

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

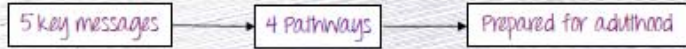
- Parent or LA express an interest
- Parent/professionals invited to an Open Day – Young People welcome to come along
- Parent makes decision to go ahead with the process
- Two forms to complete, one for parents, one for professionals, along with guidance. We also ask for any additional supporting paperwork 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

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

Preparing for Adulthood



Employment

Independent living

Community Inclusion

Health Pathway



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 be 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 set backs

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?

