



West Yorkshire and Harrogate Excellence Centre

Spotlight on Success



Project SEARCH The Mid Yorkshire Hospitals NHS Trust

Project SEARCH is a one year programme for young people with learning disabilities aged 17-25. The programme's primary objective is to secure paid employment for every participant.

Mid Yorkshire Hospitals NHS Trust first introduced the Project SEARCH programme at Pinderfields Hospital in September 2017.

Fifteen interns have since graduated in the first two years of the programme being in place and as a Trust, Mid Yorkshire Hospitals employed nine of the students who graduated from the scheme.

The success of the Pinderfields' programme and the positive publicity it generated resulted in a second Project SEARCH programme to be established at Dewsbury and District Hospital.

Presently, both the Pinderfields and Dewsbury programmes have cohorts that started in September 2019. They currently have 11 interns at Pinderfields Hospital and 7 interns at Dewsbury and District Hospital.

So, how does it work?

The programme operates over the academic year with the interns starting in September and completing the programme the following July.

When interns first begin, the first two to three weeks is spent completing an induction and the mandatory training required by the hospital.

Each term they undertake a new "rotation" or work placement. They get one to one support in the beginning but ultimately the interns will be working on the job independently with a local mentor who will work alongside them and help with any questions or concern they might have.

The Project SEARCH programme matches interns to their placements in terms of skills, abilities and interests. The placements take place in different departments within the hospital, including recruitment, facilities, medical records and many more.

All of the interns are also supported by a Project SEARCH on-site job coach and tutor who help and support them to develop an employability plan, CV, interview practice and writing letters to employers. Interns can find a job at any stage during their year on Project SEARCH and will have a supported employment team to help them learn their new role.

Although jobs are not guaranteed on Project SEARCH, the programme has proven to help young people with learning disabilities gain transferrable skills and the confidence needed to find meaningful paid employment in the future.

Currently, The Mid Yorkshire Hospitals NHS Trust is the only NHS Trust outside of the London area to host two Project SEARCH programmes.

"The confidence they've [the interns] now got and the enthusiasm and motivation they've got working as part of the team...really shows them what work is about and prepares them for the discipline that's needed."

**Gordon Smith
Head of Diversity and Inclusion
Mid Yorkshire Hospitals NHS Trust
Pinderfields Hospital**

"We looked at many internship programmes and we think that the Project SEARCH model is by far the best one we've found. We're very thrilled to have Mid Yorkshire Hospitals NHS Trust on board as a partner because of the range of jobs in their large hospital site."

**Simon Jones
Assistant Head
Highfield School**

Contact Gordon Smith at gordon.smith9@nhs.net tel: 01924 543551 or Sarah Palmer at SPalmer@highfield.wakefield.sch.uk to find out more about the Project SEARCH programme.

For more information about Project SEARCH in The Mid Yorkshire Hospitals NHS Trust, check out: <https://www.midyorks.nhs.uk/my-project-search->