

## **JOB PACK:**

# **PROJECT MANAGER – SUPPORTED INTERNSHIPS – MEDWAY AND SWALE**

### **About Skillnet Group**

We are people with and without learning difficulties and/or autism in Kent and Medway working together to achieve equality.

Skillnet Group is also a social enterprise. As a Community Interest Company, all our profit is put back into supporting the work we do.

- We support people with learning difficulties or autism to speak up, make choices and become powerful and influential. We support them to gain opportunities and become more independent in learning, housing, work, health, money, travel, leisure and relationships.
- We support people to hear, respect and empower people with learning difficulties or autism.
- We promote positive action to challenge negative attitudes about disability.
- We work with local communities so that people with learning difficulties and/or autism become fully included and no longer segregated.

## **The background to this job**

Skillnet enjoyed a successful partnership with JobCentre Plus in East Kent for over four years, supporting adults with learning difficulties or autism into paid work. We then brought our skills and passion for opportunity to Medway and Swale's most disadvantaged young people, using Supported Internships.

A Supported Internship is an employment programme for young people aged 16-24 with learning difficulties or autism with the central goal of progressing into high quality, sustained, paid work. Although it is a learning programme funded by the Education Funding Agency, it should not be seen as a College course in the traditional sense. Learners need to experience the difference. This plays out in features like learners applying for time off, with different leave entitlement to school holidays, for example five weeks of annual leave. It will also mean off-the-job learning taking place in a non-classroom setting. We have found many disadvantaged young people are alienated from school and college, and need a workplace in which to thrive.

There are no entry or completion requirements, so the programme can be personalised for each learner to provide progression and stretch. There is a major unmet need for such opportunities in Medway and Swale. While 65% of people with a learning difficulty want to work (Office for Disability Issues), only 2.6% in Medway have a job, and 3.8% in Kent. The South East average is 6.1%, so progress is possible. Medway ranks 122nd out of 150 local authority areas. (Adult Social Care Outcomes Framework).

This project aims to engage private sector businesses and other employers in and near Medway and Swale to create one-year internships as a service for them, and for young people and their families and carers.

Skillnet Group secured a contract with Medway Council to create eight internships starting in September 2017, rising to twelve in September 2018 and sixteen in September 2019. We are presently supporting six interns in Swale, rising to 10 in September. We expect to continue with a minimum twenty six places across Medway and Swale from September 2020. We have set the goal of achieving high quality, sustained paid work for 50% of interns during or shortly after the programme. This is an ambitious but achievable goal in the current jobs market. We aim to raise the profile of young people with learning difficulties or autism among Medway and Swale's employers as potential employees of genuine business value. There is also a need to raise the aspirations of young people themselves, together with their families and

carers, demonstrating that work is possible and rewarding.

Co-production is a core value and method for Skillnet Group. This means people working equally together to make the most of their respective experience and skills. A typical Skillnet Group project will be led by two people – one with and one without a learning difficulty. This values equally expertise gained from an individual, personal perspective and professional work experience and training. The approach taken to valuing and supporting young people with learning difficulties or autism in this project will be shaped by the leadership given by our Jobs Champion, which is a paid role for a colleague with a learning difficulty.

*Further background reading:*

<http://www.preparingforadulthood.org.uk/what-we-do/supported-internships>

*Apply online here:*

[skillnetgroup.co.uk/working/pages/jobapplication.php](http://skillnetgroup.co.uk/working/pages/jobapplication.php)

## Job Description

<b>Main aims:</b>	<p>Project manage supported internships in Medway and Swale, with a primary emphasis on Medway.</p> <p>Engage local employers to create work placements likely to lead to high quality, sustained, paid work.</p> <p>Line manage work coaches.</p>
<b>Salary:</b>	<p>£23,000 - £25,000 per annum pro rata, depending on experience. An offer at the top of this scale will require strong knowledge of, and track record with, businesses across Medway and Swale.</p>
<b>Hours:</b>	<p>37 hours per week.</p>
<b>Location:</b>	<p>Much of the working time will be out in the Medway and Swale (Sittingbourne and the Isle of Sheppey) communities, visiting schools, employers and other people and organisations. The project is presently structured so that this post is focused on Medway, with others in the team focusing on Swale. We will provide a laptop and mobile phone to support mobile working. There will be occasional travel to locations in Kent where Skillnet is based, primarily Canterbury and Maidstone.</p>
<b>Duration:</b>	<p>Permanent contract</p>
<b>Probationary Period:</b>	<p>12 weeks</p>
<b>Annual leave:</b>	<p>25 days per annum plus eight public holidays</p>
<b>Notice period:</b>	<p>8 weeks</p>
<b>Line management:</b>	<p>Head of Supported Employment</p>

## **Main responsibilities:**

Engage young people in Medway with learning difficulties or autism to attract them to the opportunity of a supported internship. Engaging learners effectively requires engagement with families, carers, teachers and others in a supporting role.

Engage employers in and around Medway and Swale to create well-matched internships for learners, based on the Place, Train and Maintain model of delivery. Engagement should prioritise private sector businesses, especially small to medium sized enterprises (SMEs), but also extending to the public sector if this means the right opportunity for a learner is created.

Maintain excellent relationships with employers, communicating responsively, monitoring progress and resolving problems, and keeping prospective employers well-engaged.

Support employers to understand the Equality Act 2010 and make [reasonable adjustments](#).

Support employers to adapt their recruitment processes to make them accessible for people with learning difficulties.

Raise the profile of people with learning difficulties or autism among Medway and Swale's employers as potential employees of genuine business value.

Ensure interns have maximum prospects for progress from internships into high quality, sustained paid work.

Promote creative recruitment as an outcome of internships, including Apprenticeships, Traineeships, Extended Work Experience and Corporate Mentoring etc.

Ensure all students have an identified progression route at the end of the programme so they don't become NEET (Not in Education, Employment or Training).

Manage a project team of coaches. Manage the team's capacity and workload against the needs of individual learners.

Support Skillnet Group's contracting relationship with the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) to deliver education to young people with high support needs.

Raise the aspirations of young people with learning difficulties or autism, together with their families and carers, demonstrating that work is possible and rewarding.

Develop the use of technical aids to enable interns to work as effectively as possible, including Training in Systematic Instruction, text-to-speech technology and visual aids etc.

Complete or arrange risk assessments, Health and Safety assessments and other types of assessment that may be needed for particular workplaces.

Deploy our Jobs Champion as an ambassador to learners and employers to help achieve the above responsibilities.

Network and promote partnership working with other organisations supporting young people, advancing best practice in the delivery of supported internships and Supported Employment.

Develop a good, practical working knowledge of learning disability and autism based on [Skillnet Group's values](#).

Develop in-depth knowledge of the supported internship model within Supported Employment, including engagement with the best examples locally across Kent and elsewhere in the UK.

Maintain strong knowledge of the factors affecting work prospects for people with learning difficulties or autism, including the law, government policy and developments with disability and work-related benefits.

Actively pursue personal professional development, including studying for and achieving the [Level 3 Certificate for Supported Employment Practitioners](#). This will involve three two-day visits to London for group study: 11-12 September; 20-21 November; 23-24 January. Skillnet Group will fund the course fees of £1,500+VAT and travel expenses. The six group study days will count as paid working time. Because this accredited course is an investment and substantial personal benefit, we expect extra personal study to achieve the Certificate to take place in unpaid personal time. At the end of the probationary period, an agreement will be drawn up between the post-holder and Skillnet Group committing the post-holder to reimburse a

fraction of the cost of course fees to Skillnet Group if they resign within the following timescales:

The whole course fee (£1,500+VAT) if the post-holder resigns before 1 March 2019

Two thirds of the course fee (£1,000+VAT) if the post-holder resigns before 1 September 2019

One third of the course fee (£500+VAT) if the post-holder resigns before 1 March 2020

*The above commitments will not apply until the 12-week probationary period has ended. This allows both employee and employer to confirm the right appointment has been made for the long-term.*

Promote best practice in Supported Employment and work according to the [National Occupational Standards for Supported Employment](#).

Report regularly to the project's Management Committee.

Manage workload, tasks and priorities using Skillnet's online teamworking system [Podio](#).

Record detailed information on individual learners using Podio and any other systems and formats required by the accredited learning environment.

Communicate responsively using a mobile phone and a work email address using the [Gmail](#) platform.

Maximise use of Access to Work funding to remove additional barriers to employment and oversee Access to Work funding applications.

Engage with external press and media and our own communications personnel and resources to promote good news stories of successful interns and employers.

Work flexible hours to support the needs of the project. This may mean occasional work in evenings or weekends, if this advances opportunities for someone you are supporting.

Support interns with transport, which may mean occasional use of your own car and will often involve arranging travel training for independent travel.

Support others areas of Skillnet Group's work as required, advancing equality and opportunity for people with learning difficulties or autism.

## Person Specification

### **It is essential:**

To be a natural, experienced networker and partnership builder.

To be experienced and well-connected with Medway and Swale businesses, which could mean a proven track record working in recruitment, business support, sales or marketing.

To be well-presented so as to be credible in the business world.

To understand the dynamics and pressures business people face, and engage people on the basis of this understanding.

To be driven by a passion for equality and overcoming disadvantage, particularly for young people with learning difficulties or autism.

To be committed to working alongside people with learning difficulties or autism as true equals, supporting self-determination over their lives and futures.

To believe in the potential of people with learning difficulties or autism as genuine assets to a business.

To personalise support for individuals, making the most of resources to minimise a 'one size fits all' approach to support.

To take an approach to employer engagement which is led by a strong understanding of business need.

To have an understanding of recruitment processes.

To be able to work autonomously and independently, with plenty of initiative.

To work flexibly according to the needs of the project. This may require occasional availability to work in evenings or weekends.

To be a strong communicator and able to communicate well and clearly with different kinds of people and organisations.

To have, or be willing to work towards, the Level 3 Certificate for Supported Employment Practitioners. This includes personal study in your own, unpaid time.

To be committed to personal professional development increasing your knowledge and skills.

To be confident speaking up in meetings and also listening well when others are speaking.

To have strong verbal and written English.

To be highly motivated and able to motivate others.

To be able to manage a small staff team.

To work ethically, minimising your, and your project's, negative impact on other people and the wider environment.

To use computers, especially the internet, social media, email, word processing and spreadsheets.

To have a clean driving license and the use of a car with business insurance.

To be organised and keep your diary up-to-date.

To be reliable and punctual.

To be sensitive and tactful but also able to give an honest opinion.

### **It is desirable:**

To have prior knowledge and experience of Supported Employment, especially supported internships or similar models of work-based learning.

To understand the law and government policies that relate to disability, learning difficulties and autism.

To have strong knowledge of the barriers people with learning difficulties or autism face with employment.

To have knowledge of the benefits system in relation to employment.

To be trained in Health and Safety in the workplace.

To have experience supporting people with learning difficulties or autism, particularly young people in the age range 16-24.

To have experience working in education.

To have a qualification in Information, Advice and Guidance (IAG).

To have experience of supervising and line-managing staff.

To understand how to manage a budget and make sound financial decisions.

To understand co-production and person-centred support.

To understand Equality and Diversity and put these ideas into practice.

To have some experience engaging with the press and media to promote your work.