



# Future Choices for All

## Employment Pathways for 16-24 year olds



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# Surrey

- 1.3 Million people live in Surrey
- Large County with the most trees of any county in the UK
- M25 runs through – two airports in bordering counties
- Many people commute to London to work
- One of the most expensive places to live in the UK
- Many parts rural, with areas of multiple deprivation
- Poor public transport in most parts of the county
- Surrey County Council divided into 11 districts and boroughs
- Commissioning adults and children services
- Surrey Choices EmployAbility Supported Employment Service commissioned by adult social care
- Future Choices commissioned by children Services



# Surrey Choices

- A Local Authority Trading Company (LATC) wholly owned by Surrey County Council
- Trading from 18 August 2014
- 325 employees supporting around around 1500 people each year
- Aims to support Surrey County Council in its pursuit of high quality and sustainable care and support to people in Surrey
- People with learning disabilities and autistic people; Physical and sensory impairments; those with mental health issues; long term medical conditions
- We operate across the County of Surrey and surrounding areas
- Day activities, Shared Lives, Respite Service, Travel Choices (travel training) and EmployAbility (supported employment)
- EmployAbility has work from adult social care, children's services, DWP
- Around 40 Employment support specialists around 800 people at any one time.



## Commissioners Perspective - Need

- Concerns with young people repeating years and levels of education with no progression or employment outcomes
- Returning out of county learners with very limited employment skills and requirements of integration into their local communities
- Classroom based 5 day offer which offered little employment focused education or training
- Requirements of section 25 of the Children's and Family act – Social Inclusion
- Provision aligned to all aspects of PFA outcomes
- Learners requiring a more supportive approach before a Supported Internship



# Commissioners Perspective - Need

- Increase in demand and complexity of SEND need (Over 11k EHCP'S)
- A need to reduce the gap in key outcomes achieved by children and young people with SEND compared to their peers
- Keeping young people local and active in their communities
- Provision that provides young people with SEND a solid foundation as they transition to work and independence
- Natural ceasing of EHCP's at aged 25
- Cost effective solution



# Commissioners Perspective - Provision

- Provision aligned to all aspects of PFA outcomes
- Vocational/Training approach
- Identified employment sectors
- Dedicated work/employment focused core element
- The need for flexibility in approach
- Looked for creative solutions outside of the formal education sector to meet identified needs



# Commissioners Perspective - Provision

- Provision that covered the whole of Surrey
- Provision that makes an real impact of meaningful progression
- Provision that fostered, fun, social interaction, friendships and ownership
- Offered a carousel of vocational work experiences
- Offered health, social and personalised focused activities



# Commissioners Perspective - Outcomes

Successful outcome was defined as:

- Voluntary work consisting of a minimum of 10 hours per week
- Enrolment on a fully accredited Apprenticeship or Traineeship programme
- Commencement of a Supported Internship or Supported Employment programme
- Paid employment

(Commencement within 30 days of last day of registered attendance on Future Choices)



# Commissioners Perspective - Evaluation

- Embedded as a core provision within Post 16 options
- Future Choices was able to adapt to the pandemic and services to learners were provided throughout
- Additional term created for work experience element due to the pandemic
- All KPI's and SLA's have been achieved year on year
- Realised meaningful progression and employment opportunities
- Consistent standards of service throughout the county of Surrey
- Made an impact to the lives of young people with SEND



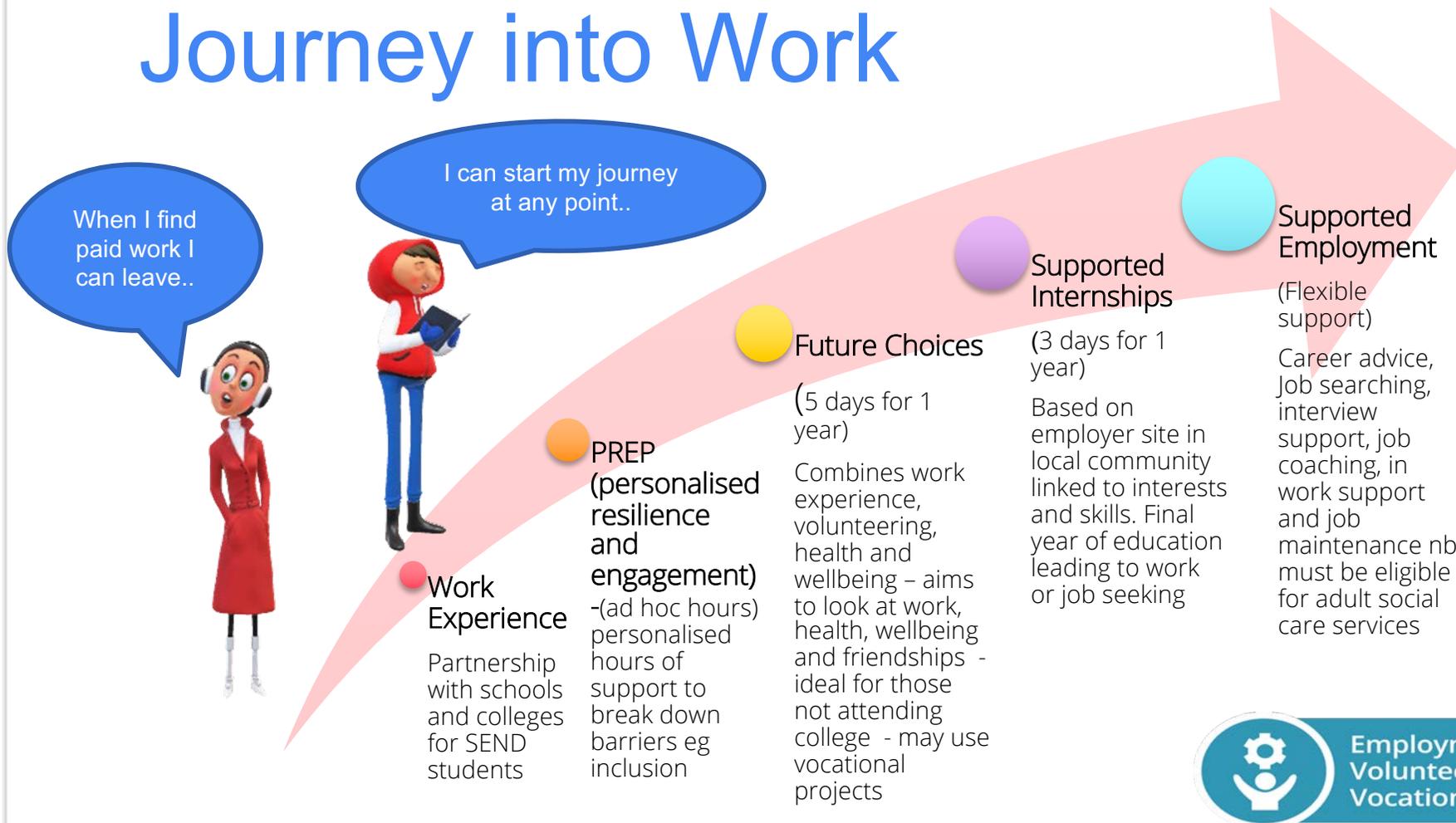
# Who is being referred?



- Employment is aim for all SEND young people
- Non Engagers in education
- Residential out of County Provision
- Not ready for supported internship
- Plateauing in college
- Family requesting a 5 day provision
- Not a replacement for college
- Not a replacement for supported internships – pre supported internships
- Those with additional barriers to work eg physical health, mental health, lack of structure, travel, poor social networks



# Journey into Work



# Future Choices – 1 year programme

- 5 days per week
  - Flexible timetable
  - Close to their local community
  - Work with family to support attendance
  - Building confidence and skills
  - Includes those with complex needs
- 3 days work experience
  - Tailored to interests
  - Changes each term
  - May be voluntary organisation
- 1 day health and well being
  - Physical or mental
  - Gym
  - Dog walking
- 1 day Addressing barriers to work
  - Travel training
  - Food Hygiene certificate
  - Adult education
  - Making friends and relationships
- Exit to:
  - Paid work or long term volunteering
  - Supported Internship
  - Supported Employment
  - Apprenticeship
  - Vocational course if job requires

"I joined the Surrey Choices programme that supports young people to learn and develop new horticultural skills in a working environment. I achieved paid work on a trial basis on a Friday, assisting an Estate Manager on an 18 acre estate."



What could my week look like?

Jack	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
am	Gym	Horticulture project	Work placement at Sainsburys	Job Club or Cooking skills	Work placement at Sainsburys
pm	Social group	Horticulture project	Work placement at Sainsburys	Zoom Driving theory	Work placement at Sainsburys

*“I was instrumental in setting up and making the choices for my timetable.”*



*“(My ESS) provided lots of resources via zoom and clubs. (They) supported continually during lockdown through regular phone calls, continual job searching and applications and working on CV”.*

“For the first time in his life Mark has been able to travel independently. From taking himself to the station, buying a ticket, and getting off at the right station. Mark is so happy and proud of himself.”



# Pilot Year



Started September 2019 and lockdown already started to have an impact from Jan with complete lockdown March 2020 – 14 started Sept with another 6 Jan but they were extended and not included in the pilot year figures or the majority of the pre-interns this was the point of them starting to achieve their goals. Although this programme is not just focussed on work outcomes as it is more a preparation for work, it meant most work placements stopped and new routines such as using the gym came to an end.

Number completed the whole year	17	94% engagement
Number of placements found	43	Average 2.5 per intern - placements not accepted is often due to anxiety or family rather than poor matching . Average placements accepted 1.8 per person
Personal goals set 5 and achieved at least 4	17	100%
Outcomes to paid work, volunteering or Supported Internships	17	100%
Paid work	5	29%
On going Volunteering	12	70%
EHCP reviews completed	17	100%





### Vocational Projects

Surrey Choices vocational projects for people who needed a more sheltered environment to start their work experience

- Café
- Office Projects
- Gardening
- Countryside management
- Radio Station



Other Placements non Surrey Choices included: Dog Groomer, Boots, Supermarkets, Hospital porters, Furniture Project, Hospice, charity shops, local Radio Station, Luxury Spa, Football club, Pubs, IT company, Locality social work team, Theme Park, Museum, NT house

# Impacts



We the pre-interns asked what they had learnt,  
“I used what I learnt in cookery at home and now am using the oven for the first time”.  
“ I gained confidence and learnt how to share problems and talk them through.”  
“I learnt I can do things independently without my parents. ”  
“ I have found work and can now work in a bar independently”,  
“the best part for me was meeting new people and the Friday social meeting”

Testament to the scheme also came in the way the team managed people with complex behavioural issues who in other settings were causing regular issues. At the end of the programme the social workers sent a message regarding one of the participants *“May I also take this opportunity to thank you and your staff for the support that you have given to X over the past year. Reduction in the number of incidents reports is clear testimony of this Thank you. County Transition Team*

The young people generally thought they would just have stayed at home if they had not come on the Future Choices Programme, in reality we know at least one student had come from a placement out of county costing over £150K per annum and although potentially he could have stayed another year in his previous provision, within 6 months of the programme had tried his first paid job working in his local community, making local friends and travelling independently, an amazing outcome for him but also the public purse.

### **Feedback for Future Choices**

Our son joined Future Choices after his schooling was abruptly ended due to Covid 19. He did not have any plans for his next move so we were put in touch with Future Choices. We were impressed with the way our son was introduced to the staff at Future Choices and his mentor took time to get to know him and understand what motivated him. Although Covid limited the places that were available for work placements, his mentor discussed the various possibilities with our son to ensure he knew exactly what was expected of him. Initially our son was placed at a local community farm and, although he didn't particularly enjoy it, he continued with it because his mentor worked with him and encouraged his participation, showing great understanding in how to motivate him and keep him engaged.

His next placement was in a charity shop where he helped behind the scenes. He cycled to the shop, which was a huge achievement given that he had never previously gone into any town by bike independently. Again, he didn't particularly enjoy the work, but he understood that he was gaining experience by continuing to attend and his mentor encouraged him to persevere.

One of the biggest achievements was that our son's mentor helped him to access online maths and English courses through the Open University. As a result, our son decided to go to college to try and gain some qualifications and is now studying full time at sixth form college for a maths GCSE and an engineering BTEC. Without the input and flexibility from Future Choices he would not have felt confident enough to do this and we are extremely grateful to the team for giving him this opportunity. Our son has matured since his involvement with Future Choices and is taking more responsibility for his future which is fantastic.



## Costs

Academic year – some choose to continue during half term

Costs need to ensure maximise independence and does not cover pre-preparation work

Different model than supported employment

Have to manage staffing during peak time eg September and January

Needs flexibility and creativity

1:1 and transport costs not included

Can take all levels of ability – no cherry picking, supported some complex young people

Need to have an aspiration for work even if this is a long term goal

Ideally find support from the family to help it succeed, work together



"Future Choices has supported Chloe to realise that she is able to work in a responsible position, where people value and appreciate her skills and her time."



L had stopped attending any education but was a very creative individual who loved historical re-enactment, comic books and gaming. His placements were varied to help him gain confidence and included retail in a toyshop, woodwork (made historical copy of a sword!) and a radio station. He gained paid work at Chessington World of Adventures

J had an unproductive experience of college education, and he felt that he had not developed much there. J was seeking a more practical learning experience. Found him work experience in a computer repair shop as his hobby was coding and IT. He attended other social activities with Future Choices staff and customers, such as bowling and playing Pool and he made good friends. He wanted to try work in a pub like one of his new friends and after a trial was offered a paid job unfortunately put on hold due to the pandemic.

"I have felt brilliant during my internship as I got a part time job out of it and I have also won a Making A Difference Award. It has made me more independent, I am more confident in myself as well as working within a team"



# Covid affected what could be done...

## Sessions Provided during total lockdown – on-line included

- EmployAbility skills
- Driving Theory practice
- Safe Travel
- Keep Fit
- Healthy Eating
- Using PPE
- Money Management
- Internet Safety
- Emotional regulation
- Fire Marshall Training
- Social groups
- On-line Job Clubs
- Interview Practice



## Sessions during partial lockdown –mixed virtual and face to face

- Walking for health
- Picnic social
- Community farms
- Wildlife Trust
- Visits to employers –socially distanced including Fast Cars, theme parks
- Travel training on public transport
- Horse management and History (sessions delivered on-line by job seekers)
- First Aid Training
- Outdoor learning – team building
- Equality and Diversity training
- How to succeed at work



# Covid .....

- First year after pilot, keen to keep engagement of interns and increased numbers but challenging
- Majority of the work experience placements stopped
- No break in service, moved on-line
- Digitiser programme to get people IT KIT as some digitally excluded
- Introduced Sessions to improve health and wellbeing from cooking to sports
- Gaining skills for the future eg theory driving lessons
- Welfare calls to both young people and employers
- On-line job clubs, helping job search, keeping cv up to date
- Community walks and engagement when possible
- Team stretched with other customers being furloughed
- Anxiety and mental health issues increased
- Families in crisis
- Employers uncertain future – would not take on new
- Staff also impacted by stress and anxiety



# Lessons Learnt?



- COVID affected outcomes and referrals
- Engagement of young people, some of whom had not been in education (PREP developed as part of this learning)
- 1:1 support needed initially much higher than in a school setting, this was challenging to get agreed
- Employer engagement (could call on EmployAbility employers harder if from scratch)
- Geography – hard to build friendships across a wide area
- Gangs and youth justice – staff needed more training on areas such as county lines
- Referrals for young people with prior involvement in gangs or previous experience with the youth justice service such as county lines- Staff needed more training on these issues
- Getting the Schedule 2 forms agreed through panel
- Cut off dates for referrals





## **PREP (Personalised, Resilience and Engagement Programme)**

PREP is a personalised, reduced hours programme that addresses barriers to engagement with education, work and everyday life.

Mindful that young people may have been affected by anxiety, school refusal or other trauma, we work at the pace of the individual. Week by week we help you to build resilience skills, re-engage with the world and become an active citizen.

The aim is to promote community inclusion to improve young people's health and wellbeing and facilitate your journey back into education or employment. Alternatively, individuals can move onto the Future Choices or Supported Internship programmes run by Surrey Choices.

## How PREP works

Visits can be weekly or more intensive schedule depending on the individual

Success is not about the number of hours a young person attends but what is actually achieved

In between visits young people are given small actions to complete

- Cooking a family meal
- Researching interests
- Exercise goals

Engagement is key

Persistence and resilience needed

Taken at their own pace

Was hourly rate – now pilot for block 9 people

"Leaving school early because I was ill was a pretty dark time for me. I found just going out and doing productive things really helped me feel better and happier. It made me feel like I had a future I was working towards."



# Summary

- Supported Internships not right for everyone (15 additional this year)
- Pre programmes of great value
- Keeps the best of supported employment techniques
- Addresses other barriers
- Totally person centred
- Uses natural support in the community
- Aim is always inclusion and active citizens
- Not instead of college but some people don't work well in group settings
- Aspirational and Flexible
- Need more non-covid times to give true outcomes
- Family approval very high
- Young people approval very high

