College

Achieving Paid Employment through a SUPPORTED INTERNSHIP



"Riley is a 17-year-old student diagnosed with ADHD. Riley has Specific Learning difficulties and a history of speech and language difficulties. He had previously completed a Level 2 Engineering course. He applied for a Supported Internship as he wanted support to develop work skills in a practical environment."

Initial Challenges:

Riley's ADHD symptoms presented several barriers to employment, including:

- **Difficulty staying on task without frequent redirection**
- **Challenges with organizing tasks**
- **Language processing difficulties – impacting relationships and resulting in frustrations at making himself understood by others.**
- **Low confidence and self esteem**

THE PROCESS

Through the college's Supported Internship program, Riley was matched with Green N Clean Environmental Services at Thurrock Council as a ground's maintenance operative. Riley was assigned a job coach who introduced him to the managers at Green N Clean and accompanied him to a supported interview.

- **Job coaches then worked closely with Riley's team and helped him to familiarise himself with tasks, manage his time and scaffold and support social interactions.**
- **Photos and descriptions were taken of tools and equipment and Riley was able to revisit these to embed his knowledge.**
- **Scheduled breaks were introduced to help Riley manage focus and reduce restlessness.**
- **The employer agreed to flexible task rotation, allowing Riley to switch tasks periodically to maintain engagement. Regular checks were made with Riley to ensure he understood all instructions and expectations,**
- **A peer mentor within the team was identified for informal guidance and support.**

THE PROGRESS & DEVELOPMENT

Over 6 months Riley's confidence and independence grew significantly. He became adept at managing time and was able to communicate well with colleagues – eventually feeling comfortable enough to explain his learning difficulties and how his ADHD presents. This strengthened relationships within the workplace as colleagues then understood and empathised with his difficulties. Riley was able to demonstrate strong practical skills and often outshone colleagues in terms of productivity. Riley's attention to tasks improved as he was working outside and was constantly active and engaged.

Having studied Engineering Riley expressed an interest in working on the council vehicles and machinery within the Fleet department. Although paid opportunities in this department were not available managers all wanted Riley to gain as much experience as possible. Riley was given the opportunity in the last month before paid employment on maintenance to spend 2 days per week working in Fleet, where he repaired lawnmowers, strimmer's and long arm tools used for tree lopping. Riley was introduced to a different working environment – met a new team and was able to add this further experience to his CV.

THURROCK COUNCIL

At the end of the Internship:

Green N Clean offered Riley a 6-month seasonal full time contract. They highlighted his reliability, positive attitude, and positive reports from colleagues as key reasons for the offer.

Riley's success highlights the importance of tailored support and a strengths-based approach. The internship gave him the structure and support he needed to develop practical skills in a real-world setting. His employer noted that the experience also helped staff become more confident in supporting neurodivergent employees, creating a more inclusive workplace.

THE OUTCOME

This case study demonstrates how a Supported Internship, when combined with individualized support and employer collaboration, can lead to meaningful employment outcomes for young people with ADHD.