

STEP INTO WORK TOOLKIT



An implementation toolkit for employers introducing adults into
your workplace from the 'Step into Work' pre-employment
programme.





INTRODUCTION

Originally designed and implemented by NHS Trusts nationwide, the Step into Work programme is an off-the-shelf pre-employment programme with a bespoke NHS curriculum. The aim of the programme is to meet your workforce needs by supporting adults (aged 19+) into entry-level employment.

Through partnership working with the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP), the Step into Work programme has been successfully used to support adults into entry level roles and apprenticeships. Each programme gives participants hands-on experience of roles, career guidance and either some formal training, or a qualification at the end of the programme.

This 'grow your own' route can be used to solve a specific workforce challenge, whilst targeting a particular demographic group within your locality or region. Considerations around target groups could include the nine protected characteristics and also go beyond to include groups such as carers, those who have experienced care or veterans and their families.

For those who take part, the programme can be life-changing. Learners have described an increase in their aspirations and self-confidence in terms of what they believe they are capable of. They describe the benefits of the programme as having enabled them to meet new people, alongside gaining the knowledge, skills and experience that are desirable to employers.





ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The below organisations have contributed to the design and content of this toolkit and associated documents. Their advice, expertise and experience have been integral to this piece of work.

- Coventry and Warwickshire Partnership NHS Trust
- Department of Work and Pensions
- East Lancashire Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust
- Greater Manchester Health and Social Care Careers Hub, Central Manchester University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust
- Health Education England
- Hertfordshire and West Essex STP
- Lancashire and South Cumbria Health and Care Partnership
- Lancashire and South Cumbria NHS Foundation Trust
- Mersey Care NHS Foundation Trust
- Norfolk and Waveney Integrated Care System
- North Cumbria Integrated Care
- Staffordshire and Stoke on Trent STP
- University Hospitals Coventry and Warwickshire
- University Hospitals of Morecambe Bay NHS Foundation Trust.



USING THIS TOOLKIT

The information in the toolkit is separated into sections relating to various stages of the programme; so you can access what you need, when you need it.

Each section has some useful advice such as what went well and pitfalls to avoid. Some sections have case studies, contact details, templates or examples of documentation used in other organisations for your reference. The sections are:

Introduction Planning DWP Recruitment Learning Placements Afterwards





HOW DO I GET INVOLVED?

Any organisation can run a Step Into Work programme. As you will see in this booklet, sometimes this programme is delivered within a single organisation and sometimes it is delivered across a system. HEE can support through resources such as this, although there might be times when there is some funding available. Email the national team on talentforcare@hee.nhs.uk to gain more information, or find out how you can get involved in Step Into Work. They may connect you with your local DWP coordinator, as well as identifying any existing regional or local projects already underway, that you may be able to join.

Support can be given to connect Trusts or systems to their local Job Centre Plus (JCP) office. Alternatively, there may be a regionally or locally coordinated approach already underway which you can join.



WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO US?

‘What makes this programme so successful is that learners gain confidence and self-respect from interacting with real employers.’

Natalie Gaston, Vocational Learning Facilitator at Cumbria Partnership NHS Foundation Trust.

‘Growing our own from the huge pool of talent already available in Cumbria is a huge step...the programme is a great example of how we are supporting and training local people to help them develop their careers and in turn, help us deliver excellent care to the people of Cumbria.’

James Manser, Learning Facilitator at North Cumbria University Hospitals NHS Trust

‘We have been impressed with their enthusiasm, skills and how they have integrated into the team. It has been a positive experience for all.’

Manager, Cumbria

‘This is a really good opportunity [to] develop individuals to their full potential, which will have a direct impact on patient care. This is also an opportunity for the Trust to put something back in to the community that it cares for.’

Manager, Cumbria

‘The programme has been really good, especially for an older person like me who is trying to get back into work. It has really helped to get my confidence back.’

Stephen, Step into Work Learner University Hospitals of Morecambe Bay Foundation Trust

‘Best thing that’s ever happened to me.’

Michelle, Step into Work Learner at East Lancashire Hospitals NHS Trust

‘I’ve learnt so much that can’t be put into words really...It’s been amazing!...it’s rare to be given an opportunity to see what a role is truly like, both theory and practice, before you have the possibility of getting it.’

Isha, Step into Work Learner at North West Ambulance Service NHS Trust



PLANNING



Planning the introduction of the Step into work
pre-employment programme.





PLANNING THE PROGRAMME



The Step into Work Programme will require some planning to successfully implement. It involves multiple stakeholders and key contacts who are both internal and external to your organisation, as well as learners who may require extra support, in some cases.

This section of the toolkit aims to provide you with some learning points and helpful suggestions to consider when implementing the programme in your organisation.



TO PROJECT PLAN OR TO NOT PROJECT PLAN

The Step into Work Programme is an off the shelf product, but its introduction to your organisation is quite bespoke. In planning implementation, some organisations have used a formal project plan or Gantt chart, others have not. All have spent some time at the start of the project planning necessary steps and possible issues.

The planning phase covers the design and implementation of each element of the programme (Recruitment, Learning, Placement, Afterwards) as well as how the different key stakeholders will work together. Project plans can help to layout the key milestones, stakeholders, risks and deadlines to facilitate your implementation. If you choose not to follow this approach some of the principles should be considered nevertheless so you know what you need to achieve and by when.

Each section of this toolkit gives further specific details for your organisation to take into account during implementation.

The overleaf list details key steps to consider in setting up a programme.





Planning

- Identify and connect with key stakeholders
- Set up planning meetings which are appropriate
- Establish the roles and responsibilities of key stakeholders
- Organise a programme timetable
- Review timescales for delivery.

Recruitment

- Review recruitment policies and agree a process
- Consider a launch event perhaps with an Executive guest speaker
- Taster or open days to showcase the programme to learners.

Learning

- Collaboratively plan and design the education and training and other curricular content
- Set up any additional learning days with in house speakers etc.

Placements

- Identify departments and roles, link with managers early on
- Provide placement details and a guide to managers
- Hold regular meetings during placements to support learners and managers.

Afterwards

- Agree a closing plan, including evaluations and communications
- How do you want the programme to end? i.e. celebration event
- What will be the next steps for learners?



"You need to be clear on why you're doing this programme and believe in what you're doing. We want to get the best out of people. We focus on their values, their compassion. Find the right people and train them into the role. We get to know our learners."

Charlotte Sutton, Talent for Care Manager, Coventry and Warwickshire Partnership NHS Trust.



KEY STAKEHOLDERS - WHO TO INCLUDE

Through the duration of the programme you will work with a range of different internal departments and external organisations to successfully provide a high quality experience for all involved.





Organisations who have already implemented Step into Work Programmes have found some common key stakeholders or contacts detailed below:



Defining roles in the programme, expected outcomes and possible limitations is particularly important to avoid confusion and last minute disasters as much as possible.

Equally, seeking lessons learnt from these key stakeholders after the programme whether in the form of a closing meeting or feedback forms is important to improve processes for future cohorts or other organisations.



PLACEMENT AREAS

Face-to-face placements are ideal, but depending on your level of risk, virtual placements have also worked effectively. Placements are the cornerstone of the programme and will make or break the success for learners. Consideration should be made during the planning stage of which departments can offer an entry level placement for the learners which can be undertaken for a few weeks. Example Departments would include:





- Catering
- Domestic
- Portering
- General office
- Laundry
- Maintenance
- Estates
- Medical Labs i.e. Pathology
- Sterile Services
- Wards
- Departments with call centres
- Departments with band 2-3 admin roles which can be amended
- Social Care refs/ Care Home - put e.g.s in PC.

All learners will need support in their placement in terms of understanding the tasks given and how to carry them out. A buddy often works well in this respect. Check managers and their teams have capacity to support learners prior to agreeing to a placement.

Before and during the placement have regular meetings with the placement managers to iron out any issues or resolve any queries speedily.

Further information on placement areas and roles can be found in the Placements section of this toolkit.



WHICH ROLES TO CHOOSE?

In choosing the role, you will need to find the corresponding job description. The department manager will be able to review it and establish what is feasible for them to complete during placement removing tasks which are not.

A list of examples roles is included in the additional resources of this toolkit.



TRIED AND TESTED TIPS

- Start at the end and go backwards – start at what you want to achieve
- Funding can have strict parameters set by the Government with HEE/DWP, they will help guide you so that your programme meets their requirements as well as where they can and cannot be flexible.

Vicky Lumley, Careers & Engagement Lead, University Hospitals of Morecambe Bay NHS Foundation Trust.





- The programme's purpose is to get people into jobs. Think about where there might be vacancies.
- Plan occupational health as a presenter in the programme early on. You can get them to explain their role in clearances with hints and tips. It'll make getting the clearances done easier before they start on placement.

Charlotte Sutton, Talent for Care Manager, Coventry and Warwickshire Partnership NHS Trust.

- Get to know who the key people are that you will need to contact
- Have a recruitment nominated person invited to the project meetings
- Go to education meetings etc to do presentation to promote the programme.

Sonia Okoh, Step into work and SWAP Project Manager, Hertfordshire and West Essex Integrated Care System

- Have an empty scheme of work (timetable) then add first of all when the college days will be and when you will spend time with them based on the rooms you can book. Then fill all the other gaps
- Plan for more placements than learners. Not all roles are actually a good fit when people start placements. It helps to be able to move people round, if you have 15 people you need 18 placements
- Trusts work so differently; you have to find out what works for you.

Claire Banks, Work Experience and Apprenticeships Administration Specialist, University Hospitals Coventry and Warwickshire.

- Plan in time to support learners with their digital skills
- Link in with senior leaders to cascade the message down to departments early on.

Karen Elliot, Talent for Care Widening Participation Lead, Mersey Care NHS Foundation Trust



DWP



The role of the DWP in the Step Into work
pre-employment programme.





DEPARTMENT OF WORK AND PENSIONS



The Department of Work and Pensions (DWP) aim to work in partnership with your organisation to support the Step into Work programme. As part of the programme arrangements, you would directly liaise with your local DWP such as Job Centre Plus. If you cover a system with multiple organisations or an organisation which covers a larger geographical area, you may need to liaise with more than one DWP office.

This section will provide some useful information, as well as some tried and tested tips from others who have already implemented a Step into Work programme.



DWP – WHAT'S THEIR ROLE?

The DWP will work with your organisation throughout the programme. Their primary role, during the early stages, will be to support you to develop a robust programme which meets national funding requirements. Longer term, this will be to provide support for a quality experience for learners with worthwhile work placements for department managers. The involvement may vary between different DWP regional offices; their role would need to be discussed and agreed during the planning process.

As a key stakeholder, early and regular communications will be needed throughout the duration of the programme. Your organisation may have existing connections with your local DWP office(s) for you to work with. If not, early conversations will be useful, so that you can make contact with your local team.





During the recruitment phase, DWP will support by sourcing potential learners from those on unemployment benefits. These will be people who are appropriate and eligible for the programme, but also have a desire to begin a career in the Health and Social Care sector. This would include using adverts, posters and job descriptions from your Organisation.

Some DWP offices have also reviewed applications, shortlisted or interviewed candidates, depending on their resources and what has been agreed during the planning phase. All Work Coaches at the DWP would provide application, interview and general support for potential learners to join the programme.

From a learner perspective, the Work Coach is often their first point of contact for support. They will have regular conversations with a Work coach throughout the programme. If concerns arise, it may be that you speak to one DWP representative or have direct access to the Work Coaches to be able to resolve the issues.

During the learning and placement phases later in the programme, the DWP will be able to deal with learner's queries and may be able to provide potential financial support for possible workplace adjustments.

The DWP will also be able to guide you whilst designing the learning packages as to what, in their experience, would most benefit the learners regarding employability. In some instances, they have been able to support with the sourcing of training providers. However, if you already have these links based on other past programmes, this may not be necessary.

Work Coaches build relationships with potential learners, so have a good understanding of their interests and existing knowledge/skills. This is very valuable in ensuring suitable learners are matched to placements.

After the learning and placements are complete, DWP will also provide continued job seeking support until the participants secure gainful employment. The programme does not guarantee employment, although it is the hope that a good placement will result in employment. The interviews and application support the DWP provide can embed knowledge and skills learned during the programme and result in an increased chance of recruitment success for participants.



GPDR

General Data Protection Regulation or GPDR governs the data protection principles, rights and obligations all organisations have to abide by. It applies to any personal data including the holding and sharing of information.

For Step into Work Programmes, this can be a tricky area to navigate. During the planning phase of the programme it is important to discuss your expectations and agree how information will be shared so that learners can access any learning and training for the programme.





Where this has been forgotten, organisations have found this can cause challenges later in the process, particularly when looking at recruiting participants or conducting checks and clearances.

In the planning phase, exactly how this information is transferred between the organisations needs to be agreed. It may be that you need to involve your Information Governance Team or Information manager to ensure compliance with the legislation which can be difficult to navigate.



PAY CONSIDERATIONS

Learners are not paid a salary as part of the programme. As a result, there are no wage costs for the placement department. Those who are in receipt of benefits from DWP may continue to claim these while on the programme. However, this will need to be discussed with DWP.

Precise funding arrangements would need to be clarified with the DWP during planning, but commute to the training provider (if delivered face-to-face) and the workplace during placement has been funded in previous programmes. An early conversation with your local DWP is advised to discuss this.



TRIED AND TESTED TIPS

- Had an existing relationship with DWP with lots of join projects, really did help a lot.
- DWP have a lot of data sharing restrictions which made it difficult to get the participants details to contact them with the information they needed. Try to agree to get a list of all participants with all the contact details to save time later.
- Work Coaches can be swamped, it's worthwhile giving participants regular calls to make sure they are getting support with issues and it helps to keep them motivated.

Sophie Carter, Pre-Employment Projects Coordinator at Norfolk and Waveney Integrated Care System

- The relationship with the DWP is really important. We previously had worked on employability programmes so had a good working relationship and lessons learnt still arose.
- DWP are really helpful with pre-screening documentation queries particularly on gaps in checks and clearances to help people get through quickly.





- Support from the DWP is not standardised, you need to understand what's available.
- Understand what timetables the DWP are working to.
- Give the work coaches the placement role and learning programme information.
- They may be able to recommend training providers and content, learn from their experiences and make sure they understand your needs.

Karen Elliot, Talent for Care Widening Participation Lead, Mersey Care NHS Foundation Trust

- Share your posters and other adverts with the DWP and Work Coaches.
- Along with other key stakeholders have regular meetings.
- Try to have a named point of contact.
- Be sure they understand the needs of all the organisation you represent if covering a system.

Sonia Okoh, Step into work and SWAP Project Manager, Hertfordshire and West Essex Integrated Care System

- Have regular meetings with the DWP and the system key stakeholders you are working with.
- Link in with the DWP early on.
- Invite Work Coaches to programme meetings, work closely together and give them the information they need for participants.
- Make sure to have them involved early on to get buy in for your open days.
- Keep in regular contact and show you appreciate them.

Sue Wright, Greater Manchester Employability Project Manager – Step into Care, Greater Manchester Health and Social Care Careers Hub



RECRUITMENT



Recruiting Participants for the Step into Work
pre-employment programme.





RECRUITING PARTICIPANTS



When bringing the programme to your organisation it is important to be clear what your recruitment and HR procedures are. The easiest way to do this is linking in with key Recruitment and HR/Workforce colleagues to establish an efficient process. It may be that you find the easiest way to do this is with regular key stakeholder meetings.

The process and systems used needs to be clear and easy to follow. Additional guides and support should be available to learners to facilitate applications.



PROCESSES FIRST

It is important to be clear what your Recruitment and HR policies/procedures are at an early point in the planning process; so you know what you and learners need to do by when.

The DWP will be able to guide you in terms of the support they can offer to your organisation. Some organisations have been able to run larger programmes with the recruitment stages led by the DWP, whereas others have managed it in house.

The process you use needs to be clear and easy to follow, particularly considering applicants may have struggled with recruitment processes previously. It may be worth connecting with the DWP to understand if there are any adjustments or extra support individuals need for each cohort.

Your organisation may have existing recruitment systems (I.e. Trac, NHS jobs etc) and guides which you can use. If not you may need to organise your own system to receive, track and distribute applications as well as tracking checks/clearances for successful candidates.





SELECTING THE PLACEMENT AREAS

It is your organisation's choice as to which areas of work and roles would be suitable for placements. Some organisations have chosen areas with high turnover, whilst others focus on hard to fill posts. Whichever you choose it is important that the area/manager has capacity to support the learners during the placement and support you during the process with the interviews and possibly qualification/training specifications etc.

The placement area will need to provide you or work with you in creating a job description, person specification and advert for the role to support the attraction of the right candidates.

Further information can be found in the Placements section of this toolkit.



ATTRACTING THE RIGHT PEOPLE

The DWP provides direct access to a pool of potential learners not currently in work with an interest in working in this sector. They are also a direct link for the learners who rely on them for support in finding work but also their benefits payments. You will need strong links with the DWP/Job Centre Plus and the work coaches throughout the programme but especially during the recruitment phase.

Adverts and social media campaigns can be used by the DWP and your organisation to promote the programme amongst job seekers. Organisations have used a range of posters, videos and social media posts i.e. twitter, Facebook etc with significant success all of which are provided to the DWP.

Consider how you can remove barriers for applicants, specifically for those from different demographics. For example looking at what might deter a young carer or someone with a learning disability. Inclusion networks or local charities can be helpful contacts in this regard.

Organisations have used open days or briefing/taster sessions to engage with applicants. The sessions give applicants a feel for the role and give the opportunity for you to advise them on the applications process, support available and placement details etc. Ultimately, the more informed candidates are prior to application, the less likely you are to experience high drop out rates and mismatched placements.

For example:



"Following a 50% drop out rate between application and interview for one cohort, introductory briefing sessions were trialled. These sessions gives the potential learners the opportunity to meet the team and to ask questions they may have. Previous learners were able to feel confident that this was the right role for them thanks to the briefing sessions, resulting in very few people dropping out of the programme."

Sophie Carter, Pre-Employment Projects Coordinator at Norfolk and Waveney Integrated Care System





APPLICATIONS

The application process and system you use should be agreed at the outset of the planning process and communicated to key stakeholders/contacts. Giving candidates the practise of employment processes.

Whether you are sent the applications directly from individuals or they apply via an existing system is your choice. Whichever you choose, being able to track received applications and match them to the relevant role/interviewer/appointing manager/location is essential.

Learners will receive some support from their work coach at the DWP but they may contact you for additional advice. They may be nervous or need extra support having had a prolonged period out of work.

During Open Days, it can be useful to include a section on your application process with useful hints and tips on the practicalities of using the system, filling in the sections etc. The aim here is to remove barriers for people who have struggled with the job seeking processes.

Support could include, amongst other things:

- Application queries and quality of submitted applications feedback
- System use issues
- Questions around role suitability, job description or person specification
- Support around personal situations and how to approach them with the interview panel/appointing manager
- Further placement information
- Reasonable adjustments needed.

Learners have explained that the application feedback they have had during the programme has improved their skills and techniques significantly. This has been particularly helpful in applying for roles after the programme. It is a critical component in the programme's success from a learner perspective.



SHORTLISTING

Once the vacancy for the programme has closed to applications, the appointing manager, and potentially yourself, would shortlist for interview. How long the application window is open for is your choice and may depend on interest levels. With smaller programmes this has been more informal. You need to define the process to be followed during planning.

Providing those not shortlisted with feedback will help them to gain an understanding of areas to improve which they would not usually receive. Whether this is a call or through the DWP should be agreed during planning.

Interviews can be a challenging experience for all of us. Learners on this programme may particularly struggle with interviews, perhaps in terms of their techniques, past experiences or nerves simply getting the better of them.

Your role in interviewing them for the programme is to put them at ease. Asking the more formal questions needed, but delivering them in a friendly way will help to get the most out of the learners. However, you still need to ascertain if the programme is right for the learner, as well as for their chosen placement.

During the planning process, think about how you want the interviews to work. Some organisations have chosen to do an interview day, with the morning looking at group work focusing on their values, how they work together and getting to know the learners. Others have done formal interviews and some informal conversations. Think about what works for your organisation and the interview panel. It may be easier to get managers to sit on panels for an afternoon, rather than a full day.

Who interviews the learners should be agreed as part of the planning process. It may be yourself, the placement manager or other members of your team etc. If you are appointing to a role in an area where you have limited experience it may be worth encouraging the department manager/supervisor to be a panel member to ensure learners are the right fit for the role.

Think about key questions you need to ask to get to know the learner, what role they want to do (if more than one is on offer) and if they are the right fit for the role.

Give learners time to ask questions in interview about the programme and placement. Let them get an understanding of what to expect as well.

As with the learners, one of the key successes to this programme is the feedback that you give after the interviews. Highlight what went well, key strengths and where they could do even better next time.

Information that you glean as an interviewer can be used later down the line when providing training on employability skills. You will have first hand experience of their approach to tailor your training around the group's needs.

The below table looks at the key practical issues organisations have faced with this part of the process and the learning they have taken from them.



Issue	Learning
Participants may be especially nervous before and during the interview.	Keep Interviews Informal in style like more of a conversation. Keep your body language open and friendly. Use a softer questioning style but don't shy away from asking the necessary questions.
There are several roles across Multiple sites, how do I keep track of interviewers.	Keep a spreadsheet with where the interviews are, which site & role interviewers can attend. Make sure you send the correct site details to the corresponding interviewers and interviewees.
What if they have a disability? How will I support them.	Ask the Participant what support they need. See if you can action this. If in doubt seek advice from HR or recruitment.
A lot of applicants are withdrawing prior to interview.	Communicate the details of the role clearly and via different mediums. Ask the people who have withdrawn. It may be that the role doesn't support someone and could be adjusted to be more appealing.
What can we do to make it more inclusive and appeal to different backgrounds	Be as flexible as possible to support people's circumstances i.e. can people with children work evenings or adjust course start times around the school run. Link in with local networks i.e. BAME or LGBT+.
The applicant can't come on site for interview.	Do the interview online via Zoom or MS teams. If you do online interviews, can you do test ones beforehand to help reduce applicant's computer nerves and resolve tech issues ahead of the interviews.
Managers aren't keen to sit on interview panels. They don't see it as priority.	The programme, from the organisation's perspective, is another way to fill vacancies. Managers get a fully funded extra pair of hands for a few weeks. After which they can apply for the vacancy or work on the bank. Attending interviews gives them direct input into who joins their team.

APPOINTMENTS

Once the successful learner(s) has agreed to a place on the programme, checks and clearances can commence using your agreed recruitment system.

As a minimum these would be DBS checks and Occupational Health clearances, which would be funded by your organisation. Rather than a DBS, your organisation may choose to accept a Declaration B Criminal Convictions form.

Candidates may have limited experience of checks and clearances. Be sure to send clear advisory documentation when confirming their place including contact details for queries.

Be clear where you can and cannot be flexible, this could be a known stumbling block for previous applications. Some learners struggle with references which completing the programme would then provide. If needed, seek Recruitment or HR/Workforce advice as issues arise.

This stage can cause delays. Have regular conversations with the DWP/work coaches, Recruitment and candidates. This will encourage learners to take proactive steps to resolve issues quickly.

See placement section for information about induction/onboarding and the learning section for training/qualification information.



TRIED AND TESTED TIPS

- Provide as much information as you can up front to avoid disappointment.
- Have a clear one page document from Recruitment about checks and clearances.
- Communicate with your DWP link - they can be great support for applicants on all things Recruitment and HR.
- If using zoom etc link in with DWP for applicant tech support.
- Keep a good database to track people, use Gantt charts if necessary.

Karen Elliot, Talent for Care Widening Participation Lead, Mersey Care NHS Foundation Trust

- Work closely with your managers to ensure you really understand what they need, adapt the support you provide around them.
- If you're supporting a multi-site Organisation coordinate with your DWP link. Make sure the interviewers and interviews are heading to an interview in the geographical area they will be working in.
- Be flexible. What can your Organisation do to make this work for the participants.
- Listen to the learners' concerns; be compassionate but realistic. Don't get their hopes up.
- Data sharing can be an issue for the DWP, make sure you agree how they'll send you the applicants' details.

Sophie Carter, Pre-Employment Projects Coordinator at Norfolk and Waveney Integrated Care System



LEARNING

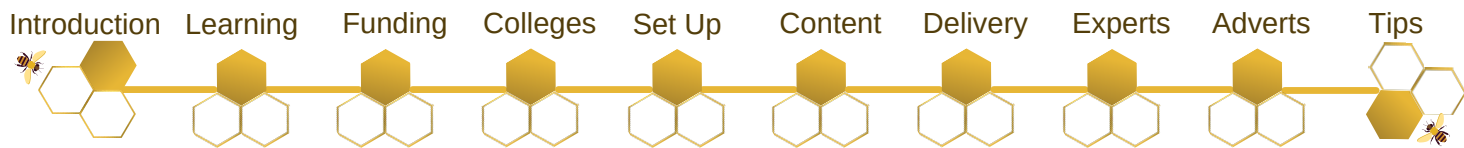


Design and delivery of the formal learning of the Step into Work pre-employment programme.





FORMAL LEARNING



The formal learning part of the programme provides learners with a qualification or new training. What this will look like varies between organisations and is agreed locally between your organisation, the DWP and your local College(s)/training provider.

The programme curriculum and plan is bespoke to your organisation and placements, but should include a section on general careers advice i.e. applications, interview techniques etc. The content may vary between cohorts dependent on the approach you take to support the placement managers you are working with.

Understanding key stakeholder needs and giving them input into developing the learning plan will improve their engagement and later the success of the programme both for the current and future cohorts.



FUNDING

The classroom-based/virtual training is funded by the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) which the College/Learning Provider will draw down.

The main commitment from an employer is the time to deliver a high-quality work placement.

Learners are not paid from your organisation during the programme. They may continue to receive any benefits they are currently in receipt of i.e. Universal Credit etc, although advice would be for the learner to seek clarity on this with their Work Coach. It is worth checking with your local DWP to see whether they have any funding to support learners. Some things covered in previous programmes have been travel and devices.





EDUCATION PROVIDER - WHAT'S THEIR ROLE?

Your Organisation or the DWP may already have existing links with colleges or training providers which you can utilise. If not, it would be advisable to make contact with a range of local providers that participants can easily travel to and assess which one will be most suitable for your programme.

Linking in early on with the Education Provider(s) and DWP to plan a thorough and supportive programme will pay off later with regards to learning content, learner support mechanisms and the general quality of the programme as a whole. Providers can advise on the systems they use, programme design etc.

The College or training provider may need to provide additional support to the participants who may have been out of education for a long period of time. Organisations have found additional tutor 1:1 meetings for example particularly helpful in ensuring assignments etc are submitted in time and to deal with learner queries in a timely manner.



PROGRAMME SET UP AND OPTIONS

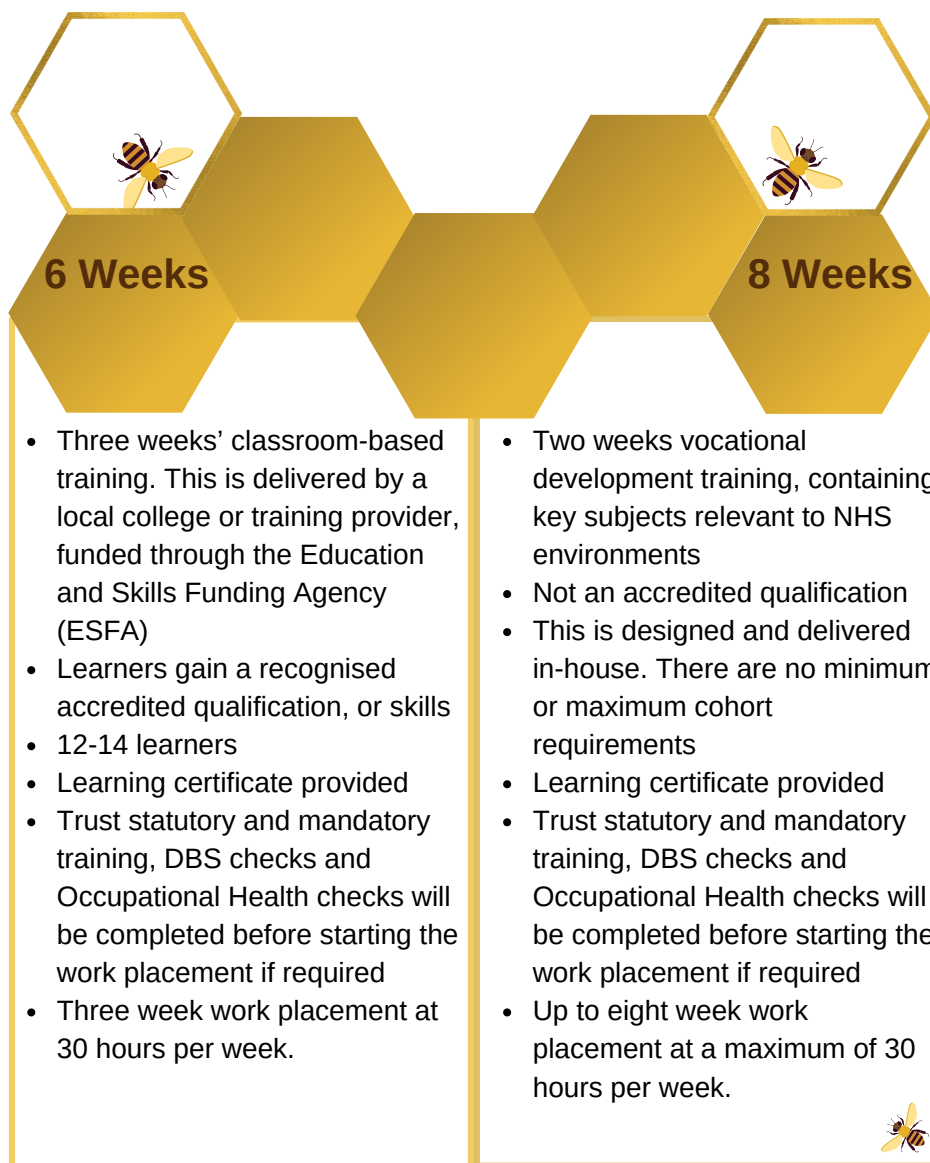
Programme models have varied between six and ten week options depending on organisation's preferences.

Positive outcomes from either model would see participants achieving the relevant qualification or completing the classroom-based training, and then going on to achieve one or more of the following:

- successfully gaining permanent or temporary employment within the Trust (or other NHS/Social Care organisation)
- registering to become a Bank member of staff
- gaining access to internal-only vacancies
- becoming an NHS/Social Care volunteer.

Some programmes include time to complete mandatory training I.e. NHS Core Skills. Learners going into the workplace are then compliant prior to starting their placement from a manager perspective, whilst building their applications for future vacancies. This is usually done by giving the learner access to internal training systems or through completion of a study day which delivers all relevant sessions as part of the learning model. However, as this is effectively a work experience opportunity, the learner would not have to complete mandatory training as part of the programme to do a placement.

Below are some example models which have been successfully run and meet DWP requirements.



Successful programmes have feedback that:

- Online learning modules should be brief, learners can then easily keep track of progress
- Be flexible around the learner's commitments i.e. consider school run times, or caring responsibilities where possible
- You can use existing training systems
- Check back in with placement managers regarding planned content. Does it meet their needs for the skills/knowledge participants will need?

CURRICULUM CONTENT

The curriculum needs to be agreed during planning. When you are aware of the placement locations, you can plan the content. Organisations have included a range of modules (Health and Social Care, Customer Services, Business Admin Skills etc). Often, the learner will gather a portfolio of learning. At the end of the programme, they then take away a meaningful qualification or skills to assist with future applications.



The overall aim of the programme is to introduce the NHS working environment and to equip the learners to take their first steps towards employment in the NHS. Depending on the course content there will be some variations in the programme design. Some example topics could include the following:

- Introduction to working in healthcare, adult care and child care
- Effective communication
- Introduction to working in a person-centred way in health and adult care
- Introduction to Safeguarding in health, adult care and child care
- Introduction to Health and Safety awareness in the workplace
- Introduction to Confidentiality and Information Governance
- Awareness of equality and diversity
- Understanding conflict at work
- Interview skills
- Applying for a job
- Developing personal confidence.



PROGRAMME SET UP AND OPTIONS

Traditionally, these programmes have been delivered face-to-face at the local college or education provider, which is easily accessible to participants. Learning is supported with online resources but it is mostly about classroom style delivery.

Organisations who have maintained the programme during the 2020/2021 pandemic have moved the learning into the online environment. Colleges and providers have used their own systems to deliver the content virtually. Some organisations have used external companies to create bespoke online packages in conjunction with their local colleges.

The computer skills of learners can be quite varied. If choosing the online version, organising training/guides etc for learners ahead of the first day of training and having a contact on the day to support with computer issues can improve their experience and prevent from them being unable to join the virtual session.

The DWP can be particularly helpful in supporting learners here, however support between the DWP in different areas can vary. It is important to liaise with your local DWP/JCP throughout to identify what support is available, particularly if your programme covers multiple geographical areas.

Also, the DWP may have supported other local organisations with similar programmes which they can use to direct your organisation and provide supporting resources.





SUBJECT MATTER EXPERT SESSIONS

Also known as partner days, organisations have used some of the learning time in the programme to set up subject matter expert sessions. These sessions allow your organisation to showcase the services it provides, particular career paths and development opportunities. This is particularly useful for hard to recruit areas or areas with a high turnover.

These sessions would be organised by your team, rather than the college/education provider, with the relevant leads/experts delivering much of the content. Other organisations have been involved in the content development from the outset to ensure the content meets learner's needs and to provide support to the leads/experts on the day.



ADVERTISING

In addition to details of the recruitment process and placements, learning overviews should be included in adverts and information packs for the programme which are shared with the DWP. Applicants will be better informed so you attract the right participants and avoid disappointment at the interview stage.

Inclusion of more detailed learning plans at open days and introductory sessions will bring out any queries and support needs early on which you can address and incorporate into your planning if needed.



TRIED AND TESTED TIPS

- Have a section on: interview/application skills, computer literacy skills and mandatory training
- Use existing links with Colleges and education providers, you may be able to use existing materials from previous employment schemes
- Have stakeholders and subject matter experts involved early on in planning the content
- Link with Health Education England regularly regarding their deadlines to avoid time pressures later on.

Sonia Okoh, Step into work and SWAP Project Manager, Hertfordshire and West Essex Integrated Care System

- Learning providers may provide laptops which is really beneficial to learners, however it can be tricky to organise and ensure returns of equipment
- Online learning works really well for those who are happy to learn this way. Face to face training can be a great support to learner too, particularly with workbooks/learning queries
- Review support regularly (i.e. 1:1s and ad hoc support) as part of the programme planning
- Learning virtually from home works really well, reducing the need to provide a training centre and enabling all learners to access the training no matter where they live in the area





- Keep regular contact with your participants.

Sue Wright, Greater Manchester Employability Project Manager – Step into Care, Greater Manchester Health and Social Care Careers Hub.

- Qualification doesn't have to be an NVQ we have done some NCFE distance learning on Customer Services in the Health Care setting
- Start working on the programme early on. Ask the training provider what elements they can offer. We cover some things in house using our existing skills/knowledge so we need to be clear
- We like to do some work in groups and give them homework. It feels like they have a responsibility. If so, give them study periods
- We do lots of in-house teaching so our team covers employability skills with a focus on application forms over CV's as people often get stuck on this
- Have other speakers from other departments. We look at their communications skills, have a resilience session, Conflict Resolution and presentation skills. But it is organic, depending on the group and their needs we tailor it
- We default to short days in training to support around parents and carers. But jobs aren't always like that so we try to make participants aware of the differences. If possible, we do some early starts on placement.

Charlotte Sutton, Talent for Care Manager, Coventry and Warwickshire Partnership NHS Trust.

- PC skills can be a challenge for people if doing distance learning
- Plan the level of the qualification carefully. Learners can struggle to get all the work done for a Level 3 NVQ in the programme timescales. Level 1 NVQ's are often covered with session by the DWP so may not be particularly helpful for their CV. Level 2 NVQ's have felt more balanced for our participants
- Get them to attend Corporate Induction
- Consider how deliver to deliver employability training. Some DWP's use an external company or you may want to run some elements internally
- It's good to deliver a session on NHS values and behaviours. What do we expect to see? What's unique to the NHS? i.e. acronyms bring a book with you write them down and ask the person you're shadowing. Do things specific to the NHS.

Vicky Lumley, Careers & Engagement Lead, University Hospitals of Morecambe Bay NHS Foundation Trust.



PLACEMENTS



Managing the placements for the Step Into work
pre-employment programme.





MANAGING PLACEMENTS



Once learners have completed the learning modules, they will move into placements in areas across your organisation. The placements usually focus on entry level roles and last between three and eight weeks, depending on the length of your programme.

Placements give learners invaluable work experience to reinforce applications for future roles. It can give them a real sense of self-worth and achievement. Equally, managers can use the programme as a different way to recruit from the local community with access to a potentially different pool of applicants from different inclusion backgrounds to previous applicants. Most importantly, it's an opportunity to make a real positive difference to someone's life.



PREPARATION FOR PLACEMENTS

The content of the placement should be planned out and agreed with the department manager in advance, usually when agreeing the job description. You need to be clear as to what outcomes the manager is looking for, incorporating them effectively into the programme.

The location and number of placements available should be decided during the planning phase. Managers can have multiple learners in their area, but they must be able to demonstrate that they can provide adequate support, training (i.e. a buddy etc) and work. This can be invaluable to someone who has been out of work for a prolonged period and may lack confidence.

For the placement to be truly successful, it is important that the role, expectations and support are defined for the buddy/trainer looking after the learner. Learners are expected to be assigned tasks which can be learned quickly, on the job and with supervision. They would be given the opportunity to try different types of tasks to learn new skills without being solely responsible. Given the short duration of the placement, there may be limitations as to what can be achieved. This will need to be planned for in advance.





In earlier stages of the programme, you will have had discussions with learners identifying support needs. For example, some may need specific equipment, risk assessments (i.e. DSE) flexibility with start times due to responsibilities etc. Having this conversation in advance with both the parties to iron out such details prior to the start of the placement will reduce protentional issues.

Learners are not be paid for their placements. In most cases, they will continue to be supported by unemployment benefits, although it is important to discuss this with your local DWP/JCP.



PLACEMENT MANAGERS – WHAT DO THEY NEED TO KNOW?





The programme can be life-changing for learners. At a personal level, learners have highlighted increased aspirations and self-confidence regarding their capabilities. From a wider perspective, learners have met new people and developed new knowledge, skills and experience that are desirable to employers. Organisations have described benefits to their own staff through professional development and mentoring opportunities and an increase in passion to share their roles.

For successful placements, managers need to be equipped with the information and support they need to deliver high quality work placements within their department. In engaging with the manager throughout the process, you will be able to identify their areas of support and incorporate these into your placement planning. This may be include resources i.e. footwear or a guide for example. This would need to take place for each cohort, although later you may have developed a bank of resources which you can reuse.

Any guides you develop need to cover the key topics managers need to know. Defining your role, details of the programme and things to look for is a valuable resource which will give confidence to the manager so that they get the most from the participants and vice versa for the participant.

Guide content could include the overleaf suggestion.



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- Information about the programme (its purpose and how it works)
 - Support from your team as Programme Lead
 - How the placement will work
 - Induction/starting details (I.e. date they are attending corporate induction and start date/time)
 - Training they need to complete (I.e. departmental fire training)
 - Key placement information (I.e pay information, shift times, breaks)
 - Expectations from the placement (I.e. work experience skills etc)
 - Support for the participant
 - After the placement (I.e guaranteed interviews if agreed, options for the bank, references etc)
 - Key contacts.



INDUCTION AND ONBOARDING

Learners are not employees and would not be expected to complete a formal induction or work to the level of other staff. The programme is an extended work placement where the learner has the opportunity to learn about the service they are in and gain experience of their role. The induction training for placements needs to support learners so that they know how to competently and safely complete tasks.

As with any work placement they would be expected to shadow a current employee throughout the placement. The buddy role should be allocated by the manager after discussion with a member of staff. An outline of clear expectations for all parties and support for the buddy as well as the participant. The information in the guide can be very helpful to the buddy to understand their role.

Some organisations do a welcome day, others require them to attend corporate induction, communicating their Trust values and expectations. Again, this is determined by your individual organisation's needs.

In terms of Induction training, some organisations have chosen to include completion of all mandatory training in their programme timetable. Others have chosen for them to complete the mandatory elements for the role, so they are safe to be on site. You may have chosen to allocate time to do this as part of the learning modules.



KEEPING CONTACT

Regular contact with learners and placement managers creates a sense of value and commitment with participants and managers alike. Investing in these relationships where you can be a point of information and assist with issues builds confidence in the programme which will encourage future cohorts. In short, organisations have found a direct correlation with the success of the programme and investment of time from the team leading the programme.

Organisations have predominantly used informal 1:1 calls, visits and discussions to achieve this. Some people prefer dropping into areas to talk to learners and managers during placements. They have found that in some cases, people are more reluctant to discuss their worries over the phone. Managers and learners open up with issues and successes, which you can resolve and learn from when you are face to face. Importantly keeping them engaged in the programme.

This can take up a large amount of your time, but investing your time here can be transformative. Many successful placements have resulted in substantive or bank roles for participants directly as a result of the success of the placement. Listening to those involved and resolving issues can be the turning point.



PLACEMENT STORIES

"I applied for the programme to get back into catering. I have always loved being a chef and I really want to get back into it. I want to start at the bottom and work my way up. This programme has given me a lot of confidence. My wife says that I never stop talking now – I used to just sit there in silence. I am so proud of myself to get back to where I am just now. It feels like I am Steve Longstaff from 20 years ago."

Steven Longstaff – Catering Assistant

"I have three children aged under 2 years so I have had to put my own career aside in recent years, but now that everything is more settled at home, I am ready to get back into work. I have really enjoyed the programme because I have made lots of friends and I have learned to push myself more. I am really hoping to get full-time work in the NHS and provide for my family."

Mark Hampshire – Catering Assistant

"I wasn't actually going to apply for the programme but I went along to the Open Day at the Jobcentre and I found out some information about the Clinical Support Worker role and I thought "I could do that!". I really like helping people and making them feel more comfortable. I have always worked with the public, helping at schools and working with kids. But I have never done anything like caring for patients before and to be honest I found the idea quite daunting at first. Now that the placement has started, I just feel really excited and I am so keen to learn. The programme has been fantastic because we have been learning together and helping each other. All fifteen of us have become close friends and we support one another and push each other."

Annmarie Jackson – Clinical Support Worker





"The programme is really good because it takes the fear out of things. We have all bonded really well as a team and we have helped each other through the programme. Everyone has been so friendly and even the interview wasn't scary because everyone was so welcoming that it really helped me to talk about the skills that I have and the things that I can do. The programme has been so empowering; it really has made me feel more confident."

Elizabeth Samuels – Clinical Support Worker

"I love the NHS. I was a bricklayer before 2015 and then I had a motorcycle accident and the NHS looked after me for two months. Because of my accident, I have been out of work but I really like to push myself and see what I can do despite my disability. I love a good challenge and I am really excited to start on my placement in the Car Parking department. I am really keen to get working in the NHS and I would like to see how far I can go, learning new skills and adding more qualifications."

Matthew White – Car Park Assistant

"I saw this programme as a fantastic opportunity to work in the NHS and refresh my skills. There has been a lot of support at every step of the way. The time we have spent in College and at Inspira has really helped to prepare us for the placement, and it has helped me to make some friends on the course. I have a really lovely mentor in Radiology and I am very positive about my placement."

Susan Campbell – Clinical Support Worker



TRIED AND TESTED TIPS

- Keep placements informed as you develop the plan and programme
- Get the right placements - liaise with different areas to establish who would like to take a learner.
- Closely monitored them whilst participants are out on placement.

Claire Banks, Work Experience and Apprenticeships Administration Specialist, University Hospitals Coventry and Warwickshire.

- Rather than a few weeks on placement we did 10 days - we always dot them around so they never do two weeks as a solid block in an area. Learners can get bored or the supervisor runs out of work for them.
- If learners don't have a lot of confidence in some areas they will get left if don't ask for work i.e. on a busy Ward. You need to give the managers a lot of information. Get to know them and think about who goes where
- Make sure learners are clear what to expect; what they will see and what they will do. They need to know that if they do a placement on the Maternity Ward they won't be watching a baby born or if they are on a mental health unit they may come across things they haven't seen before which may seem scary.

Charlotte Sutton, Talent for Care Manager, Coventry and Warwickshire Partnership NHS Trust.





- Regular (weekly) visits to people is when you find out actually what's happening. If you don't hear anything go and check. It takes a lot of your diary time but it's worth it.
- Learners don't always feel able to raise things on placement, particularly on busy Wards. Build your relationship with them early on then go talk to them during placement
- Set up a conference meeting with all of the participants during placement. They can raise what's going well and any issues. Helps for them to see that they are not alone.
- Make sure managers understand the strategic goal of doing the programme; to fill vacancies. That's why we do them and why it's important to them. Helps you get engagement so it's not just another task for them
- If the relationships you build across departments during placements have been brilliant it enables you to do repeat programmes/placements.

Vicky Lumley, Careers & Engagement Lead, University Hospitals of Morecambe Bay NHS Foundation Trust.



AFTER THE PROGRAMME



Next steps after the Step Into work
pre-employment programme.





AFTER THE PROGRAMME



By the end of the programme, learners will have had new training or a qualification, a reference and experience of: work in their placement area, induction and employment processes. In the longer term, the programme would be a significant factor in the learner gaining employment and potentially no longer requiring benefits.

Organisations have described the value to their services in being able to support individuals through this journey. They have been able to use the placement as an opportunity to take an almost 'working interview' approach to recruitment with no additional costs, whilst attracting candidates from different backgrounds and the variety that brings to the workplace.

This section will give you some helpful suggestions as to how to complete a cohort of the programme from a manager, programme lead and learner perspective.



GUARANTEED INTERVIEWS

After learners complete their placements, there would be no more mandated steps for the programme. The programme does not result in guaranteed roles upon completion. However, during the planning phase you may have agreed that there could be guaranteed interviews for vacant posts, apprenticeships or Bank posts.





This can be seen as a significant advantage of agreeing to undertake the programme for both learners and placement managers alike.

To encourage the success of the programme, some organisations have also set up employment skills workshops after the programme or provided 1:1 career support for individuals as required. Support beyond programme completion is not a requirement, but is valued from learners on a personal level if it can be facilitated.

If recruiting to the Bank is the key outcome of the programme, it will allow both parties flexibility around shifts and a resource of experienced and trained workers. If you have also incorporated completion of mandatory training into the programme, this can mean that the learners are ready to go straight away. To assist with this, some organisations have started Bank checks and clearances during the programme so upon completion there are no commencement delays.

If recruiting to vacant posts is the key outcome the experience, knowledge and skills obtained during the programme can significantly improve the learner's chances of securing substantive employment. If the vacancy is in the area of the placement, they have, in effect, had a month-long working interview and showcased what they can do and how they can develop with the right support.

With either option, the programme can be a significant factor in overcoming previous issues preventing learners from obtaining gainful employment i.e. reference, interview techniques, qualifications and work history.



TRAINING/QUALIFICATIONS

One of the outcomes of the programme for learners is that they obtain a formal qualification or new training for their C.V. Throughout the programme, the college or training provider will have been engaging with the learner to ensure the timely submission of assignments or reflections etc so that by the end of the programme, the learner has completed their qualification/training.

The qualification (or proof of learning) may be given by the end of the learning part of the programme, however, if assignments are submitted late this may cause delays. By the end of the programme, the learners must have completed all their assignments etc for the course to gain the qualification/training completion. Some organisations have also decided that if they have not completed the qualification/training they cannot apply for the guaranteed interviews or Bank roles. The process at this stage should have been agreed in conjunction with key stakeholders during the planning phase and communicated to learners throughout the programme.





Depending on how the qualification or learning is designed, the learning may not result in a formal qualification. However, learners could still include the experiences they have gained from the programme in job applications and interviews. If so, this could be factored into the programme, so that support and understanding how to demonstrate learned skills and knowledge in applications and interviews can be included.



FEEDBACK

Feedback from the programme from all the key stakeholders but in particular placement manager, learners and college can provide a wealth of information to develop your approach and resources for future cohorts. Some organisations have used feedback forms, informal 1:1's and group sessions to gather this information. The information gathered can also be used to assess the success of the programme in more than just the percentage of learners entering into employment afterwards.

This feedback can also be used to identify individuals willing to be part of a case study or learner story to be included in future communications. These case studies could be from either perspective but would bring weight to the value of the programme at a professional and personal level for all involved.

Step into Work programmes can be life changing for some learners and provide an opportunity for departments to make a real difference in people's lives. Personal accounts from those involved are very powerful. Organisations have shared both video and written accounts of case studies through social media. Both provide new placement areas and learners equally with access to first hand experiences of the programme and why they could do it. Gaining this at the feedback stage or earlier, prior to individuals moving on from the programme would be advised.



INSPIRING MORE COHORTS

After the programme has come to an end for the particular cohort, some organisations have found a great way to encourage departments to come forward for future placements is to showcase the programme through your organisation's communications channels i.e. newsletters, twitter, or to invite department leads to a celebration event, where they can hear first hand the experiences from the learners and teams involved in the previous cohort.

Advertising successes can encourage applications for future cohorts. In some cases though, funding from other sources to support the programme has been gained through communicating the success of the programme through social media etc. This has primarily been where perhaps employability schemes are managed in a system wide approach with multiple organisations contributing to the programmes.





A range of communications can be designed to promote the programme such as infographics focusing on the numerical successes i.e. number of learners employed by the organisation etc. More personal approaches focusing on people's experiences i.e. case studies can also be used. However, this would always need to be with the learner's consent which could be obtained when gathering the feedback.



TRIED AND TESTED TIPS

- Invite as many people as you can to the closing celebration event. Hearing people's stories makes them want to be part of it, they feel moved.
- Evaluate each candidates' experience for each placement and the course.
- Write to the Chief Executive, tell them what you're doing. Get them interested. Executives may come to your events and encourage others to get involved.
- Do a celebration event at the end. Invite as many people as possible, including learners' families. They may hate their idea of it at first but they love it in the end. We do a finger buffet for them and they each do little speeches about their experience. We give them their certificates for the course and the programme. It's as important as the taster day.

Charlotte Sutton, Talent for Care Manager, Coventry and Warwickshire Partnership NHS Trust.

- Have two days with them after the placements. Time for a celebration (with cake) to present to each other what they've been doing on placements. Invite the DWP so they can learn from the feedback. Then look at what's next (job websites, applying for jobs etc).
- Try to get as many people on the Bank as possible.

Vicky Lumley, Careers & Engagement Lead, University Hospitals of Morecambe Bay NHS Foundation Trust.

