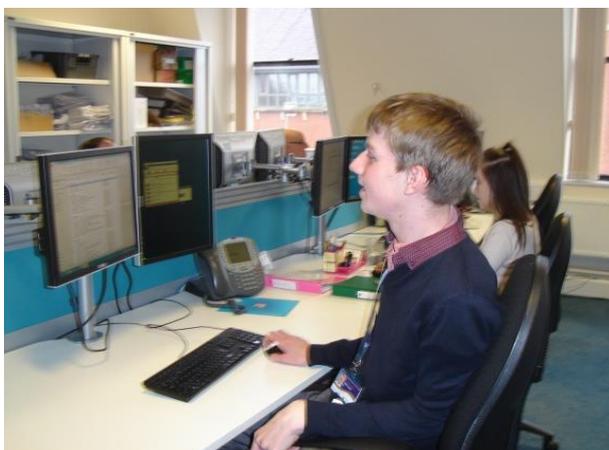
As Sam himself says "some people with a disability think they will never find a job, but I'm living proof that you can do whatever you set your mind to – including working – especially when there are employers like Cheshire West and Chester who are so caring and responsive to disabled people's needs".

Sam spends two days a week in the workplace, and as part of the programme he spends time at College studying, GCSE English, Maths, ICT and employability skills – ensuring that he gets the best possible start to his working life. Sam also has a job coach who spends time with him on a regular basis at his workplace to make sure everything is going well.

Sam Chester's manages the Supported Internship programme at West Cheshire College and is also Sam's job coach. She is very impressed with Sam, saying she believes he will do amazing things in the future and has no doubt that he'll reach his career goal of managing a team in a busy office environment.



Sam at work





Sam in the office



Sam with his Job Coach Sam Chesters

If you would like to find out more about Supported Internships or know a young person who may benefit from being on the programme please contact:

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