Implementing Employment into Study Programmes
A little bit about me...
What is Ambitious College?

- Opened its doors on 15th September 2014
- Is part of a suite of services run by Ambitious about Autism
- Is a day college
- Is CQC registered
- Offers a specialist FE provision for learners with complex autism, aged 19-25
- Is co-located within Barnet and Southgate College in the North of London, and Ealing, Hammersmith and West London College in the West of London
- 36 week, 7.5 hours a day, 5 days a week
- An option of a 12 week wraparound service
The Process that informs the content of a Study Programme

- Parent or LA express an interest
- Parent/professionals invited to an Open Day – Young People welcome to come along
- Parent makes decision to go ahead with the process
- Two forms to complete, one for parents, one for professionals, along with guidance. We also ask for any additional supporting paperwork that will enable us to make an informed decision
- Employment is one of the main criteria set out in each form
- Two assessment visits booked in – one in the current educational setting and one at home. If employment recognised as high priority, employment specialist attends visit
- Findings all gathered together by our Admissions Officer
- Presented to the Admissions Panel (SLT) and decision is made
Place offered
At this point the findings of assessment inform a member of staff to write an individualised study programme. This supports them in making their case to the LA for funding
This is signed off by a senior manager
Shared with parents and tweaked accordingly
‘Getting to know learners’ sessions
SLT take all the study programmes and begin to develop our curriculum – this means our curriculum is based on learners hopes, aspirations, motivations and interests
During the first 6 weeks continued assessment – including SaLT and OT
Personalised study programmes continue to be tweaked as we get to know the young person better
Our curriculum

Preparing for Adulthood

Employment
Independent living
Community Inclusion
Health Pathway

Personalise your approach
Develop a shared vision
Improve post-16 options and support
Raise aspirations
Plan services together

5 key messages → 4 pathways → Prepared for adulthood

Amelorous College
Ambitious about Autism
Independent Living – Cooking, cleaning, washing and drying clothes and shopping

Community Inclusion – Accessing leisure activities, developing friendships, travel training

Health – Accessing sport activities, promoting self care, well balanced diet, managing stress and anxiety
Employment

- Aim that all learners, regardless of ability, participate in vocational activities
- Developing pre-vocational skills in preparation for work placements, including social and communication skills
- Internal and external work placements to determine skills/abilities and interests
- Access to social enterprise
- Vocational lessons embedded into the curriculum
What does it look like in practice?

Assessing Employment Skills

- Information gathered from parents and professionals referral forms
- Observations of learners on home and education visits
- Discussions with the young person, parents and professional regarding employment goals and aspirations
- 6 week of baseline assessment upon commencing college
- College based vocational activities designed to assess current skill level of learners
Vocational Activities at College

• Based on 4 vocational pathways – administration, retail, hospitality and horticulture
• Varied skill level among learners
• Make tasks as real as possible – use canteen at college, tidy college grounds
• College based activities to build skills – sorting/matching stationery, colour matching
• Some learners will focus on college based skills – others will move on to work placements
How do we match young people with job placements?

- After gathering information from young person, parents and professionals, start to develop vocational profile for learner
- Vocational baseline assessment also provides information about vocational skills and aspirations
- Take into consideration travel, location of employer, length of placement, environment at placement, type of tasks that will completed while on placement – are they in line with current skill set and interests of the young person?
How do we work with employers?

- Before any placements occur, employment specialist spends a day with employer to learn the job, write risk assessment, determine environment of workplace
- One page profile about the learner including methods of communication and challenging behaviour is sent to employer before placement
- Learner participates in trial shift – outcome of this determines if the placement will continue
- Employment specialist always accompanies learner and support staff on first shift
- Support staff working with employers trained in TSI
Conor

- Attends college 2 days per week
- Has three days with another provider
- Requires 1:1 support
- Is learning to use ProLoQuo2go to communicate
Things we knew about Conor

- Conor had participated in work experience at his previous school
- Very successful placement washing laundry in a local church
- Parents and professionals placed importance on Conor participating in part time work
- Involved sorting, organising, following instructions, working with others
- Conor had a tendency to request several breaks during a lesson – every three to five minutes
- Conor is unable to use public transport or taxi’s so placements were to be within walking distance of the college
- All information considered when writing study programme
Placement One: Saracens

- Very successful
- Within walking distance
- Requested 2 breaks in 90 mins of first shift
- Completed 4 weeks
- Employer noticed a positive change – less anxiety
Placement two: RAF Museum

- Another successful placement
- Within walking distance
- One hour long shifts – requested one break in each shift
Helen

- New student for 2015
- Identified very early on that employment is a priority – this came from Helen
- Employment specialist involved in home and community visit
- Employment specialist contributes to the study programme
- Employing job coach to work directly with Helen
Example of strategies included in Helen’s Plan

- Developing social skills relating to employment
- Accessing a range of external work experiences
- Support Helen to understand the job application process – how to write a CV etc.
- Support Helen with visits to Job Centre Plus
- Support with managing anxiety around setbacks
Critical Success Factors

- Include the learner in the process – this is *their* study plan
- Being flexible and personalised – adapt plan to suit learner need and level of ability
- Not being risk adverse – really good risk assessment processes
- Investment in well trained staff - specifically employing a job coach to support learners
- Developing community partnerships – we have a full time employment specialist
- A multi disciplinary team approach to our work
- Parents as co producers (this involves having difficult conversations at times)
Questions?
THANK YOU
FOR LISTENING