

Overview of Project SEARCH at London North West University Healthcare NHS Trust

What is it?

Project SEARCH is a supported internship programme for young people with learning disabilities and/or those on the autistic spectrum. It is a unique business led, one year education to work programme that takes place entirely in the workplace. It is a partnership between a host employer (NWLU Healthcare NHS Trust), education establishments (Harrow College) and supported employment services (Kaleidoscope Sabre) and offers total workplace immersion, facilitates a seamless combination of employability skills instruction, career exploration and hands-on training through a series of job rotations within the host business.

How does it work?

The programme runs five days a week, for a full academic year. Typically, interns complete three work placements between 10 – 12 weeks in length. Those taking part will have learning disabilities and/or autistic spectrum conditions. Interns are expected to travel independently to the workplace where possible and required to follow the NWLU Healthcare NHS Trust induction, new employee checks, Occupational Health guidelines as well as work to the Trusts visions, values and behaviours. (Follow the link to a short video of the programme at Whipps Cross Hospital: <https://youtu.be/OHU3jM0ppJE>)

Benefits to London North West University Healthcare NHS Trust

- Access to a talent pool of enthusiastic, motivated and well trained prospective employees.
- Potential cost and efficiency savings in recruitment and overtime or agency staff payments.
- Enhanced business reputation as a disability confident organization that actively supports equality & diversity in the workforce by giving a person with a disability a rewarding job and increased independence.

Case Study

Andrew was a Project SEARCH intern from our 2017/18 cohort, his first work placement in Domestic Stores enabled him to develop a clear understanding of the different areas and wards in and around the hospital. After a stint in Pick and Pack for his second rotation, Andrew decided to return to Domestic Stores, where his work ethic and reliability saw that he was left in charge of the stores whilst he's mentor was away on sick leave. Andrew's enthusiasm to work has led to a full time role in Central Stores, where he has settled in really well! *"Project SEARCH helped me gain experience and develop my confidence"* Andrew said when asked what would he say to someone who is going to join Project SEARCH, *"So I would really suggest that anyone planning to do Project Search, should stick at it"*. This is just one of the now over 500 success stories achieved in partnership through Project SEARCH programmes all over the UK.

Typical Departments that are often involved:

Departments offering placements often include: Linen & Laundry, Patient Dining – Pick & Pack and Ward Hosts, Restaurant - Catering Assistants, Paediatric Department, Medical Records, Estates & Facilities, T.S.D.U (Sterile Services), Restaurant, Oral Surgery, Endoscopy, Medical Engineering, Porterage, Physiotherapy and Outpatients Receptions, Main Stores, Catering Stores, Domestic Stores, Pharmacy, , Dental Training Laboratory and Post Graduate Training & Development any number of wards.

What has it achieved?

To put it into perspective, the national percentage of people with learning disabilities in paid employment in the UK is around 6.7%. Project SEARCH programmes across the UK now have over 1000 graduates in full time paid employment, many working for NHS organisations or in the wider community. This represents a national average of 66% over the last five years and the international average for employment outcomes stands at 73%.

**For further information please contact a member of the Project SEARCH Team at
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