



European Pathways to Employment for Disabled Young People

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Date: July 2017

Reference: PP03

Funded by the European Union's Erasmus+ Programme

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Introduction and context

European Pathways to Employment for Disabled Young People is a 2 year Erasmus + funded Strategic Partnership project involving Petroc, a Further Education college in Devon, England, and Duveholms Gymnasiesärskola (Duveholms), a school from Katrineholm, Sweden. Following work together as part of the European Union's Lifelong Learning Programme and Erasmus+ Mobility projects, the partnership decided to collaborate on a two year investigation into the most appropriate delivery model for schools and educational organisations to help ensure that disabled young people can progress from basic education to higher level qualifications and permanent, meaningful employment within the local economy. The partnership decided to investigate this in detail in recognition of the fact that, at a European level, only 6% of disabled people are active in the labour market¹. This is significantly lower than average figures for able-bodied people. In April 2017, the employment rate in the UK (the proportion of people aged from 16 to 64 who were in work) was 74.8%.²

The project would centre on examining models of progression into employment intended to increase success of sustainable work for these groups of young adults.

There was also a focus on designing and testing resources that would support young adults with learning difficulties into employment, whether this was paid full time, paid part time, volunteer work or a role in a government resource centre (currently only an option in Sweden).

The three resources we chose to develop were:

- My Employability Workbook
- Student Work Placement Log Book
- Employment Support Information

All of these resources were tested on students and amended based on their feedback throughout the project period, with a dedicated trail taking place in May 2017 with both English and Swedish students in Duveholms.

Methodology

Literature review

There is a range of literature on the subject of work experience and study programmes which has informed much of the background to this report. See the *References and useful resources* section for further reading and useful resources.

¹ Chris Hatton, Gyles Glover, Eric Emerson & Ian Brown, (2016) *Learning Disabilities Observatory, People with learning disabilities in England 2015: Main report* [online]. Public Health England, available at https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/613182/PWLDIE_2015_main_report_NB090517.pdf [accessed 27/06/2017].

² Office for National Statistics, (2017) *UK Labour Market June 2017* [online]. ONS, available at <https://www.ons.gov.uk/employmentandlabourmarket/peopleinwork/employmentandemployeetypes/bulletins/uklabourmarket/june2017#summary-of-latest-labour-market-statistics> [accessed 27/06/2017].

Feedback from students

Students were asked how well they like the processes and resources being developed and their feedback informed changes that we made.

Feedback from staff

Staff were asked for feedback on the delivery models and the testing of the resources which informed development of the model and materials.

Feedback from employers

Feedback was gathered from employers by electronic survey and in person at our dissemination events and other meetings.

Live testing of model and resources

Students in the UK have used the resources throughout the year and given their views on the changes we've made to improve them. We then tested the model and resources in Sweden with three UK students working alongside a Swedish student.

Conferences and meetings

Conferences and meetings, such as the *Pathways to Employment* conference in the UK in June 2017, and the Bygga Broar conference in Sweden in October 2016, brought employers, providers and other stakeholders together to share innovative ideas and best practice.

Partnership working

Petroc and Duveholms have worked closely together throughout the project to share best practice. The project has seen visits from Catharina Lundqvist and Anja Cameron from Duveholms Gymnasiesärskola to Petroc and visits from Alex Wittram from Petroc to Duveholms, with Alex being joined by Petroc students in May 2017.

Both sets of teachers have paid visits to local employers who employ or offer placements to students from the schools with learning disabilities. Various settings for work placements were investigated including social enterprise, supported internships, Project SEARCH and government daily activity centres. We have also attended a speech and conference in the Swedish Parliament about destinations of students with learning disabilities when they leave school and the need for a database to know the whereabouts of those moving to unknown destinations.

The project was also represented at Social Venture Network Sweden's conference in Stockholm where we talked about the project and our research.

A workshop was run in Gothenburg to examine the project, research and resources. Anja Cameron attended as a speaker to present the progress of the project. This was a national conference attended by about 100 head teachers, principals, stakeholders and politicians. Participants completed the Employability Workbooks and then commented on them.

Review of existing models in the UK and Sweden

UK

Social Enterprise

Petroc runs working cafés at both its Mid Devon and North Devon sites using students with learning disabilities to staff and run it. This enables students who are unable to take up external placements to begin to develop employability skills which will hopefully enable them to progress into external supported internships. The cafés are highly supported and in an environment the students know and are accustomed to. Students acquire a variety of skills whilst in the café environment and it provides a good initial platform in order to work towards supported internship. A third catering opportunity is offered in the community where 8 students have the opportunity to cook a lunch for the residents of a sheltered housing complex once a week alongside Petroc staff.

The social enterprise provides students with a sheltered environment to learn employability skills and can be seen as a first step towards building confidence and skills to enable students to make the transition to supported internships.

Project SEARCH

The Project SEARCH framework was initially set up in the USA in 1996, and now runs in more than 350 locations across the world, offering support to people with learning difficulties.³

Petroc is involved in the Project SEARCH based at North Devon District Hospital (NDDH), set up in 2013. It has seen high levels of success in its first three years.

Project Search offers young people the chance to undergo on-the-job training at NDDH. It is run by three organisations working in partnership:

The Northern Devon Healthcare Trust provides the interns with intensive work experience at NDDH, as well as a base to hold tutorials and employee training. Over the academic year each student works across three areas of the hospital, selected on the basis of their specific skills and talents. NDDH provides each intern with a mentor who is a fellow employee whilst they are on a rotation. Their staff give the interns detailed feedback.

Pluss, a Social Enterprise that supports over 5,000 people with disabilities and other disadvantages into employment each year, provides a full time Job Coach who is based at the hospital. Pluss is able to help the young people with their job search towards the end of the internship, along with support into paid employment where necessary.

Petroc provides a full time Tutor who is based at the hospital. The Tutor runs tutorial sessions twice a day, offers extra support to the interns and provides them with CV and interview skills to support their job search.

³ Project Search, *About Project Search* [online], available at <http://www.projectsearch.us/About.aspx> [accessed 31/07/2017].

The Pluss Job Coach and the Petroc Tutor work very closely together to ensure the interns are given all the support they need and to make sure they have the best chance of securing employment or a traineeship or apprenticeship at the end of the internship.

Interns attend five days a week, Monday to Friday, 8.30am till 4.00pm. They meet the Tutor and Job Coach every morning in the education room which is on the hospital site. They meet for 30 minutes in the morning and 1.5 hours at the end of the day. This allows discussion about the day, the setting of daily individual targets and the solving of possible problems or issues before the day starts, and before they go home. Interns also attend sessions on a wide range of topics including employability, CVs and applications, politics, and an appropriate level of maths and English. The learning results in a Project SEARCH Certificate which includes City and Guilds Employability Level 1.

Both Tutor and Job Coach are trained in systematic instruction techniques to breakdown the job role so that each student can be successful no matter what their limitations.⁴ The classroom based at the hospital also serves as a place for students to practise skills they found difficult in the workplace or to increase their speed and output.

Being based full time in the employment setting had a positive impact on the interns. They felt they were in what they considered a "proper job" where they had to behave as an employee in work and outside. They were treated as employees, not students. They recognised they needed to be more responsible and mature than in the college setting and were all keen to succeed, with a view to move into employment by the end of the year. Interns felt they were valued as colleagues in the work setting and all had individual mentors within their areas of work within the hospital. The mentors were employees of NDDH who had volunteered to take on the role. They had received training from the Project SEARCH team and were in regular contact with the Tutor and Job Coach throughout an intern's placement.

The partnership between the NDDH, Petroc and Pluss is vital to the success of this model.

Single Employer Supported Internship

Having seen the success of Project SEARCH in a hospital setting, two more internship groups with local employers, Calvert Trust and The Joshua Tree Project, were set up in September 2016 by Petroc.

Both employers could accommodate a number of interns at their workplace and could offer an education room where a Petroc lecturer could deliver tutorial, employability skills, practical numeracy and communication skills. The two employers offered a variety of work placements for interns who needed a high level of support initially when they entered the workplace. Calvert Trust is a working hotel and adventure centre for visitors with disabilities and their families/carers and The Joshua Tree Project joinery and restoration makes a range of products from recycled timber. Educational sessions were delivered to

⁴ Mark Kilsby, (2015), *What is TSI?* [online], Training in Systematic Instruction, available at <http://www.systematicinstruction.com/what-is-tsi> [accessed 27/06/2017].

the groups in these settings one day a week by the Petroc Employment Lead Tutor and the interns were supported in their work placements three days a week by Job Coaches and Work Supports. For a summary of these different roles, see the diagram at Appendix 3. These two employers supported ten interns during the 2016-17 academic year.

This highly supportive model provides a training ground to enable students to develop the practical and employability skills they need to then move on to work placements with employers offering opportunities in the multiple employer supported internship model which may offer employment opportunities.

Multiple Employer Supported Internship

Individual students are placed on supported internships with a range of local employers. They are on placement 3 days a week and return to college one day a week for educational sessions with the Employment Lead Tutor. These sessions cover tutorial, employability skills, and practical numeracy and communications skills. Interns are found work placements that match their interests and skills and are hopefully within their local communities or within easy travel access. The Job Coach supports the interns through the interview process and into the job. Once the intern feels happy the Job Coach will gradually withdraw. However, if there is the need for continued support then Work Support will be introduced. Interns can have as many as three work placements during the year but if they are happy in the placement and there is the possibility of employment they can remain in the one placement.

The key difference Multiple Employer and Single Employer models is that the interns are spread out around the region at different employers during the week and have to travel in to college once a week. This makes them less efficient to run, but they do provide more autonomy for the students and avoid saturating the organisation's vacancies in one year.

Funding for Supported Internships

In England there is Access to Work funding.⁵ An Access to Work grant can pay for practical support if you have a disability, health or mental health condition to help you:

- start working
- stay in work
- move into self-employment or start a business

Access to Work can be available for those in work experience, so it can be claimed during a supported internship.

The funding available on or after 1 April 2017 is up to £42,100 and can pay for things like adaptations to equipment; special equipment; fares to work for those who can't use public transport; a support worker or job coach.

Unfortunately once the young person leaves education and is in employment they do not always have anyone to support them to get the Access to Work grant. Support once in employment and after education is needed for both the employee with a learning disability and the employer.

⁵ <https://www.gov.uk/access-to-work> (online) Gov.uk website, [accessed 26/10/2017].

Sweden

Funktionsrätt (Functional Rights)

Funktionsrätt is a new word of action recently coined in Sweden to describe the right to self-determination and full participation for people with disabilities. On 18th May 2017, the Handikappförbunden (Disability Federation) changed its name to Funktionsrätt Sverige (Functional Rights Sweden). According to the Handikappförbunden, the concept of functional rights should add a new dimension to the conceptual flora by shifting focus from obstacles, availability, and specific solutions to the principle of human rights and a society designed for all regardless of functional ability.⁶

The concept of Funktionsrätt should be followed throughout all stages of a young person's education, through work experience, and into meaningful employment or other activities if employment is not possible. On that basis, Duveholms's ideal approach is to spend 4 years with the relevant students, the first year being to settle students in to college, years 2-3 being focussed on learning and employability, and year 4 being all about future planning, including engaging with employers and other professionals to ensure a warm handover into support after college.

Program Board

Once every term the School has a Program Board. This is a great opportunity for employers to meet students and staff as well as staff from the Job Centre, the national insurance office, social services office, habilitation and daily work activity. The board is chaired by a politician. Quite often the program board is visited by staff from other schools in the region to learn and share best practice.

Habilitering (Habilitation)

Habilitation activities are for children, adolescents and adults with long-term disabilities. Unlike rehabilitation, habilitation targets people with lifelong disabilities. It can be about the ability to see, hear, move, understand, perceive the outside world or relate to other people. Services offer advice, support and treatment to prevent and reduce the difficulties that a disability can cause in daily life, working with different occupational groups who have knowledge about how permanent disabilities can affect everyday life. There are opportunities to meet others in the same situation, work together, exchange experiences and make new contacts. Individuals who have a disability are involved in the design of habilitation and get support from people in their vicinity. Help is available to co-ordinate the support on offer from the range of agencies with which disabled individuals may be working.

Habilitering looks at supporting people with disabilities to achieve maximum independence in activities of daily living through training, education and treatment. The focus of this approach is collaborative working, involving healthcare professionals, employers, education and training providers, and social welfare. The aim is for them to work in partnership to deliver a person-centered approach to supporting the individuals.

⁶ <http://www.hso.se/press/Senaste-nytt/Funktionsratt-ar-ett-nyord/>, (online) Disability Federation Sweden website, [accessed 26/10/2017].

Work Placements

In the Swedish system, 16+ special schools are available only for students with IQs below 70 according to the Wechsler Intelligence Scale for Children (WISC) assessment. Sweden has four years' government legislated curriculum where the emphasis is on chosen vocational paths for students with moderate learning difficulties. The vocational areas in Duveholms are aesthetical education, administration, catering, commercial & construction. Work Placements are unpaid and have to be a minimum of 22 weeks in total over the 4 years, although it is often much more. The student may be out more in the workplace than in the classroom in the final year. A Job Coach sources the work placement and then the students are supported by Work Support for as long as required. The Work Support also supports travel training when the first initial work placement occurs. At present approximately 56 employers are providing Work Placements for the students at Duveholms.

Government Subsidised Employment

Government subsidies are available to employers who take on young people with a learning disability.

Both private & public employers can receive payment up to 16,700 SEK per month (approximately £1513) for each person they employ on a permanent basis. The subsidy is provided to help the employer support the person in the work place. It also recognises that a disabled person, whilst capable, may not be as productive as others, particularly at first, so there are certain costs associated with that.

Where the individual works for a non-profit organisation, for example an organisation for the disabled or a sports association, the employer can also receive a grant as a provider of a public service.

Very able individuals can receive a wage supported by wage subsidy for their whole career until retirement. For less able individuals, or if there is uncertainty how capable the individual is, there is another wage subsidy called Safety Development and the individual can use this from one up to three years. The Job Centre in theory should follow up the employment on a regular basis and act as a support for both the employer and the young person – however often the people at the Job Centre are unaware of the young person's needs or how to deal with them so this often fails.

A specialist area within the Job Centre where staff are trained to work with people with learning disabilities would enable this support to be far more successful. One summer the school's Job Coach was employed by the Job Centre to bridge the support for those students moving from school into employment. That was very successful but has not been repeated because of lack of funds. The Employment Support Information booklet, described below, would help by providing some information for the Job Centre to enable them to be more successful in their support role.

Daglig Verksamhet (Daily Work Activity)

The Lagen om Stöd och Service (LSS) (1993:387)⁷ (Support and Service Act) is an act of Swedish Parliament that provides for Daglig Verksamhet for those individuals who have learning disabilities and are of working age but have no work and are not in training. Eligibility is based on assessment by their doctor.

Students who don't find employment subsidised by the government can continue to be supported in work placements through the day care centres or work in work-related placements set up within the day care centres. Jobs available include car valeting, charity shop work, and packing ball bearings. For this the individuals receive a wage of 10 Kronas per hour (approximately 90 pence sterling). Daily work activity users and those with a learning disability receive 8000 Kronas benefit a month (£750 approximately), so the 10 Kronas per hour acts as a top up to their benefit money.

There are Work Placement Officers at the placements who will help individuals move on into employment if they become ready. However, there are some individuals who become comfortable in such a safe environment when they are capable of moving into less supported employment. This is something that must be considered as it is important for everyone to have the opportunity to fulfil their potential.

Exploring a flexible career pathway

In the original plans for this project, there was a period of 12 months allocated to the review of existing models of provision for young people with learning disabilities. During this time there were to be 4 international meetings focussing on each of the models:

- Social enterprise
- Work experience
- Internship
- Employer engagement

However, it was quickly determined that no one framework would suit all young people with disabilities. The group is diverse and therefore so are the individuals' needs. Each young person will have such varied strengths, needs and preferences that all of the above models may have some merit for different individuals.

On that basis, the approach altered so instead the multiple possible routes into employment were considered, and the team explored the key features required to enable a young person to succeed, regardless of the route they follow.

The following elements were considered to be crucial to a successful route into employment:

- Recording preferences, strengths, barriers;

⁷ http://www.riksdagen.se/sv/dokument-lagar/dokument/svensk-forfattningssamling/lag-1993387-om-stod-och-service-till-vissa_sfs-1993-387 (online), Swedish Parliament website [accessed 26.10.2017].

- As much time as possible in the work place: significant work experience to become part of the curriculum from 16 years old;
- Daily review in the supported work placement; and
- Consistent, open communication with employers

Of course in an ideal world every student would be provided with a bespoke experience to meet their individual needs, however timetabling, staff numbers and availability of work experience, not to mention funding, will not allow this. Taking this into account, whilst recognising that we are not working with a homogenous group of people, we developed a career pathway that allows flexibility within a delivery framework leading to employment.

There are four steps to the flexible career pathway:

1. Vocational skills development

This initial step of the pathway is to identify areas in employability that the young person needs to tackle before being work ready. This could include improving maths and English, personal and social development, confidence and communication skills.

2. Internal vocational experience

This step enables young people to put their employability skills into practice in a heavily supported environment. At Petroc, for example, the young person would work in one of several social enterprises we run for this purpose. They may be in one of the cafés, working in horticulture, upcycling old furniture, or creating craft and gift items such as soaps, jewellery, cards etc. They will have access to customer facing and technical skills related roles. They are expected to act and dress professionally as they would in any work place.

3. External real-life work experience

At this point, the young person will have developed their employability skills enough to be able to work with slightly less support in a real-life work placement. At first the work placements may only last a week or two, to give the young person a taster of the world of work. They then may go on to undertake a longer pre-internship to get used to the daily routine of being in the workplace, and to take on more responsibility. Finally, they may move into a full internship for up to one academic year, such as Project SEARCH, the goal at the end of this being employment.

4. Employment

The final step will be the young person's first job following their career pathway so far. The ideal situation would be supported, taking into account any adjustments the young person may require to succeed in their chosen career pathway.

The four steps should be delivered flexibly to suit the development and needs of the young people. For example, the three students who travelled to Sweden to

test the materials developed as part of this project all took different routes, over different durations, to their current job roles:

	Student 1	Student 2	Student 3
Year 1	Introductory vocational skills	Introductory vocational skills	Vocational skills development
Year 2	Vocational skills development	Vocational skills development with short periods of external work experience	Internal vocational experience with short periods of external work experience
Year 3	Internal vocational experience with short periods of external work experience	External work experience - Internship	External work experience - Internship
Year 4	External work experience – Internship	Supported employment	Supported employment
Year 5	Supported employment		

Throughout the whole process, the young person is fully supported up to the point of employment. At this stage, it becomes the employer’s responsibility to provide the support and adjustments needed. Because of the potential for a young person to suffer from lack of support at this stage, the team developed a range of resources to support successful progression into employment, and throughout the individuals’ careers.

Developing resources to support the flexible career pathway

In order to provide an easy to use, ongoing record of development of the individual, the partnership created three documents: My Employability Workbook is for use before an individual undertakes supported work experience; the Student Work Placement Log Book is for use to record progress and set targets during supported work experience, whether internal or external; the Employment Support Information is to be prepared during supported work experience so that the individual has a record for future employers to refer to. This should be added to throughout the individual’s career to enable ongoing progression.

Employability Workbook

An employability skills workbook which students complete at age 16 and then update each school year is a useful tool in supporting students into work. It was recognised that an important element in finding successful employment was good job match to students' skills and interests. It was important to get the right questions within the workbook so that the most suitable jobs could be identified. It was also necessary that the Employability Workbook be student friendly and easy to complete. In order to do this we trialled Swedish and English draft copies of the Employability Workbook with young people and staff in both Sweden and England, getting their feedback on the content. Several drafts later we produced an easy to use Employability Workbook to use with current interns at Petroc and year 1- 4 students at Duveholms, as well as the trial group in Sweden in May 2017.

Feedback from staff trialling the Employability Workbook shows that students find it easy to use and staff feel they have good information available to job match to the individual student's skills and needs. The workbook has been used with students when they start at Petroc and before they do their first work placements. The workbooks will then follow the students throughout their college careers and can be updated regularly and include a list of their work placements and how they felt about them.

Log Book

There was also an identified need for the students to have a book containing important contact information, log of work done, targets for them to achieve and employer assessment sheets. We chose to develop a Log Book which would support the student in their work placements and can be used as a learning tool within the teacher led training sessions of the supported internship groups. These again have been used with the internship group and feedback from interns, staff, employers and the trial in Duveholms informed development of the final version.

Following feedback from the internship team at Petroc and from staff at Duveholms, there have been some changes made to the Log Books. A front page with student information and emergency contact details has been added. The following page sets out placement details along with staff and support contacts. The comment pages now have questions for the students to answer so that their comments are more focussed. The weekly goals pages have been added so that students can have specific targets against which they measure their own success.

Employment Support Information

During our conversations with employers we became aware of the need for young people to have a record of information including the way they like to work, their support needs, their social skills and their independence skills that continued with them after they had completed their education. Employers felt that, without this important information on how young people needed to be supported in the workplace, there was a much greater likelihood that the

employment placement would fail. Important information which would be useful throughout the student's employment life was being lost. In fact they were being asked to duplicate the information over and over again whenever they moved position. As a response to this need the Employment Support Information booklet was produced. This will detail important aspects of the student's support needs and would be attached to their CV. Employers, Work Placement Officers, Job Coaches and other support staff were sent an online survey to determine the importance of specific information when taking on young people with learning disabilities as employees. The survey consisted of simple questions with a 5 ratings from 'Not Useful' to 'Extremely Useful'. The questionnaire was completed online for the convenience and preference of the employers. Questionnaires were sent to both Swedish and English employers. Following online responses we also took hard copies of the questionnaires to events and dissemination to increase the number of responses and to ensure the widest coverage. (See attached results at Appendix 3).

Originally it was thought that the Employment Support Information could be attached to the students' CVs but after some discussion with staff in both schools it was thought it would be better to form part of the pack students take to the interview rather than at application. This resource is intended to be a first step in supporting the young person beyond achieving employment, into a life of supported career progression and job satisfaction.

An illustration of resource supported delivery

The following table sets out how the resources may be used to support individualised progress into employment and beyond.

Resource	Step	Provision
<p>Employability Workbook</p> <p>Preparation for selecting the best placement for the individual. Can be amended to reflect lessons learnt during work placement.</p>	<p>1. Vocational skills – start completing the employability workbook.</p>	<p>Employability skills learning at college.</p>
<p>Employability Workbook</p> <p>Preparation for selecting the best placement for the individual. Can be amended to reflect lessons learnt during work placement.</p>	<p>Step 2 and 3 – internal and external experience can all be recorded in the Log Book.</p> <p>The Employability Workbook may be revised as the young person gains experience.</p>	<p>Internal social enterprise placements.</p>
		<p>External short term work placements.</p>

<p>Log Book</p> <p>Detailed daily log of working day. Can be used with social enterprise, work experience placements, internships.</p>	<p>This will all inform the ESI.</p>	<p>Long term placement (up to 6 months, a 'pre-internship').</p>
		<p>Long term work placement - either multiple employer or single employer.</p>
		<p>Paid employment with supported induction period.</p>
<p>Employment Support Information (ESI)</p> <p>A record of young person's needs and preferences to support them throughout careers.</p>	<p>Step 4 – as a passport into employment and beyond, the ESI record will be a source of important information for current and future employers.</p>	<p>Promotion, extra responsibility or simply review of current role to ensure job satisfaction.</p>
		<p>Possible change in job role or employer.</p>

Testing the new model

In May 2017, 3 students from Petroc travelled to Duveholms to work with their students in supported work placements. During their visits, they worked at a supermarket with Swedish students and Job Coaches, as well as Petroc staff members who observed their progress. The intensive work experience, learning new skills every day and reflecting on their learning using the resources, was considered to be a successful approach.

Pages taken from the students' work books can be found at Appendix 4.

Staff feedback

UK

"We felt that the old logbooks, required too much input from the support staff, and also the importance of the logbook was not emphasised enough to the students. We found that the new logbook should be filled in by the students at the end of each session, with initial support to give them the guidance of what is expected, leading to independent completion. The new logbook contained relevant questions, making the students think, reflect, understand and recognise what it is that they are doing or have done. It is important for the students to take responsibility for filling in their books, as well as looking after them and remembering to take them to their placements."

"Whilst we were in Sweden, we supported the students with their logbooks and we found that even the lower functioning individuals quickly gained an understanding because of the questions that were in the logbooks. The 2 other booklets were also useful, providing invaluable information on how to support the young person in future employment."

"The young person can easily see and feel the progress or problems experienced during that day. It lets the young person identify what went well or what didn't, and allows them to devise their own targets. The students soon got used to completing their workbooks daily, and became quicker at filling them in, and during the day would recognise actions that they wanted to record in their books."

"We felt that it was an invaluable experience to compare how Swedish workplaces have embraced working with young people, providing them with a future and giving them opportunities."

Sweden

The Duveholms staff valued the opportunity to assess the students' qualities in workplace. As well as the students demonstrating employability skills, working with English students allowed for development of leadership and communication.

Student feedback

UK

Danny said "The actual job experience was fun and interesting, and the log books were more clearer [sic] to use."

Laurence said "I enjoyed stacking shelves. The staff and owners of the supermarket were friendly. The logbook was easy to write in because of the questions."

Ben said "The supermarket was interesting and we went into the bakery, we used a knife to open the boxes and we were in a different country. The logbook was easier to read."

Sweden

Despite being nervous, with the support of her Work Support, Steffi was calm, focussed and committed to her work and her support of the visiting English students. She had no issue with the language barrier as she was able to communicate tasks using physical demonstration. Steffi took on a leadership role, coaching the visiting students. Steffi has enjoyed her work placement at ICA and has now secured summer work with the organisation which will hopefully become a longer term position in future.

Employer

ICA Supermarket, Sweden

ICA recognised that the students had been well prepared for their work placement: tasks had been matched to the students according to their abilities, and the students on the placement were well suited to the type of work experience on offer.

Some of the ICA staff were shy and afraid of speaking English so they avoided the students while other staff took initiative and invited the students to try out other areas, for example a day in the bakery.

Further testing of resources

In addition to the Sweden visit, the resources have been tested on existing students at both Petroc and Duveholms. The following feedback has been obtained from staff and students:

Staff

Mandy Campbell, Work Placement Officer at Petroc, has been involved in the organisation and oversight of supported internships since they were first delivered in September 2014. She made the following points.

On the idea of having the classroom based in the workplace:

“I have noticed that the students who are taught away from college are more focussed and don't have the same behaviour issues despite being seen as the group with a higher level of needs”.

She also made that point that it is preferable for students to do their employability skills qualifications at the earliest opportunity, i.e. during the first year when they are doing work placements, so that they are well prepared by the time they start internships.

On support following internship, Mandy highlighted the importance of young people and their parents and carers being supported to apply for Access to Work funding (see above). The process to apply is not straightforward. One student managed to secure employment without support, but was only able to take on the job with help from Mandy and colleagues who enabled his mother to complete the relevant paperwork to secure funding from transport and support in the workplace (a private Job Coach from time to time). They also trained the employer to support the young person. This was all done voluntarily and without this support the job would have been turned down.

Finally, she explained that at the Petroc Mid Devon Campus they have piloted a 'keep in touch group' once a fortnight, in the evening, for students with learning disabilities who have secured employment to come together, gain peer support, and discuss any challenges they are facing at work, or in their lives in general. This enables Petroc staff to identify any problems early on before the young

person becomes overwhelmed and possibly leaves their employment. There is no funding for this provision.

Students

Students felt that the documents were much improved by limiting the word count and keeping the content simple and to the point.

Having to select how things were going on a scale of 1-5 was too difficult for the students, they were much more comfortable with the red, amber and green buttons that were introduced as an alternative.

Students got the most out of the Employment Log Book when it was used daily, rather than weekly, and when they were supported completing it as this encouraged them to reflect on their experiences more deeply and identify targets and goals on a daily basis.

The students' feedback led to the resources being simple, being used with support, and ideally being used every day they are in work.

Recommendations and challenges

Work experience from day one

A model of further education, involving substantial and meaningful work experience from day one, throughout the year rather than in one block, is the ideal to enable those learners with learning disabilities to develop the skills required to succeed, in the long term, in employment.

Finding the right match

Finding the right placement to fit the students' skills and preferences is key. This will involve completing skills profiling with the student before the work placement to ensure the student has a suitable placement along with analysis by a work placement officer of possible difficulties, simplifying and job carving where needed. The Employability Workbook should be used from placement to placement to help record students' preferences and eliminate unsuitable work placements.

Providing support

Students must be supported appropriately within their roles, whether they be internal, external, paid, subsidised or voluntary. Support should be flexible so as a student's confidence grows the support can decrease. Employers must be supported to take on the role of in work support from Job Coaches and Work Support. The Log Book should be used to record progress and set tasks daily.

Securing employment

At the end of the work placement, once the young person is ready, available job opportunities should be evaluated and the individual supported to apply for the role and, if successful, start and maintain the job. The Employment Support Information should be used to ensure that individuals are supported from job to job, and employers are properly informed of their strengths and needs.

Sustaining employment

Employers need support learning how to enable individuals with learning disabilities to sustain employment. National recognition of the benefit of a workforce that includes those with learning disabilities should be encouraged, and human resource teams should be trained to support these individuals so that they get the most from their talents. If every large organisation operating in Europe was obliged to have a Disability Champion available to train mentors and arrange peer support for those individuals who require it, we may be some way to succeeding in more learning disabled individuals securing sustained employment.

Employer engagement and support

Employers don't have spare time to spend learning about how to support young people to sustain work. Whilst the Employment Support Information book is a useful start, we need to be offering employers a package of training and support that makes the prospect of taking on a supported intern attractive. In addition, more needs to be done to sell to employers the benefits of diversifying the workforce and providing work placement opportunities and accessible interviews for roles, and also for promotion.

Finding sufficient placements for students

Once a vacancy has been filled, hopefully by a successful supported work placement student, that employer will then have no more vacancies for further work placement students. Saturating the available roles at employers who wish to engage is an issue which will need to be solved by branching out all the time to new employers.

Incentivising and supporting provision of work placements

Without supportive employers the supported internship model can't possibly work. Often people with learning disabilities need additional support, don't work as quickly or independently as their peers and this has an economic knock on businesses. Unlike some other European countries including Sweden, there is no financial incentive from the government for employers to employ people with a learning disability. Even apprenticeships are out of the reach of the majority of students with a learning disability as you have to be able to work at a particular level, level 2, to qualify. There is therefore an argument that educational establishments and employers can do so much but without a real drive and investment from the government into financial incentives for employers – at least initially- and the establishing of level 1 practical apprenticeships there will only be a limited effect from supported internships on the overall employment figures of people with a learning disability.

Supporting the individual beyond the internship

The following quotes, direct from former students at Petroc and Duveholms, show just how devastating the sudden ceasing of support can be:

"I had a text from my advocat [mentor] he couldn't continue working with me as I had left education – I had no money, no job, nowhere to live. What shall I do?"

"I had a paid job with a small café following my supported internship where I helped design the menus, prepare the food and serve the customers. They were

going to send me to college 1 day a week to do my Catering level 1, but they asked me to do the washing up as part of my job and my mum said I shouldn't do that – so I left!”

“After finishing the supported internship at Petroc I did voluntary work at the Garden Centre. I was doing really well and hoped that they may employ me when I got quicker at my job. Then I got stuck and there was no one to phone to help me solve my problem so I had to stop working there.”

The ongoing support is essential and needs to be provided consistently across all areas, with government support and ideally subsidy to afford the level of support required. A job club running once a week in the evening, like the one being piloted at the Petroc Mid Devon Campus, where ex-students can meet up socially but also ask for help and support or even to complete funding application paperwork for additional support in the work place would be one way of supporting people beyond college.

Future

It is encouraging to see the success of the students being supported in work placements both at Petroc and at Duveholms, but there is always the challenge that they are left with no support once they move on and their link with college ends. If there is a change in the job role, or a colleague leaves, or there is a change in home situation, the young person can find difficulty in the work place and may need additional support to resolve the problem. At present that support could be difficult to find.

It is this gap in support which often leads to the breakdown in the place of employment which may mean the end of their ongoing career progression chances. Employers need to be supported throughout the career of the person with learning disabilities as it often only takes a very small change of circumstances in the workplace or home to begin a sequence of problems which lead to the loss of employment, whereas early intervention and support would often enable the problem to be resolved.

The key focus for the future is overcoming the challenge of lack of support beyond college, improving quality and consistency of destination tracking, and incentivising employers to develop support for their employees with learning disabilities in-house. This will facilitate a smooth handover for individuals from college supported work experience to employer supported employment to ensure their career pathway is not interrupted due to lack of support.

References and useful resources

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Access to Work in England:

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About Funktionsratt:

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About Swedish Law 1993:387:

http://www.riksdagen.se/sv/dokument-lagar/dokument/svensk-forfattningssamling/lag-1993387-om-stod-och-service-till-vissa_sfs-1993-387 (online), Swedish Parliament website [accessed 26.10.2017].

Appendices

Appendix 1	Destination results
Appendix 2	Recommended staffing structure
Appendix 3	Survey results
Appendix 4	Examples from students' resources

Appendix 1

Destination results

Petroc Supported Learning Section 2016

Under 19 SLD Course

- 21 – Further SLS course
- 6 – Unknown
- 2 – Private Provider
- 1 – Internship

Bridging Under 19 Course

- 2 – Mainstream L1 Catering course
- 7 – Internship
- 2 – Project SEARCH
- 3 – Unknown
- 1 – PLUSS work search

Over 19 Courses

- Further Course - 14
- Internship - 12
- Unknown - 10
- Project SEARCH - 1

Supported Internship

- 7 – Paid Employed
- 1 – Apprenticeship
- 2 – Voluntary work – with the hope of future employment
- 1 – Further supported internship – Project SEARCH

Out of the 94 students in the Supported Learning Section (SLS) last year only 7 got paid work and 2 voluntary work and 1 Apprenticeship – the only students with employment outcomes. All of these 10 students were on the supported internship Course. The drive to get students ready and into employment has increased greatly in the last year due to the funding changes for students with learning difficulties in post 16 education. As a result there will be more students applying for supported Internships at a younger age as the funding for students becomes employment focused. These figures tend to suggest that Supported Internships gave students with learning disabilities the greatest chance of getting employment compared with the other courses. This is almost certainly because the greatest part of the study programme was focused on work and took place in the workplace. Students were no longer learning about work in an artificial setting but learning the employment rules and skills in a real work setting. The majority of Interns were taken on by the employer they did their Internship with so the students were able to show the employer what they were capable of before they employed them.

Duveholms Gymnasiesärskola from 2011-2016

Work with activity grant – 4

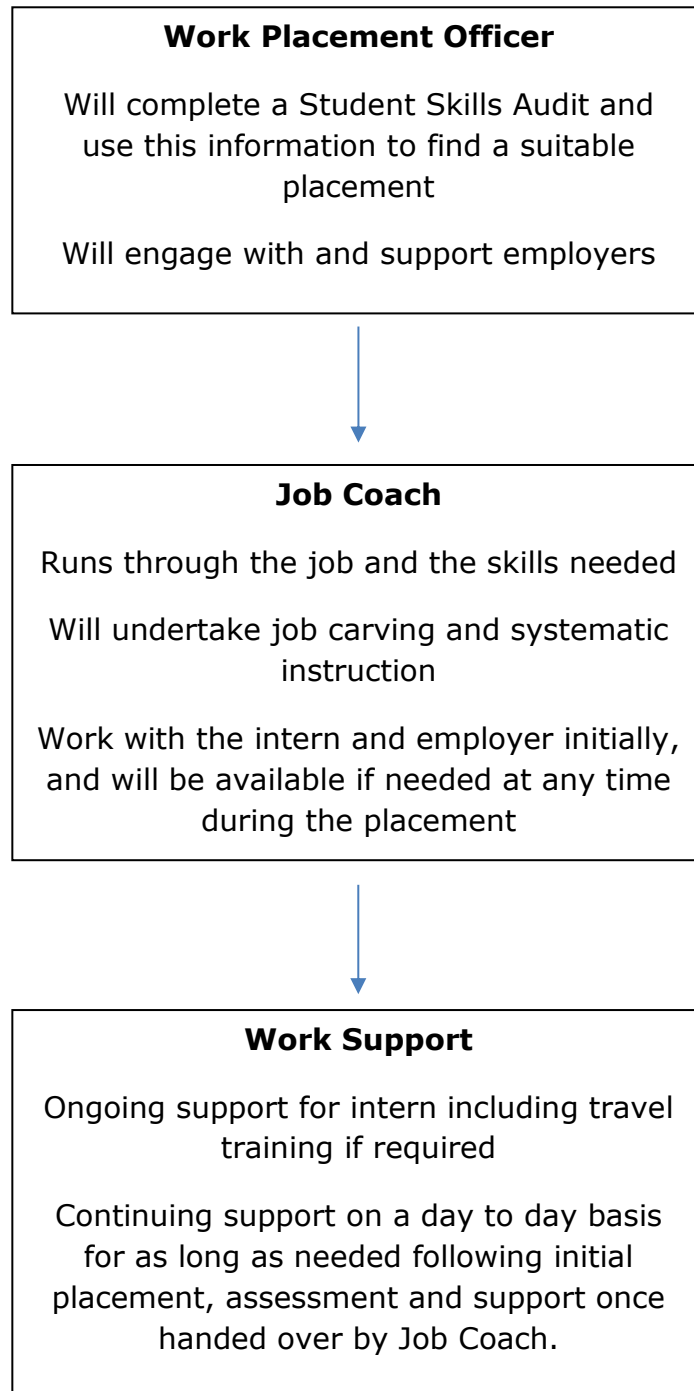
Work with wage subsidy – 9

Employment without any subsidy – 1

Work with activity grant in daily activity centre – 15

Appendix 2

Recommended staffing structure



Appendix 3

Employer survey and results

Employers were asked to rate the importance of information about the following areas, prior to a student/young adult's internship/work placement.

They were asked to rate the usefulness of the information by ticking the boxes ranging from not useful to extremely useful. Each question was scored 1-5 with 1 being not useful and 5 being extremely useful.

The employers were asked for any other information that they felt would be useful.

Total responses: 88 (Gothenburg) + 26 (Survey Monkey) + 12 (hard copies from Devon employees) = 126

The question we intend to ask in the resources	Average rating / 5
1. What support in the internship/workplace does the student/young adult need?	4.73
2. How the student/young adult functions in social situations	4.64
3. What strategies help the student/young adult?	4.59
4. How the student/young adult prefers to learn.	4.55
5. What challenges or worries the student/young adult has.	4.52
6. The student/young adult's skills/knowledge.	4.35
7. The student/young adult's interests.	4.31
8. What the students/young adults hopes & wishes for their future and their working life.	4.15
9. The student/young adults preferred working environment e.g. Inside, outside, messy/dirty, clean etc.	4.06
10. What other information about the student/young adult would be useful?	Feedback below

Question 10 feedback:

- Hur det yttrar sig om eleven inte får rätt stöd.
- Hur eleven tar sig fram och åter till arbetsplatsen.
- Ev. medicinering, medicinsk information/allergier/diabetes/kroppsliga begränsningar
- Allergier, sjukdomar? Om det påverkar/påverkas av arbetsuppgifterna/arbetsmiljön.
- Vilka är förväntningarna på mig (eleven)?
- Vilka är förväntningarna på andra aktörer, arbetsgivare, FK, AF, kommun?
- Kommer någon från skolan att följa med?
- Viktigt att det i mötet med eleven lämnas utrymme för att skapa en egen uppfattning/relation objektivt inte alltför mycket förhandsinformation.
- Lätt att få förutfattade meningar/fördomar.

- Tidigare erfarenheter från APLplats/er, praktik, jobb var? hur? annat?
- Vilka platser eleven haft praktik på förut.
- Vilken utbildning går hen.
- Sommarjobb.
- Styrkor inte bara svagheter.
- I vilken omfattning ska eleven arbeta.
- Behov av stöd, vilket sätt, verbalt/visa/bilder.
- Tidsuppfattning.
- Vad är det som eleven har svårt med.
- Hur reagerar eleven.
- När fungerar inte eleven.
- Kan vara viktigt att veta lite om livssituationen, ev vid delat boendesyskon, social utsatthet.
- Ju mer man kan delge arbetsplatsen individens fördelar och svårigheter kan det underlätta för
- Syftet med praktik.
- Vad man som handledare kan förvänta sig.
- Befintligt stöd som ex föräldrakontakt och inflytande/hjälpmedel/myndighet
- Från arbetsförmedlingens sida som handläggare är det också viktigt att under/efter praktiken ställa frågan hur det fungerar i förhållande till en anställning jämfört med andra kollegor inte skolpraktik.
- Frågorna ger bra underlag till Arbetsförmedlingen.
- Som arbetsgivare är alla frågor viktiga. Typ av arbete/arbetsmiljö bör kanske vara klarlagt innan praktik – om inte så klargörs det på praktik nr 1 (om man har flera APL platser)
- Bra slutdokument: -Vad bör elev utveckla mer för att vara anställningsbar
- Ramar.
- Förväntningar.
- A personal letter from the student so you know more about the student & their interests
- What they do NOT want to do
- Parent/Carer input into their skills & qualities
- The most important thing is to find out all reduced areas so you have an understanding
- Directly from the practice
- Developmental background
- What the student has been interested in at school
- Other allergies, medications, illness, threats and violence, orientation, self-harm

Appendix 4

Excerpts from students' resources

The following are excerpts from My Employability Workbook and Student Work Placement Log Book completed by the students who tested the materials in Sweden.

About Me

What makes me happy?
friends

What things do I find difficult?
Am I understanding instructions

What makes me stressed or angry and how do I show it?
When I don't understand

What do I need to do when I get stressed or angry?
A bit of fresh air and talk to someone

What are my physical disabilities and medical needs?
Dyslexia
Dyspraxia
wear glasses

What I think is important to me (low being 1 high being 3)	
My family	1 ← 2 → 3
To have a job	1 ← 2 → 3
To earn money	1 ← 2 → 3
To help create a better world	1 ← 2 → 3
To have friends	1 ← 2 → 3

Date: 12/15/17

Student comments

New things I tried or learnt today:

~~Now~~ I made a cake ^{today in} the Bakery

What went well today?

I sliced the cake in three places
then I washed up the plates

What do I need to improve?









I need to work in team way











Mentor's comments:

Lawrence was better at making eye
contact with staff + Swedish students
today.

WORK PLACEMENT SELF-ASSESSMENT SHEET

Date	8/5/17	9/5/17	10/5/17	11/5/17
Weeks Target	Walk to work	check where to open car box	fold the boys better	wear the PPE that is given to me.
Tick Good or Bad	 	 	 	 
Score 1-5	4	5	3	5

Date				
Weeks Target				
Tick Good or Bad	 	 	 	 
Score 1-5				

EMPLOYABILITY ASSESSMENT

Completed by: *Steph, Swedish Student Supervisor*

Area of Assessment- Self	5	4	3	2	1	Comment
Motivation/Participation		✓				
Self-Presentation & Hygiene	✓					
Using initiative/thinking for self	✓					
Conscientiousness		✓				
Working without supervision		✓				
Area of Assessment - Work						
Punctuality	✓					
Flexibility	✓					
Coping with pressure		✓				
Checking/correcting mistakes		✓				
Quantity/speed			✓			
Quality/consistency	✓					
Area of Assessment- Communication						
Relating to others	✓					
Coping with criticism		✓				
Ability to follow instructions	✓					
Willingness to work alone/part of a team		✓				

Please complete this assessment using the scale: 5 = more than satisfactory, 4 = satisfactory for work, 3 = a little work needed, 2 = major work needed, 1 = unacceptable.

And a final quote from staff:

“The students all said that it was an amazing experience for them because it gave them opportunities that they wouldn’t necessarily have had in England (using the trolley jack and making a cake in the supermarket bakery, for example). They got to meet new people, and make new friends, tried new foods, experienced a different culture and climate, flew for the first time. They were given independence, with regards to staying in a hotel room, behaving appropriately in a mature way and being away from their families.”