

## At the heart of change

DFN Project SEARCH believes that everyone deserves the right to aspire to the very best future, yet nationally **less than 6% of people with a learning disability** who are known to local authorities go on to secure full-time paid employment.

Our vision is to ensure that everyone with a learning disability or autism can attain high-quality, integrated employment in their local area.

Offering a high aiming one-year transition to work programme in their final year of school or college, our approach is so much more than work experience, it is education and training at its very best!

Students get to use and apply their skills and learning every day, ensuring that they are ready to move seamlessly into the workplace as skilled and effective employees.

## Best Practice Education and Training

DFN Project SEARCH is a business-led, one-year transition to employment programme for young people with a learning disability and autism.

70% of our graduating interns secure paid employment with an impressive average of **60% securing full-time roles**, creating life changing opportunities and transforming outcomes for young people with additional learning needs.

We offer an evidence based model and professional resources that deliver results through developing great relationships with high aiming and committed partners.

DFN Project SEARCH students throughout the country are already seeing the benefits of the innovative learning experience and the opportunity to fully immerse themselves in the host business.



## Social Value

Evidence shows that being in employment improves health and wellbeing and is central to individual identity, social roles, and social status.

People in work tend to enjoy happier and healthier lives than those who are not in work.

Transitioning people from education straight into competitive employment also saves money for health and social care by creating opportunities for people with a learning disability to become **net contributors** rather than recipients of adult social care and health services.

- Once a **DFN Project SEARCH** partnership is established, it is sustainable year after year and keeps delivering increasing numbers of full-time paid jobs and careers.
- Over time, community expectations are raised along with the belief that people with a learning disability can work in many different skilled jobs.
- The pathway from childhood to adulthood and work becomes smoother for young people and their families.
- A variety of local businesses benefit from the talent pool created, they can access a new, diverse, workforce with skills that match labour needs.
- This opportunity transforms the life chances and improves social mobility of young people with additional needs.
- Communities become more inclusive and people with a learning disability more visible.
- Social justice is achieved for people who have been frequently marginalized from the world of work.

### Our unique programme is changing lives for the better, bringing students:

- ✓ Competitive, transferable and marketable job skills
- ✓ Increased independence, confidence, and self-esteem
- ✓ 800 hours of structured support from teacher, job coaches, host business managers and mentors

# A Team Of Teams

DFN Project SEARCH is a partnership between a host business, education, and professional adult supported employment. The goal is to provide on-site internship experiences that

allow necessary skill development opportunities for young adults with a learning disability to compete for employment.

## Host Business

Provides an on-site base and a variety of internships that teach core skills related to that business or organisation.

## School or College

Provides a teacher and student interns from the local area.

## Local Authority

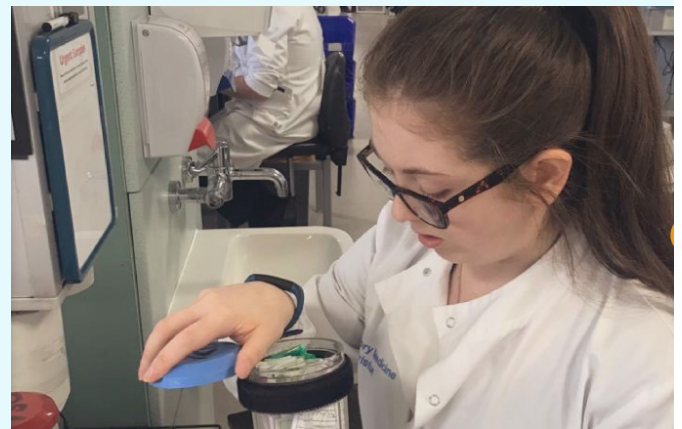
Commissions appropriate partners and ensures access to the programme across a community. Individual life planning guidance, care management and individual budgets for job coaching and other support.

## Department for Work and Pensions

Provides 'Access to Work' funding for job coaching and other follow on support. Provides advice to the young person and their family about better off in work calculations.

## Supported Employment Agency

Provides professional job coaching and job development for interns at the host business.



## Benefits to Local Authorities

- Evidence value for money and track positive employment destinations.
- Invest to save, research shows that £3.96 is created for every pound of investment when 60% of DFN Project SEARCH interns move into paid work of more than 16 hours per week.\*

For every pound

# £3.96

is created for society

- Continue to drive standards. 70% of DFN Project SEARCH interns move into paid work with the opportunity to increase those hours over time and develop their independence skills.

# 70%

DFN Project SEARCH  
interns move into  
paid work

- Support transition from education to employment at a time that is appropriate for individual learners.

- On average 19% of DFN Project SEARCH interns are aged 18, 21% are aged 19, and 17% are aged 20 when they join and will see their plans cease on completion of the programme year.
- Taking a range of college courses until aged 24 is not necessary as interns as young as 16 or 17 years old have the same (or slightly better) chances of finding employment.

That means they  
find a career early  
and have much  
better chance of  
an independent  
and fulfilled life!





## Benefits to the Host Business

- Organisations gain access to a new, diverse, talent stream with skills that match labour needs.
- Departments improve communication and teamwork.
- Businesses experience increased local, regional, national and international recognition through marketing of this unique programme.
- Organisations dramatically improve performance and retention in some high turnover or hard-to-fill posts.



## Benefits to Education

- Full access to a best practice International Employability Curriculum.
- Full access to the world's largest vocational profiling tool for people with SEND which allows you to track and measure progress against learner skill acquisition.
- Robust and clearly evidenced data demonstrating in year Intent, Implementation and Impact relating to learner progress and aspirational destinations.
- A seamless approach to transition that develops preparation for adulthood skills.

To find out more or to partner with DFN Project SEARCH, please get in touch.

[admin@dfnprojectsearch.org](mailto:admin@dfnprojectsearch.org)

 [dfnprojectsearch.org](https://dfnprojectsearch.org)

 [@dfnsearch](https://twitter.com/dfnsearch)

“ We are important, we can do things, we can talk to employers what we are capable of... We shouldn't call it disability but ability. We might think differently but we can share wonderful ideas. ”

**Mohammed Hamza**, A graduate, now an apprentice mechanic and a member of the Youth Advisory Group

# DFN Project SEARCH Scotland

Data Class of 2021-22

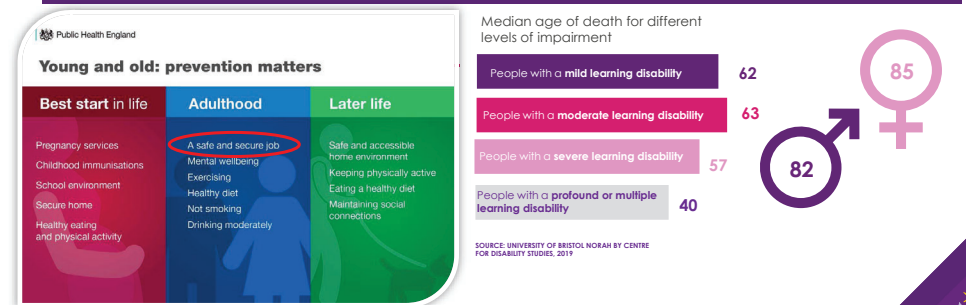


## People with a Learning Disability and Autism in the UK

**Work is Good For You**  
Young and old: prevention matters

**Life Expectancy for people with Learning Disabilities**

**Median Age of Death General Population**



## The DFN Project SEARCH model



DFN Project SEARCH has a number of model fidelity components that define the programme, its values and goals. These critical components include:

1. The outcome of the programme is integrated, competitive employment that is:
  - In an integrated setting
  - Year-round work (not seasonal employment)
  - 16 hours/week or more
  - Paid the prevailing wage
2. The focus of the programme is on serving young adults with learning disabilities and autism who can benefit from personalised support in an intensive year of career development and internship experience.
3. The programme is a collaborative partnership using support and resources from: Education, Local Authorities, Adult Supported Employment Agencies, Families and Host Businesses.
4. The programme is business focused.
5. The programme is committed to continuous improvement.
6. The programme leads to acquisition of competitive skills.

## DFN Project SEARCH Employment Outcomes class of 2021/22 (Overall figures)



**368** (68%) interns secured paid employment



**327** (61%) interns found full-time, non-seasonal jobs paid at prevailing wage and in an integrated workplace.



Average hourly wage was **£9.78**



Interns work on average **27 hours** per week.



## DFN Project SEARCH Employment Outcomes class of 2021/22 (Scotland)



**89** (72%) interns secured paid employment



**77** (63%) interns found full-time, non-seasonal jobs paid at prevailing wage and in an integrated workplace.

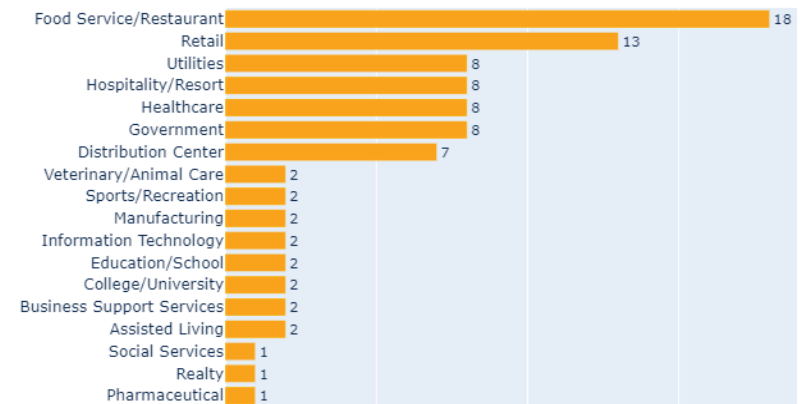


Average hourly wage was **£9.66**



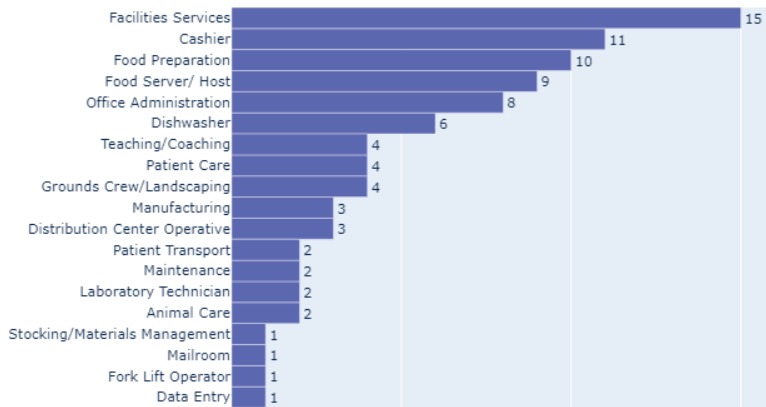
Interns work on average **26 hours** per week.

## Number of jobs by sector (Scotland)

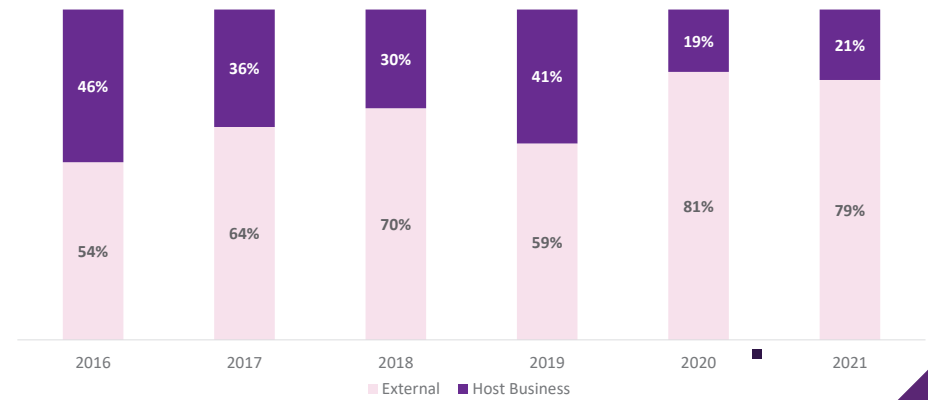




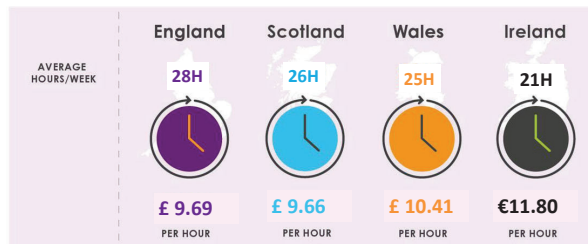
## Number of jobs by role (Scotland)



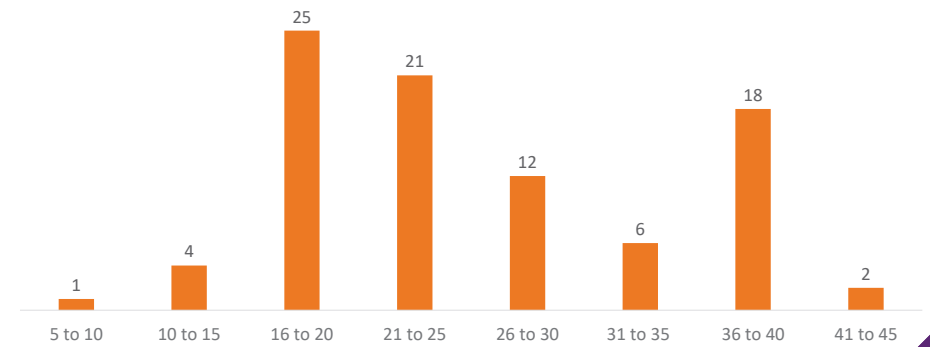
## Host Business and External Employers (Scotland)



## Hours and wages by countries



## Weekly working hours by number of jobs (Scotland)



## Sites with 100% employment outcome meeting criteria

### 100% employment outcome meeting criteria

Deer Park Golf and Country Club, Livingston, Scotland  
Shetland Islands Council, Lerwick, Scotland



## Sites with 70% - 80% employment outcome meeting criteria

### 70% - 90% employment outcome meeting criteria

Forth Valley Royal Hospital & Serco, Larbert, Scotland  
University Hospital Wishaw, Wishaw, Scotland



## Sites with lower than 70% employment outcome meeting criteria

60% - 70%	3
50% - 60%	2
50% - 40%	1

## Top Tips for 100%

1

Follow the DFN Project SEARCH **model** as closely as possible and keep checking you are all working to the critical success factors, the GPPW and keep all eyes on the prize – full time paid employment! “What you think about comes about...” We also have in our base rooms now a couple of posters with a phrases we adopted from key points Erin made at the conference last year.

2

Relationships... work hard to maintain good strong working **relationships**, particularly with managers and mentors in the host business so interns can get the most of out of their rotations in terms of skills building, a full immersive experience in the work place and by so doing be considered as an obvious and great candidate for any upcoming vacancies, that job coaches will be made aware of because they have those strong relationships!

3

Start **job development** early, don't wait! Use the second week of the Easter break to run Job Club and set the bar high. Set up third rotations as working interviews where possible, whether internal or external to the host business. Celebrate the early successes, as this is highly motivating for others who may still be on their pathway into work.





## Number of jobs that did not meet criteria (with overlaps, Scotland)



# Protected Characteristics



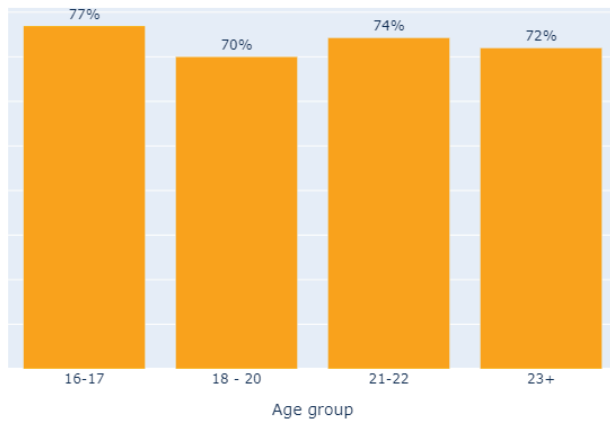


## Outcomes by age group (Scotland)

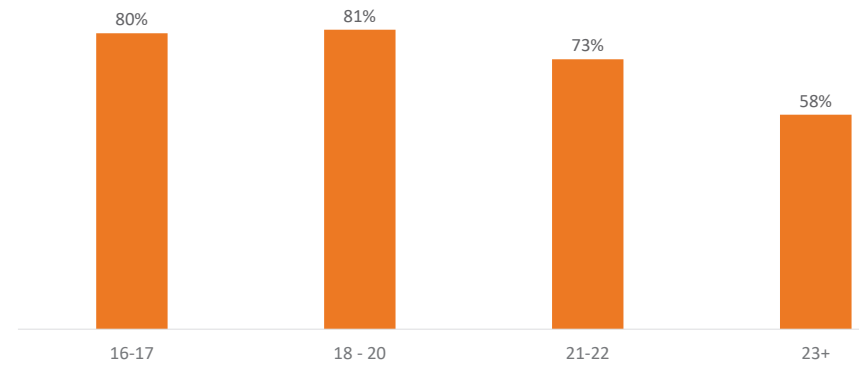
Age Group	Enrolled	Completed	Completed %	Employed	Employed %	Employed Criteria	Employed Criteria %	Average Wage	Average Hours
<b>16-17</b>	14	13	93%	10	77%	10	77%	£8.53	30.6
<b>18 - 20</b>	52	50	96%	35	70%	31	62%	£9.51	25.6
<b>21-22</b>	39	35	90%	26	74%	22	63%	£10.01	26
<b>23+</b>	26	25	96%	18	72%	14	56%	£10.09	24.2
<b>Total</b>	131	123	94%	89	72%	77	63%	£9.66	26



## Employment by age group (Scotland)



## Historical data – Employment rate by age groups (Scotland)



## Wage by age group (Scotland)



## Wage by age group vs minimum wage (Scotland)

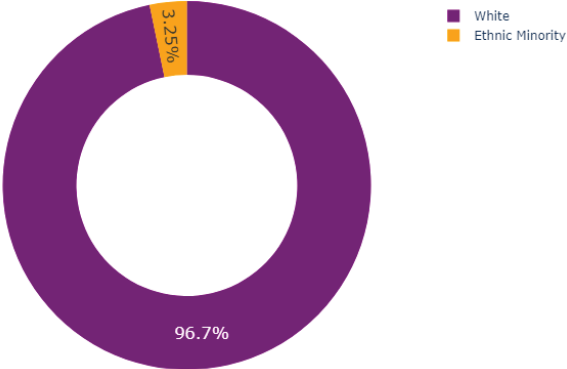
Age Group	DFN Average Hourly Wage	UK minimum wage	Hourly wage difference	Estimated wage difference in the year
16-17	£8.53	£4.81	£3.72	£5925.63
18 - 20	£9.51	£6.83	£2.68	£3570.60
21-22	£10.01	£9.18	£0.83	£1130.07
23+	£10.09	£9.50	£0.59	£740.85







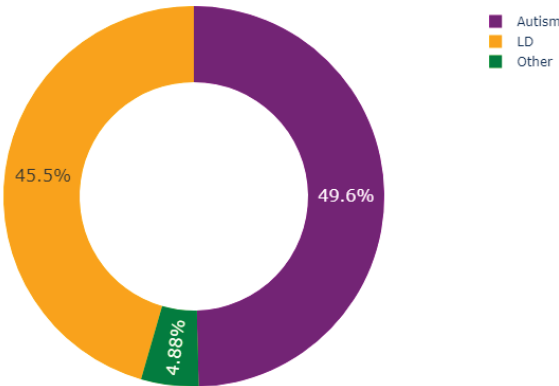
### Enrolment by ethnic background (Scotland)



Scotland ethnic minority population: 4.5%



### Enrolment by primary disability (Scotland)

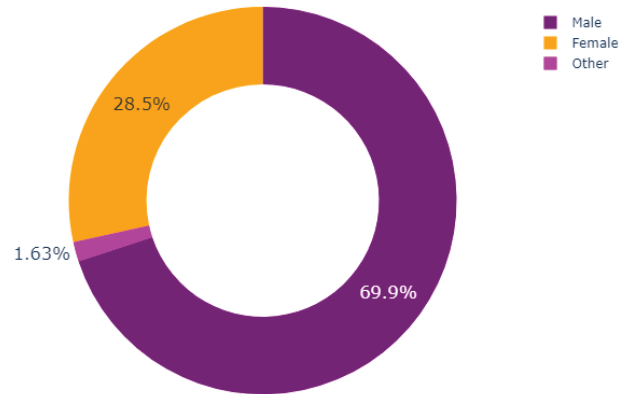


## Outcomes by primary disability

Primary Disability	Enrolled	Completed	Completed %	Employed	Employed %	Employed Criteria	Employed Criteria %	Average Wage	Average Hours
Autism	66	61	92%	46	75%	39	64%	£9.78	26.1
LD	59	56	95%	38	68%	34	61%	£9.63	26.6
Other	6	6	100%	5	83%	4	67%	£8.91	20.7
<b>Total Scotland</b>	<b>131</b>	<b>123</b>	<b>94%</b>	<b>89</b>	<b>72%</b>	<b>77</b>	<b>63%</b>	<b>£9.66</b>	<b>26</b>



## Enrolment by gender (Scotland)



## Outcomes by gender (Scotland)

Gender	Enrolled	Completed	Completed %	Employed	Employed %	Employed Criteria	Employed Criteria %	Average Wage	Average Hours
Female	39	35	90%	24	69%	19	54%	£9.84	26.0
Male	90	86	96%	63	73%	57	66%	£9.63	26.1
Other	2	2	100%	2	100%	1	50%	£8.61	25.0
<b>Total Scotland</b>	<b>131</b>	<b>123</b>	<b>94%</b>	<b>89</b>	<b>72%</b>	<b>77</b>	<b>63%</b>	<b>£9.66</b>	<b>26</b>







## DFN Project SEARCH Scotland Key findings – 2021-22



- ✓ Highest employment rates (including jobs that meet criteria) and completion rates (94%)
- ✓ Increased wages and working hours compared to previous year
- ✓ Younger interns have slightly higher employment rate than older groups
- ✓ All ages groups earn considerably more than the minimum wage

## Youth Advisory Group & Alumni Membership



## ALUMNI MEMBERSHIP



### MISSION

To create a network to support DFN Project SEARCH graduates, whether they are starting or looking for employment.

A UK wide network of fellow alumni, who as a community will help people reach their own aspirations.



### PRIORITIES

- Follow on support
- Community
- Marketing



### KEY AREAS

- LIVE training sessions
- Resources
- Opportunities



### GOALS

Deliver webinars, training sessions and meetings.

Ensure we review, reflect and research in partnership.

Create case studies, events, interviews. Speak at events & awards

Resources available on our app



### VISION

Improving the lives of young people by evidencing the short term and long-term effectiveness of a supported internship.

## DFN Project SEARCH App

Find on Play store/ App Store

Register by clicking on the lock icon in the right-hand corner

Once registered you can get access to all alumni Information

Stay connected.  
Join a community.



# Pre-Project SEARCH Curriculum



## The History and Evidence Base of the Curriculum

- Twenty-five experienced Project SEARCH instructors from across the world have developed the curriculum.
- The teachers developed eight units with corresponding objectives they feel are critical for interns to know to be ready to make the transition to competitive, integrated employment.
- They created activities that reflect critical objectives adults need to live and work successfully.
- Funded by the Mitsubishi Electric America Foundation



## Who is it for

- This pre-transition curriculum is available to Colleges and Schools that are engaged with a DFN Project SEARCH programme and other transition programmes that serve people whose end goal is competitive integrated employment.
- The lesson plans can complement a daily schedule for school and college students and adults with learning disabilities and autism to facilitate a successful transition to employment.
- It is free to use – you just sign up and tell us how you are using it



## Sign up now and encourage others to do so

- Go onto the portal
- Go into the Curriculum
- Click onto Flyer called [Lessons for Living Learning and WorkingV2.pdf](#)
- Click into the QR code
- Sign up and gain access
- Tell your Schools and colleges about it (we can provide you with a presentation to use)





150+ Current sites



## Get in touch



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## **Programmes in Scotland**

**April 2024**

1. Borders General Hospital, Melrose, Scotland
2. City of Edinburgh Council, Edinburgh, Scotland
3. Culzean Castle, South Ayrshire, Scotland
4. Dumfries and Galloway Council, Scotland, Dumfries,
5. Forth Valley Royal Hospital & Serco, Larbert,
6. NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde Royal Infirmary, Glasgow, Scotland
7. NHS Lanarkshire-University Hairmyres Hospital, East Kilbride, Scotland
8. NHS Lothian Western General Hospital, Edinburgh
9. NHS Tayside/ Dundee Health and Social Care Partnership
10. Renfrewshire Council, Paisley, Scotland
11. Stirling Highland Hotel
12. University Hospital Monklands, Airdrie, Scotland
13. University Hospital Wishaw, Wishaw, Scotland
14. University Hospital, Crosshouse, Kilmarnock, East
15. University of Aberdeen, Aberdeen, Aberdeenshire,
16. University of Strathclyde, Glasgow, Scotland

On hiatus in 23/24 academic year

17. Shetland Islands Council, Lerwick, Scotland
18. West Lothian Council, Livingston, Scotland

## Megan

Megan started on DFN Project SEARCH at Glasgow Royal Infirmary in August 2019. Megan has a mild learning disability and had previously completed a Pathways to Employment course at a local college. Before starting DFN Project Search, Megan didn't have a lot of confidence and although very capable, Megan didn't always see herself in that way.

Megan's first rotation was a retail assistant with WH Smith and this was the first time DFN Project SEARCH had used the shop for a rotation. Megan excelled here and was great with both the customers in the shop and the patients she met when she took the sweet trolley around the wards. Rotation number two saw Megan working as a Healthcare Support Worker with the Maternity department, working both on the Outpatient clinic and the postnatal ward, helping the new mums with their babies. Megan's bright and bubbly attitude was regarded positively with the department, so much so that Megan stayed with Maternity for her final rotation. This time Megan worked alongside the domestic team enabling her to layer on new skills as well as consolidate the skills she had already learnt.

Midway through her final rotation, Megan applied for a domestic position with the NHS at Queen Elizabeth University Hospital. She was able to talk about her real-life work experience and was coached by the onsite team in interview skills, enabling her to show her abilities to the best advantage. This built her confidence, enabling her to share all her newfound abilities. Megan began working in the Children's Hospital just as the country went into lockdown and Megan has adapted and taken the changes in her stride. Although the hospital is quieter with patients, Megan still has lots of tasks to do and has quickly proven herself to be a hardworking and committed member of staff.

Megan feels that she is part of a team now and this view is mirrored by her new colleagues. She is happy at work and is glad to have been working during lockdown. Megan feels like she is contributing by holding a valued job role that is a vital part of the NHS. Megan has been able to use a lot of the skills she learnt on DFN Project SEARCH in her new job, but she has also been taking part in more training, so she is constantly building on her skills and knowledge. Megan's supervisors are full of praise of how well she has done in a short space of time. The NHS set very high standards





of cleanliness and Megan is working to these standards and makes sure that they are consistently being met.

Working for several months now, Megan is really enjoying her new role and is making friends within the team. Megan is more independent; her confidence has increased and she feels more mature. The fact that Megan is now working means that she can also help her family out at home... and indulge in her favourite hobby of shopping! Megan has also just applied for her driver's license and she intends to start driving lessons as soon as she can. Megan has worked very hard over the year and everyone at DFN Project SEARCH is incredibly proud of how well she has done and what she has achieved.

DFN Project SEARCH is a Transition to work programme that is committed to transforming the lives of young people with autism and learning difficulties. DFN Project SEARCH work in partnership with the NHS across the UK, supporting young people through real life work experience combined with employability training and independent life skills. The collaborative approach between the NHS, local authorities, colleges and schools and supported employment providers, helps with transition into a productive and fulfilling adult life specifically for this marginalised cohort.

Megan is one of hundreds of young people who through DFN Project SEARCH and our partners at the NHS, has developed and grown through the innovative and integrated provision. With over 60% of graduates achieving competitively paid employment of over 16 hours a week, the figures show that working in a collaborative way makes a substantial difference to young people affected by Learning disability and Autism.

For more information about DFN Project SEARCH or to find your nearest DFN Project SEARCH programme please visit <https://www.dfnprojectsearch.org/>