

## **Frequently Asked Questions about Supported Internship Schemes for young people with learning disabilities:**

### **1. Could it affect productivity?**

The job coach will work with the young person to ensure they pick up the tasks required of them to make sure productivity is not affected.

### **2. Will it take up a lot of time for employer and staff?**

Clearly there is some input needed, but we will set that out very clearly from the start and it's something that will be kept under review. However, the job coach will do much of the training after an initial induction and providing of support so staff shouldn't find themselves burdened.

### **3. Are there health and safety issues?**

Interns are covered by the employer's insurance as for any employed staff. For the vast majority of interns, there will be no need for any considerations beyond those that exist for all staff. If there are particular issues, these will be discussed openly with the employer and strategies agreed between learning provider, employer and intern with support provided to implement any additional control measures. The learning provider will do an initial risk assessment at the job matching stage, which should prevent interns being placed in unsuitable environments in the first place.

### **4. Do we know how to cope/communicate with a disabled person? What if we can't manage their behaviours or meet their support needs?**

The job coach can support both staff and employer to communicate effectively with the intern and provide advice on strategies for managing challenging behaviours or creating an environment which will minimise the risk of such behaviours occurring. The job coach will always be available to the employer, on site or at the end of a phone, if issues/concerns are arising.

### **5. Can someone with a disability or learning difficulty really do any of the jobs I could offer?**

Employers are often surprised at just how much a person with a learning difficulty or disability is able to do, once the right support is in place. It may also be useful to think how a specific role might be 'carved' for an individual if tasks were allocated differently across a team. Some employers have found productivity is increased when they take this approach (e.g. freeing up some staff from data entry work, taken on by the intern, so they can do more customer-facing activity).

### **6. What will other staff or customers/clients make of it?**

The job coach can support the staff to understand the abilities and needs of the intern. It is rarely a problem for existing staff and often brings out the nurturing side of one or more colleagues who thrive in that role. Customers and clients are often pleased to see a diverse workforce, especially if it helps the workforce to better reflect the client group – and that's any workforce that serves the general public. If issues do arise, the job coach can help negotiate solutions.

### **7. Will a job coach just get in the way and be an extra burden?**

Job coaches are very skilled in making their presence as unobtrusive as possible. They are likely to be around quite a lot to start with – but this is very helpful to the employer in getting the intern trained up to do the job and ironing out any teething issues. As the intern grows more confident, the job coach will begin to withdraw although will do some light-touch monitoring and be available to intern or employer if additional support is needed (e.g. if employer introduces new or more challenging tasks).

### **8. Will I face some kind of equality / discrimination challenge if I don't recruit the intern at the end?**

Employers are not obliged to recruit the intern at the end of the internship. This is the ideal outcome but is not always possible. Employers are only expected to recruit the intern if there is a vacancy and the intern is the best candidate for the job. Providers will expect them to apply their normal recruitment procedures – with reasonable adjustments to the process as required, as for any disabled job applicant.