

JOB PACK:

WORK COACH – MEDWAY & SWALE SUPPORTED INTERNSHIPS

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 and/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 and/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 Group has enjoyed a successful partnership with JobCentre Plus in East Kent for over four years, supporting adults with learning difficulties and/or autism into paid work. We want to bring 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 and/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. Students need to experience the difference. This plays out in features like students applying for time off, with different leave entitlement to school holidays, for example five weeks of annual leave. It will also mean on-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 student 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 disability want to work ([Valuing Employment Now](#)), only 1.9% in Medway and 3.8% in Kent have a job. These are far below the South East average of 6.2%. ([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. In Medway, our Project Lead has been working since September 2016 to engage people in the idea of Supported Internships and has been networking with local schools and colleges as well as business owners and other local organisations. We are currently piloting the Supported Internships programme in Swale with four interns.

Skillnet Group has secured a contract with Medway Council and the EFA to provide eight internships starting in September 2017, rising to twelve in September 2018 and sixteen in September 2019. We expect to continue with

a minimum sixteen places from September 2020. We will also be providing five internships in Swale in September 2017. 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 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

Interviews will be held on Wednesday 16th August in a Medway location.

Job Description

- Main aim:** Providing dedicated, individualised support to students, working alongside them in bespoke work placements with the aim of supporting them into paid employment at the end of the internship. Engage with local employers to create opportunities for students and provide effective information, advice and guidance to the employer during the placement. To support the student to achieve a successful completion of the internship programme.
- Salary:** **£18,000-£21,000** per annum pro rata to a full-time week depending upon experience. A full-time week is 37 hours. Salaries are normally paid one month in arrears, but we can consider revising this arrangement in situations where delayed payment causes difficulty for individuals in our workforce.
- Hours:** We aim to create one post at **28 hours** per week, worked flexibly through the week. There are opportunities to cover annual leave / sick leave in this programme and other Skillnet Group projects. We aim to strike a fair, reasonable balance between the project's needs and the post-holder's, bearing in mind this is a part-time post. For example, the role may suit a parent/carer who needs to drop-off and pick-up children from school. Skillnet Group is an employer that understands and values family life. At the same time, meetings may be planned at any time during the normal working week, occasionally at times that clash with other regular commitments. Applicants who have other regular commitments in the working week are welcome to apply and must give details of these commitments in their application.
- Location:** In Medway, we are running the programme from Chatham and in Swale we are based in

Sittingbourne. However, much of the working time will be out in the Medway / Swale area supporting your students in their workplaces. You will also liaise and network with other organisations including schools and colleges in Medway and Swale as well as local businesses to secure internship vacancies. You will be able to claim for travel costs incurred during the working day using our expenses policy and procedure. We do not reimburse any travel costs for the first and last journey of the day unless it exceeds 30 miles, at which point you can claim for any additional mileage. We will provide a laptop and mobile phone to support mobile working. There will be occasional travel to other locations in Kent where Skillnet is based, including Dover, Canterbury and Maidstone.

Duration:	Permanent
Probationary Period:	3 months
Annual leave:	25 days per annum pro rata plus eight public holidays pro rata, payable in lieu.
Other benefits:	Pension scheme, Childcare vouchers,
Line management:	Project Lead – Gemma Cooper

Main responsibilities:

At the beginning of the programme you will provide individualised support to students. We will be supporting thirteen students in total, with one work coach supporting seven students and the other work coach supporting six. However you will also be required to provide support to other students as and when needed, covering sick leave / annual leave.

Some work placements may have already been set up and some will remain to be sourced, which you will help to identify and develop.

You will support students to build up a Vocational Profile and Support Plan to assess their support needs as well as their skills and abilities.

You will provide tailored mentoring support to students within the workplace and classroom environment.

You will work with the Project Lead to source potential employers, identifying possible internships through cold calling, visits and liaising with external agencies. You must negotiate with employers for suitable job roles and learn the role in readiness to train the student. This will include completing detailed job analysis forms as well as health and safety and risk assessment forms.

You will co-run a weekly group called the job club for the students supporting them with things such as CV writing, interview role play, conduct in the workplace and other associated skills required for employment.

You will accompany students to the workplace and communicate with employers regarding the student's support needs. You will also provide the students with appropriate support within the workplace which may include mentoring and confidence building.

You will provide person centred travel training, as and when identified.

You will participate with the reviewing and setting of targets and complete appropriate documentation throughout.

You will provide daily reports for the register, identify absences and develop strategies to address student absence. This may involve working with the family, carers or social services.

You will communicate effectively with your line manager and colleagues to

ensure the smooth running of the programme.

You will participate with and contribute to EHCP (Education, Health and Care Plan) reviews, and in-year provision reviews for each student.

You will work according to Skillnet Group's Policies and Procedures throughout your employment, including lone working.

You will create and maintain excellent relationships with employers, communicating responsively, monitoring progress and resolving problems, and keeping prospective employers well-engaged.

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

As the programme becomes established and your students become more independent, you will work with the Project Lead and other job coach to begin planning next year's programme. This will include:

Engaging young people in Medway and Swale with learning difficulties and/or autism to attract them to the opportunity of a supported internship. Engaging students 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 students, 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 student is created.

Themes throughout the role include:

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

Ensuring students have maximum prospects for progress from internships into high quality, sustained paid work.

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

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

Developing 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.

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

Maintaining 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.

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

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

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

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

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

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

Supporting other areas of Skillnet Group's work if required, advancing equality and opportunity for people with learning difficulties and/or autism

Actively pursuing 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 (17th/18th July, 4/5th September and 5/6th December 2017). Skillnet Group will fund the course fees of £1,800 plus travel expenses. The six group study days will count as paid working time. Because this accredited course is a substantial personal benefit, we expect extra personal study to achieve the Certificate to take place in unpaid personal time. 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 (£1,800) if the post-holder resigns before 6 months of service

Two thirds of the course fee (£1,200) if the post-holder resigns before 1 year of service

One third of the course fee (£600) if the post-holder resigns before 18 months of service

Person Specification

It is essential:

To have experience supporting people with learning difficulties and/or autism.

To understand Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults and Young People.

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

To have strong verbal and written English.

To be able to record information clearly and to a high standard.

To be highly motivated and able to motivate others.

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

To be a natural, experienced networker and partnership builder.

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

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

To believe in the potential of people with learning difficulties and/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 have, or be willing to work towards, the Level 3 Certificate for Supported Employment Practitioners (see above). This includes personal study in your own, unpaid time.

It is extremely important that you are organised and reliable. Many employers have had negative experiences of unreliable agencies who do not follow through on their promises.

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

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

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

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

It is desirable:

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 have experience of planning and facilitating groups.

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 and/or autism face with employment.

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

To be trained in Health and Safety assessments in the workplace.

To have experience of writing effective risk assessments.

To have experience working in education and knowledge of EHCPs (Education Health and Care Plans).

To understand the ethics and value of co-production.

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

To have experience of delivering travel training

To be aware of Prevent and Channel.

To have experience of supporting young people with preparation for adulthood and into employment.

To have an NVQ Level 3 in Health and Social Care.