Essex County Council

Young Person & Families Support Guide

Additional support available to young people and their families during and after undertaking a Supported Internship



Created by Preparing for Adulthood: Targeted Employment
SEND Strategy & Innovation

targetedemployment@essex.gov.uk

AI Disclosure: This document may contain content drafted or refined with the support of OpenAI tools used to enhance clarity and communication

Version 1.0, Revision Date: September 2025

Contents and quick links

Page 3	Important information
Page 4	Supported Employment Services
Page 5 - 7	Regional Directory of Supported Employment
Page 8	Guidance for Parents and Carers
Page 9 to 11	Jobcentre Plus and benefits
Page 12	Connect to Work
Page 13 - 14	Case Studies and Testimonials
Page 15 - 16	What do parents say?

Important information

Whilst this guide aims to provide a comprehensive overview of support that may be available during or after a Supported Internship, it is important to note that:



Eligibility for services can vary depending on the provider and individual circumstances. Always check directly with the organisation offering the service for the most accurate and up-to-date information



Suitability for services will depend on the young person's strengths, interests, aspirations, and support needs. What works well for one young person may not be the best fit for another. We recommend discussing options with practitioners where appropriate



Information provided within this guide is generic. For tailored advice, please contact individual providers directly or consult with practitioners, careers advisers, and SEND teams where appropriate

Disclaimer: This guide is designed to support informed decision-making but should not replace personalised advice from qualified practitioners. Every effort has been made to ensure the accuracy of the information in this guide. However, services, contacts, and resources may change over time. We cannot accept responsibility for any errors or omissions. Please check with individual providers for the most up-to-date details.

Supported Employment Services

Supported employment helps people with disabilities or other barriers to employment find and keep meaningful jobs. The aim is to ensure everyone can contribute to the workforce, promoting inclusion and independence which not only benefits individuals but also brings diverse talents and perspectives to workplaces.

Examples of support provided

Job Coaching
One-to-one support to help young people learn job tasks, build confidence, and settle into the workplace

Workplace adjustments
Advice and support to employers to make reasonable adjustments that ensure the job is accessible and sustainable

Job matching
Helping young people find roles that suit their skills, interests, and goals

Ongoing in-work support
Continued support after employment begins to help with any challenges and ensure long-term success

Employer engagement
Working with employers to create inclusive opportunities and raise awareness of the benefits of hiring people with SEND

Travel training
Support to help young people travel independently to and from work

Regional directory of Supported Employment Services

This directory provides an overview of supported employment services across Essex, Southend, Thurrock, Suffolk, Hertfordshire, and Havering. It includes service names, target groups, support offered, contact details, and relevant links.

Essex

ECL Inclusive Employment

- Target Group: Adults aged 18+ with autism or learning disabilities
- Support Offered: Vocational profiling, job application and interview support, on-the-job coaching, employer engagement

Contact: https://www.ecl.org/inclusive-employment

EPUT Employment Services

- Target Group: Individuals with mental health conditions
- Support Offered: Job search, interview prep, staying well at work, one-to-one support

Contact: https://eput.nhs.uk/services/employment-services/

Southend

Making it Work - Southend-on-Sea City Council

- Target Group: Adults with learning disabilities and/o autism
- Support Offered: Job coaching, CV building, interview support, travel training, workplace integration

Contact: https://www.southend.gov.uk/support-people-learning-disability/making-work-employment-scheme

Southend Careers Service

- Target Group: Young people and adults
- Support Offered: Career advice and guidance, links to local employment initiatives

Contact: https://www.govserv.org/GB/Southend-on-Sea/102476089012286/Southend-Careers-Service

Regional directory of Supported Employment Services (cont.)

Thurrock

Inclusion Thurrock

- Target Group: Adults with serious mental health conditions
- Support Offered: Employment coaching, CV help, interview prep, in-work support

Contact: https://inclusionthurrock.org/ips/

Thurrock Opportunities Portal

- Target Group: General public including those with disabilities
- Support Offered: Careers advice, Access to Work, adult learning, sector-specific training

Contact: https://www.thurrockopportunities.co.uk/

Suffolk

Realise Futures

- Target Group: People with learning disabilities, autism, or other barriers
- Support Offered: Work options, job search, work trials, training, in-work support

Contact: https://www.realisefutures.org/employment/

Connect to Work - Suffolk County Council

- Target Group: People with disabilities or long-term health conditions
- Support Offered: Individual Placement and Support (IPS) based model into sustainable employment

Contact: https://www.suffolk.gov.uk/jobs-and-careers/support-finding-employment/connect-to-work

Regional directory of Supported Employment Services (cont.)

Hertfordshire

Step2Skills - Hertfordshire Skills & Employment Support

- Target Group: Adults with learning disabilities, mental health challenges, low skills
- Support Offered: Connect to Work, Adult Skills Fund, Skills Bootcamps, Careers Hubs

Contact:https://www.hertfordshirefutures.co.uk/news/2025/step2skills-joins-hertfordshire-futures-a-new-chapter-in-adult-learning-and-employment-support/

Hertfordshire Directory - Employment Support

- Target Group: Adults with additional needs
- Support Offered: Searchable directory of local employment support services

Contact:https://supportedliving.hertfordshire.gov.uk/Services/24469/Employment-support

Havering

Havering Works

- Target Group: Unemployed residents of Havering
- Support Offered: Career guidance, job coaching, CV writing, job matching

Contact: https://www.havering.gov.uk/HaveringWorks

Sycamore Trust UK - Autism Employment Support

- Target Group: Autistic adults aged 18+ in Havering
- Support Offered: Employment coaching, CV support, confidence building, employer training

Contact:https://www.sycamoretrust.org.uk/latest/article/Havering-employment-project-returns

Guidance for parents and carers: when a dependent starts paid employment

Once a Supported Internship has been completed and a young person gains employment, the benefits received by their parents or guardians may be affected:



Child Benefit

- Continues until the young person turns 16, or up to 20 if they remain in approved education or training
- If the young person leaves education or training and starts working more than 24 hours per week, Child Benefit will stop



Universal Credit

- Parents can still receive UC for a dependent aged 16–19 if they are in non-advanced education or training and studying more than 12 hours per week
- If the young person leaves education and starts working, they may no longer count as a dependent, which can reduce the parent's UC award



Housing Benefit and other means-tested benefits

- If the young person is no longer classed as a dependent, they may be treated as a non-dependent adult
- This can lead to a non-dependent deduction, reducing the parent's Housing Benefit or Council Tax Reduction



Parents/Guardians should therefore report any changes to the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) or local council immediately if:

- The young person starts or leaves a job
- Their education or training status changes

Prompt reporting helps avoid overpayments or benefit disruptions

Department of Work and Pensions

Getting help from Jobcentre Plus during or after your Supported Internship can open doors to your next opportunity. Whether it's finding a job, building confidence or accessing extra support, Jobcentre Plus can help you take the next step forward towards independence and success. Young people, parents and carers can contact Jobcentre Plus for help with:

- new or existing benefit claims
- finding a job
- getting a National Insurance number

To find your nearest Jobcentre Plus office, use the local office search tool.

What support can a young person with disabilities receive from Jobcentre Plus?

In 2025, the UK government introduced several reforms to enhance support for young people with disabilities through Jobcentre Plus including:

- **Personalised work coach support**
  Tailored guidance from dedicated work coaches to help identify strengths and career goals, support with job opportunities, CVs, interviews, and navigating benefits

- **Disability Employment Advisors (DEA)**
  Specialist advisors who understand the barriers faced by disabled people, provide one-to-one support, help jobseekers access suitable training, work experience, or volunteering opportunities and advise on reasonable adjustments and workplace support

- **Youth Employability Coaches (YECs)**
  Intensive, personalised support for 18–24 year olds facing barriers to work

What support can a young person with disabilities receive from Jobcentre Plus (cont.)?

Young people with SEND starting work may be able access several types of funding and support through the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) and Jobcentre Plus. Benefits calculators are also available at https://www.gov.uk/benefits-calculators.

Access to Work Grant

Can help applicants get or stay in work if they have a physical or mental health condition or disability.
This may cover:

- Special equipment or adaptations
- Support workers (e.g. for communication or mobility)
- Help with travel to and from work
- Mental health support
- Communication support at interviews (e.g. BSL interpreters)

Speak to your local Jobcentre Plus or go to:
https://www.gov.uk/access-to-work/apply

Flexible Support Fund

A discretionary fund managed by Jobcentre Plus to help remove barriers to employment and can cover:

- Interview clothing or uniforms
- Travel expenses for interviews or training
- Tools or equipment needed for a job
- Short courses or certificates (e.g. CSCS card, first aid)

FSF is available via Jobcentre Plus Work coaches to people who are:

- Claiming Universal Credit
- Actively seeking work and engaging with Jobcentre Plus
- In genuine need of support that would help them find or start work

What support can a young person with disabilities receive from Jobcentre Plus (cont.)?

Budgeting Loans

This is an interest-free loan (minimum of £100) from the DWP to help cover essential one-off costs and is paid back via benefit payments, normally over 2 years. Applicants must be on certain benefits (e.g. Income Support, JSA, ESA but not Universal Credit) and can cover items such as:

- Furniture,
- Clothing
- Rent in advance
- Travel

Speak to your local Jobcentre Plus (form SF500) or go to: https://www.gov.uk/budgeting-help-benefits

Universal Credit

A monthly payment to help with living costs for those on a low income, out of work or who cannot work. Universal Credit can support young people with SEND as they move from education into employment or independent living.

Applicants must live in the UK, be over 18 and have savings under £16,000 (some exceptions apply for 16–17-year-olds and full-time students).

Work expectations:

- Young people with SEND may have reduced or no work-related requirements depending on their health, disability, or caring responsibilities
- Flexibility is built in to support part-time, temporary, or supported employment

Speak to your local Jobcentre Plus or go to: https://www.gov.uk/universal-credit/how-to-claim

Connect to Work

Connect to Work is a voluntary employment support programme launched by the UK Government as part of the Get Britain Working Strategy. It's designed to help people who face barriers to employment - such as health conditions, disabilities, or specific disadvantages find and stay in meaningful work. Whether someone is unemployed or at risk of leaving their job, the programme offers up to 12 months of personalised, person centred, one-to-one support.

Young people may be eligible if they are:

- aged 18 or over (or 16+ in exceptional circumstances)
- a resident in Essex including Southend-on-Sea, or Thurrock and have the right to live and work in the UK
- not part of a group which has no entitlement to public funds
- not on a DWP employment programme

AND

- not currently in paid work or are economically inactive (those not currently in paid work or are actively seeking employment) OR
- are employed but at risk of dropping out of work OR
- face barriers to employment and would benefit from tailored support

Please complete this short form to make an enquiry:
https://www.essexopportunities.co.uk/connect-to-work/connect-to-work/

connecttowork@essex.gov.uk

+44 3330 138 337

Connect to Work, County Hall, Market Road, Chelmsford, Essex, CM1 1QH

Case Studies and testimonials from previous Supported Interns

> “The support I got from my job coach made all the difference. They believed in me when I didn’t believe in myself. Now I’m working part-time and saving for my future

Sophie, Hospitality Intern

Alex’s Path to Employment

After completing his Supported Internship in July 2024, Alex applied for five roles at Princess Alexandra Hospital. Though unsuccessful, he used interview feedback to grow and stayed determined to reach his goal of paid employment.

His persistence paid off - Alex later applied for two more roles and was offered both. He chose to become a Porter, fulfilling his dream of working in the hospital.

Alex’s journey shows how resilience and family support can lead to success. With encouragement, young people can build confidence, independence, and a sense of purpose.



> My Supported Internship helped me figure out what I’m good at. I used to be really shy, but now I feel confident and proud of what I can do

Jayden, Office Administrative Intern

Case Studies and testimonials from previous Supported Interns (cont.)

> It wasn't just about getting a job—it was about learning how to be independent. I've made friends, learned new skills, and I'm excited about what's next

Amira, Childcare Intern

Nathan's Journey

SOUTH ESSEX COLLEGES GROUP



Nathan began his journey in October 2024, initially feeling anxious about speaking with patients and staff. With support from his job coach, he started with two days a week, gradually building confidence by breaking down tasks and practicing conversations together to prepare for each new challenge.

With encouragement and positive feedback, Nathan's confidence grew; he became more independent, increased his hours, and showed real motivation to succeed. His hard work paid off - after a successful interview, Nathan was offered a full-time role as a Health Care Assistant at Southend University Hospital.

Nathan's story highlights how support, perseverance, and a welcoming team can help young people overcome anxiety and achieve their goals. With the right encouragement, individuals can develop the skills and confidence they need to thrive in the workplace.

> I never thought I could work in a real job, but my internship showed me I can. I learned how to travel on my own, talk to customers, and now I've got a paid job doing something I love

Liam - Retail Intern

Let’s hear what parents have to say...

A Supported Internship is a fantastic opportunity for young people to gain real work experience, develop essential skills, and build confidence in a supportive environment. With guidance from dedicated job coaches and workplace mentors, interns are encouraged to take on new challenges at their own pace, helping them grow both personally and professionally.

Many families find that a Supported Internship not only helps their young person become more independent, but also opens doors to future employment and a greater sense of purpose. The journey may have its ups and downs, but with encouragement and the right support, every step forward is a reason to celebrate.

Your support and belief in your young person’s abilities make a real difference. When families actively support their child into work, they’re not just helping them find a job—they’re helping them build confidence, independence, and a sense of purpose. Your encouragement can be the bridge between education and a fulfilling future. Together, we can unlock their potential and show them that they belong in the world of work!

> As a parent, I was nervous at first. I didn’t know if my child would cope in a real work environment. But the support was incredible. The job coach worked closely with them, and we saw their confidence grow week by week. I’d say to any parent—don’t be scared. This could be the opportunity that helps your child shine

Parent of a Supported Intern

Let’s hear what parents have to say... (cont.)

> The Supported Internship gave my son a sense of purpose. He came home proud of what he’d achieved each day. It’s helped him grow into a confident young man ready for work

Parent of a Facilities Intern

> We saw a huge change in our daughter. She became more independent, started travelling on her own, and now she’s working part-time. The internship gave her the tools and belief she needed

Parent of a Retail Intern

> It was the first time my child felt truly included. The support was tailored to his needs, and the team worked with us every step of the way. He now has a job he loves and a future he’s excited about

Parent of a Hospitality Intern