

# Transition programmes for young adults with SEND.

## What works?



The Careers & Enterprise Company is evidence led and works closely with the following strategic partners:

- Career Development Institute (CDI)
- Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD)
- Confederation of British Industry (CBI)
- Gatsby Charitable Foundation
- Teach First
- The Federation of Small Businesses (FSB)
- The Institute of Directors (IOD)
- WorldSkills
- Young Enterprise

The Careers & Enterprise Company is working with the following organisations to deliver transition programmes for young adults with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) in schools and colleges in England.

- DFN Charitable Foundation
- Envision
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- York Cares

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# About this paper

This paper describes the evidence base for transition programmes for young adults with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND). Schools, colleges and providers of careers and enterprise programmes are invited to use this evidence to inform the programmes that they are running and developing.

The paper draws together academic and 'grey' literature (such as policy papers, speeches and programme evaluation reports), with the aim of, first, clarifying the impacts from transition programming and, second, exploring what effective practice looks like.



# In brief



The evidence suggests that transition programmes for those young adults with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) can have a significant and observable impact on behaviour, attainment and progression. We can describe these interventions as effective (a 3 on the Early Intervention Fund scale) or consistently effective (4) as we have a number of high quality studies and qualitative reviews, although there is some variety in the evidence base across the different interventions that comprise transition planning. However, the size of the effect is typically **small to moderate**.

Key features of the evidence include the importance of putting the individual with SEND and their family at the centre of transition programmes and the importance of facilitating supported work experience.

# Executive summary

Transition programmes for young adults with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) to make a successful move from school to further/higher education, training, employment or self-employment. Traditionally learners with SEND have demonstrated poor outcomes. Transition programmes provide opportunities to improve these outcomes by allowing young people to learn about themselves, the skills that are needed for life and the world of work. The evidence suggests that some of the elements of these programmes, particularly work experience, supported internships/employment, employee preparation programmes, self-determination training and family involvement are well evidenced by a series of research studies and by multiple literature reviews which demonstrate positive outcomes for participants. Other elements, for example interagency practices, are less well evidenced but can still be described as potentially effective.

Existing studies have observed impacts associated with transition programmes across personal attributes (personal effectiveness, career readiness, employability skills and social capital) as well as personal outcomes in education and employment.

## Lessons for practice

The evidence base identifies five key areas which a successful transition programme should focus on. The following areas should be viewed as a description of proven practice. This does not mean that other approaches do not work. Rather, the evidence base should be used as a stimulus for further innovation.

### **1. Start young and maintain support across the life course or until the young person is established in the labour market.**

It is important that transition programmes are started early in secondary school.

Like all young people, those with SEND need time and space to explore their strengths and needs, engage with face-to-face guidance, explore and develop their own skills, access meaningful employer and employee encounters and have supported work experiences over a longer period of time than someone without SEND. This needs to be carefully planned, coordinated and managed and requires the interplay of multiple teams, organisations and/or agencies. There is evidence to suggest that taking a 'developmental' approach to transition programmes (where the individual with SEND is continually supported by a dedicated individual or team throughout school and into post-school activities) is more likely to result in a successful transition than what has been termed the 'booster' approach (where the individual with SEND is responsible for their own progression and seeks help as and when they need it).

### **2. Ensure access to support and relevant developmental activities (this can include career guidance, teacher support, agency support and specific skills training).**

Young people with SEND and their families should be aware of all the relevant support and developmental opportunities available to them in their area and where necessary access to these should be facilitated. Schools should ensure dedicated adult support for young people with SEND.

### **3. Involve families in the transition.**

There is strong evidence to suggest that involving the individual with SEND's family in transition programming is very important to the success of the programme. Families not only have insight into the young person's unique strengths, needs and capabilities but are also likely to be involved in supporting them through the transition. It is important therefore that they are included in the planning.

### **4. Provide encounters and experience with employers, working people and workplaces.**

As with all young people, multiple encounters with work facilitate effective transitions after school. Young people with SEND are significantly more likely to be employed after school when they have had some form of work experience. To be effective, work experience should involve mentoring or individual job coaching in the workplace, have a clear, individualised/personalised training plan for the individuals with SEND and include reinforcement of work-based learning outside of work.

### **5. Ensure that career and employability learning and support continues in the workplace.**

Young people with SEND will continue to require work that is aligned to their evolving strengths, interests and needs and that retains precise expectations and feedback. Clear, personalised training plans that make use of on the job training are required with ongoing assessments of support needs. Mentoring or individual job coaching by trained staff is of benefit.

# 1. Introduction

All young people can face difficulties in finding employment, but finding a job can be even more complicated for the 14% of young people with disabilities.<sup>1 2</sup> Young people described as having special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) face unique challenges in progressing from school to further learning and the workplace.<sup>3 4</sup>

This group are frequently disadvantaged in society and are the most likely group of young people to be absent or excluded from school.<sup>5</sup> Students labelled with SEND are also less likely to achieve good outcomes both in terms of their attainment and progression. For example, they are more likely to be NEET (not in education, employment or training) than their peers, less likely to hold higher, managerial, administrative and professional occupations<sup>6</sup> and more likely to be in occupations that are expected to decline in the near future such as manual work.<sup>7</sup>

*Students labelled with SEND are also less likely to achieve good outcomes both in terms of their attainment and progression.*

The Careers & Enterprise Company believes that young people should be given the best support available to develop their careers and to make choices about education and employment. At the heart of the Company's ability to do this is our commitment to listening to and developing the evidence

base. This paper sets out the findings of a rapid review of the current evidence on transition programmes for young adults with SEND. We hope that it will be useful to schools and careers and enterprise providers in shaping what they provide for young people with SEND and how they think about using evidence.

The National Audit Office report *Oversight of Special Education for Young People aged 16-25*<sup>8</sup> estimates that supporting people with a learning disability into employment will not only improve their independence and self-esteem but could also increase that person's income by between 55 and 95 per cent. They further suggest that providing a young person with the relevant life and employability skills so that they can live in semi-independence could reduce lifetime support costs to the public by approximately £1 million.<sup>8</sup> Only 7% of people with learning disabilities are currently in paid employment.<sup>9</sup> Poor employment outcomes for young people with SEND are linked to both a lack of suitable jobs and to limited aspirations and opportunity awareness.<sup>10</sup>

1. Bevan, S., Zheltoukhova, K., Summers, K., Bajorek, Z., O'Dea, L., and Gulliford, J. (2013). *Life and Employment Opportunities of Young People with Chronic Conditions*. Lancaster: The Work Foundation, Lancaster University.
2. Department for Education. (2016). Special educational needs in England: January 2016. Available from [https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/539158/SFR29\\_2016\\_Main\\_Text.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/539158/SFR29_2016_Main_Text.pdf) [Accessed 29th June 2017].
3. Grigal, M., Hart, D., and Migliore, A. (2011). Comparing transition planning, postsecondary education, and employment outcomes of students with intellectual and other disabilities. *Career Development for Exceptional Individuals*, 34(1), 4-17.
4. Wehman, P. (2013). Transition from school to work: where are we and where do we need to go?. *Career Development and Transition for Exceptional Individuals*, 36(1), 58-66.
5. Ofsted. (2010). *Special Educational Needs and Disability Review: A Statement is Not Enough*. Manchester: Ofsted.
6. ONS. (2015). *Life Opportunities Survey*. London: The Office for National Statistics (ONS).
7. UKCES. (2012). *The Youth Employment Challenge*. London: UK Commission for Employment and Skills.
8. The National Audit Office. (2011). *Oversight of Special Education for Young People Aged 16-25*. London: The National Audit Office.
9. Department for Education and Department for Health. (2015). *Special Educational Needs and Disability Code of Practice: 0 to 25 Years. Statutory Guidance for Organisations which Work with and Support Children and Young People who have Special Educational Needs or Disabilities*. UK: Department for Education.
10. Moore, N., Sahar, A., Robinson, D. and Hoare, M. (2016). *Young Enterprise: Evaluating the impact of the Team programme*. Derby: International Centre for Guidance Studies, University of Derby.



There has been considerable research examining the issues and challenges that young people with SEND experience and the important challenges in adjustment for families in their relationships with the young people undergoing transition.<sup>11 12</sup> <sup>13 14 15 16</sup> Such research typically highlights that young people with SEND often fail to achieve the necessary qualifications to participate in post-compulsory education or access most jobs. This raises questions about the availability of appropriate post-school provision. It also highlights that young people with SEND often deal with an additional transition between the support and advocacy arrangements in schools and those in place in post-secondary learning, work or the community and that these young people have to consider how to disclose and manage their SEND within a new context.<sup>17</sup>

Research with young people aged 14-18 reports that young people with SEND are less likely than others to feel able to achieve their potential, and are more likely to have considered dropping out of learning and to worry they will fail.<sup>14 15</sup> While the aspirations of young people with SEND are higher than previous cohorts, many experience disappointment and frustration in adult life.<sup>8</sup> Some feel that as they move to adulthood it is more difficult to access the support they need in order to pursue career options and to help with transitions from education to employment and adult

life.<sup>6</sup> Some research suggests that transition support is insufficiently targeted at the particular needs of disabled young people, including any additional support needs.<sup>16</sup> Young people with SEND may not be offered the continual long-term support they need.<sup>10</sup> This can also lead to young people being lost in the system and being without support.<sup>17</sup>

Four sets of factors seem important in determining the outcomes of the transition process<sup>17</sup>:

1. Young people's capacities and characteristics
2. The level of familial inclusion and support
3. The nature and effectiveness of local support systems
4. The range of local opportunities available to young people, such as college courses, employment and training options.

11. Foundation for People with Learning Disabilities. (2016). *Friends for Life: Building Resilience and Emotional Well Being. Practical Guidance on Adapting FRIENDS for Life to Increase Participation for Children and Young People with Learning Disabilities*. Second Edition. London: Foundation for People With Learning Disabilities.

12. Burchardt, T. (2005). *The Education and Employment of Disabled Young people: Frustrated Ambition*. UK: Policy Press.

13. Carter, E.W., Trainor, A.A., Cakiroglu, O., Sweeden, B., and Owens, L.A. (2010). *Availability of and access to career development activities for transition-age youth with disabilities*. *Career Development for Exceptional Individuals*, 33(1), 13–24.

14. Davies, M. D., and Beamish, W. (2009). Transitions from school for young adults with intellectual disability: Parental perspectives on "life as an adjustment". *Journal of Intellectual and Developmental Disability*, 34(3), 248–257.

15. Del Quest, A., Fullerton, A., Greenen, S., Powers, L. and The Research Consortium to Increase the Success of Youth in Foster Care. (2012). *Children and Youth Services Review*, 34, 1604–1615.

16. Foley, N. E. (2006). Preparing for college: Improving the odds for students with learning disabilities. *College Student Journal*, 40(3), 641–645.

17. Rehm, R. S., Fuentes-Afflick, E., Fisher, L. T., Chesla, C. A. (2012). Parent and youth priorities during the transition to adulthood for youth with special health care needs and developmental disability. *ANS Advances in Nursing Science*, 35(3), E57–E72.

## 2. Key definitions



### SEND

According to the government's Special Educational Needs Code of Practice 2015<sup>9</sup>

"A child or young person has SEN if they have a learning difficulty or disability which calls for special educational provision to be made for him or her. A child of compulsory school age or a young person has a learning difficulty or disability if he or she:

- has a significantly greater difficulty in learning than the majority of others of the same age; or
- has a disability which prevents or hinders him or her from making use of facilities of a kind generally provided for others of the same age in mainstream schools or mainstream post-16 institutions" (pp. 15-16).

Many children and young people who have SEN may have a disability under the Equality Act 2010<sup>9</sup> – that is:

*"...a physical or mental impairment which has a long-term and substantial adverse effect on their ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities. This definition provides a relatively low threshold and includes more children than many realise: 'long-term' is defined as 'a year or more' and 'substantial' is defined as 'more than minor or trivial'. This definition includes sensory impairments such as those affecting sight or hearing, and long-term health conditions such as asthma, diabetes, epilepsy, and cancer. Children and young people with*

*such conditions do not necessarily have SEN, but there is a significant overlap between disabled children and young people and those with SEN. Where a disabled child or young person requires special educational provision they will also be covered by the SEN definition."* (pp. 16)

Throughout the SEND Code of Practice,<sup>9</sup> four broad areas of need are referred to and each includes sub categories; these are defined as:

#### 1. Communication and interaction

- Speech, language and communication needs
- Autistic spectrum disorder

#### 2. Cognition and learning

- Specific learning difficulty
- Moderate learning difficulty
- Severe learning difficulty
- Profound and multiple learning difficulty

#### 3. Social, emotional and mental health difficulties

- Behaviour, emotional and social difficulty

#### 4. Sensory and/or physical needs.

- Visual Impairment
- Hearing Impairment
- Multi-Sensory Impairment
- Physical Disability

This paper considers the evidence base for transition programmes for all individuals with SEND which includes low, moderate, severe levels of SEND and across all four broad areas. Where the evidence has found differential outcomes this is noted.

## Transition

Transition refers to a change in status from behaving primarily as a student to assuming emergent adult roles in the community. These roles include employment, participating in post-secondary education, maintaining a home, becoming appropriately involved in the community and experiencing satisfactory personal and social relationships.<sup>18</sup> It has been argued that the foundations of successful transition should be laid in the early teenage years and be guided by the broad concept of career development with the young person with SEND encouraged to take responsibility for this.<sup>9 19</sup>

## Career outcomes

Career outcomes for young people described as having SEND need to be conceptualised more broadly than in the general population; they include a range of adult roles and purposeful activities such as unpaid work, learning and wider forms of citizenship. It is also clear that for a young person described as having SEND, career management skills include the ability to deal with various kinds of disabilities whilst maintaining work. This report considers young people labelled with SEND transitioning from school into these different activities and roles and the programmes and factors that make these transitions more successful.

18. Halpern, A.S. (1994). The transition of youth with disabilities to adult life: A position statement of the Division on Career Development and Transition, the Council for Exceptional Children. *Career Development for Exceptional Individuals*, 17(2), 115–124.

19. Johnson, D. R. (2005). Key provisions on transition: A comparison of IDEA 1997 and IDEA 2004. *Career Development for Exceptional Individuals*, 28(1), 60–63.

## 3. Policy and practice in England



In January 2015 the government published the Special Educational Needs and Disability Code of Practice: 0 to 25 Years, which:

- increases the age under consideration to 25 (while the young person is in Further Education at a sixth form or in a college, undertaking an apprenticeship or undertaking training/work experience)
- outlines the requirement for an Educational Health and Care plan (EHC plan) (replacing statementing and the Learning Difficulty Assessments)
- includes a determination that planning, decision making and the commissioning of services be a joint activity with the cooperation and input of children, young people, their parents, education, health and social care<sup>9</sup>
- should take the form of a four-part cycle (assess, plan, do, review; The Graduated Approach)
- needs to ‘include planning and preparation for the transitions between phases of education and preparation for adult life’<sup>9</sup> (p.102)
- should begin in Year 8 and continue through to year 13.

*“Schools should seek partnerships with employment services, businesses, housing agencies, disability organisations and arts and sports groups, to help children understand what is available to them as they get older, and what it is possible for them to achieve. It can be particularly powerful to meet disabled adults who are successful in their work or who have made a significant contribution to their community”<sup>9</sup> (pp. 124–125).*

A key aspect of the SEND Code of Practice is the inclusion of specific and individualised transition planning where there are clear outcomes that are aligned with high aspirations.<sup>9</sup> Explicit support should be planned to prepare the child or young person for continuing their education or moving into employment or self-employment. This process requires identifying potential pathways including those of training (internships, apprenticeships and traineeships), enterprise activities such as setting up of one’s own business, and the development of employability skills that will help the young person to obtain and perform well within a job. This might include career coaching, work placements or experience and support mechanisms such as benefits packages.

In England the SEND extra support options are varied across regions and they are complex; individual options may be effective but their provision is not necessarily uniform in scope or efficacy.<sup>20</sup> This leads to a patchy service with some individuals receiving all the support they need, whilst others receive uncoordinated support and still others make no progress at all.<sup>21</sup> Aston and colleagues<sup>21</sup> have noted that a key finding for England was:

*“there is no clear or systematic evidence of any individual, organisation or agency having overall responsibility for assisting young people to identify and source appropriate options, nor to coordinate service delivery. There are many opportunities for young people to fall down the cracks between services and there is a very real risk that some young people will wander beyond the reach of support.” (pp.xiv)*

20. Yates, S., and Roulstone, A. (2013). Social policy and transitions to training and work for disabled young people in the United Kingdom: neo-liberalism for better and for worse? *Disability and Society*, 28(4), 456–470.

21. Aston, J., Dewson, S., Loukas, G., and Dyson, A. (2005). *Post-16 Transitions: A Longitudinal Study of Young People with Special Educational Needs (Wave Three)*. Department for Education and Skills Research Report No 655. UK: Department for Education and Skills.

## 4. What is transition programming?



In order to support the transitions of young people with SEND a number of approaches have been developed in the UK and internationally.<sup>9 12 20 21</sup> This international evidence base is useful as it allows for the development of a taxonomy of programmes for facilitating transition. It also makes clear the evidence for each of the elements of this taxonomy.<sup>22</sup> The taxonomy comprises 5 programme types of which 1, 2 and 4 are most researched.

1. Student focussed planning e.g. the student participates in the creation of their own individual education plan (IEP).
2. Student development e.g. teaching employability and life skills.
3. Interagency collaboration e.g. creating frameworks for delivering services collaboratively.
4. Family involvement e.g. training families in self-determination.
5. Program structures e.g. allocating resources to provide transition services.

### Approaches to transition

In England the careers landscape which supports all young people to transition to employment is fragmented and crowded. For young adults with SEND it is more complex and involves even more agencies and support systems. Aston and colleagues note that there are two different approaches to transition and the different agencies and support systems can employ either.<sup>21</sup>

One approach is a developmental model or approach. The developmental approach provides continued guidance and support to facilitate progression. For example, in this approach an individual may be provided with a plan (for example, the new Education, Health and Care plan, EHCP, that is now offered in England) and case worker(s) who will meet with, monitor, review and develop the individual's plan with them at regular intervals and direct to other resources as and when required. Responsibility here is shared until the age of 25. At this stage the individual classes as an adult and practice and policy changes.

An alternative approach is the 'booster' approach which places the emphasis onto the individual to chart their own transitional course and seek guidance as they need it. There is not necessarily a plan and the responsibility lies with the individual to seek out relevant resources.

22. Kohler, P.D., Gothberg, J. E., Fowler, C., and Coyle, J. (2016). *Taxonomy for Transition Programming 2.0: A Model for Planning, Organizing, and Evaluating Transition Education, Services, and Programs*. USA: Western Michigan University.

## Key components of transition programmes

A review of the transition literature recommended 19 best practices that were further narrowed down to a core of 10 best practices.<sup>23</sup> These are shown in Figure 1 alongside the taxonomy introduced previously.

### Interagency collaboration/ Programme structures

These categories refer to the way in which agencies work together (or do not) to facilitate the transition process. In Kohler's review<sup>22</sup> 39 individual practices were identified as being transition services agency practices.

## Student Development

### Career, vocational assessment and education

The need to focus on employment as an outcome for young people with SEND has been noted<sup>24</sup>. Yet research suggests that career guidance was only provided to a minority of students by their school and the National Careers Service to which young people with SEND are entitled to.<sup>5,24</sup> However, Bajorek and colleagues state that one-to-one careers interviews, careers education programmes, information about opportunities and additional careers services such as facilitating work experience are useful to young people in understanding their strengths and developing career.<sup>24</sup> However, it has been noted that in the UK discussions around careers can focus mostly on college as the next option and not on longer term employment opportunities.<sup>24</sup>

**Figure 1. Taxonomy Categories and Best Practice Programmes**

Interagency collaboration	Interagency collaboration
	Interdisciplinary collaboration
Programme structures	Integrated schools, classrooms and employment
Student development	Functional life skills curriculum
	Community based instruction
	Social and personal skills development/training
	Career vocational assessment and education
	Business and Industry linkages with schools
Student focussed planning	Development of individualised and comprehensive plans which include self-determination development, advocacy and input in transition planning
Family Involvement	Parent/family involvement in planning

23. Greene, G. (2003). Best practices in transition. In Greene, G. and Kochlar, C. (Eds.) *Pathways To Successful Transition for Youth with Disabilities*. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson Education, pp. 154–196.

24. Bajorek, Z., Donnalaja, V., and McEnhill, L. (2016). *Don't Stop Me Now: Supporting Young People with Chronic Conditions from Education to Employment*. Lanchester: The Work Foundation, Lancaster University.

### Supported internships/employment

In the UK supported internships are study programmes aimed specifically at young people described as having SEND.<sup>25</sup> Introduced around 2009, supported internships offer the young person with disabilities and/or learning difficulties an extended opportunity to develop employability and job role specific skills to facilitate a smoother transition into work. Supported internships permit an extended time in the workplace that is more personalised than a typical traineeship and that helps to develop those skills. Furthermore, the presence of a job coach also provides support for their non-work learning.<sup>24</sup>

Remploy, in collaboration with Mencap, report that many employers are unaware of supported internships as a recognised model of good practice. Assuming the approach to be similar to unpaid work experience, 'employers are reluctant to be associated with a programme which might bring them negative publicity or criticism' (p.5).<sup>26</sup> Thus work experience may be a statutory requirement of a local authority's Local Offer,<sup>9</sup> but not all Local Offers contain information about supported internships.<sup>9</sup>

In America supported internships are better documented and evaluated. The Marriott Foundation's Bridges to work programme 1993–1997 was evaluated in 2000.<sup>27</sup> This is a paid internship programme that provides structured work experience with support for young people with a

number of different disabilities (ranging from mild to severe) in their final year of high school. The evaluation reported on the progress of 3024 participants who were originally entered onto the programme. Of these 2524 secured an internship, 2119 completed the internship and 1586 were offered positions within the host company. The Marriott Foundation has a five year database of information regarding internship performance and post school experiences of students and this data was used to examine relationships between demographics, work behaviour and work setting factors, and post-school employment success at 6, 12 and 18 months post internship completion. The programme itself is an intensive vocational intervention that has three phases: a pre-vocational orientation programme phase (where participants work with an advisor to set goals), followed by pre-vocational preparation phase (participants receive career guidance, job preparation and job search skills training) then an internship placement phase with support (this includes specific skills training, monitoring of students work performance and other employee-employer relationship support activities). A paid 12 week internship is put into place based on the goals set earlier. Support is provided from the employer representative which is tailored to the participant and context and this is overseen by trained central staff from the programme. The outcomes associated with this programme are largely positive.<sup>27</sup>

25. Department for Education. (2014). Supported internships: Advice for further education colleges, sixth forms in academies, maintained and non-maintained schools, independent specialist providers, other providers of study programmes and local authorities. Available from [http://base-uk.org/sites/default/files/knowledge/Supported%20Internships%20guidance/support-ed\\_internships\\_guidance.pdf](http://base-uk.org/sites/default/files/knowledge/Supported%20Internships%20guidance/support-ed_internships_guidance.pdf) [Accessed 15th May 2017].

26. Allott, S., and Hicks, T. (2016). Raising Aspiration: Widening participation in Supported Internships. Remploy in collaboration with Mencap. Available from [http://www.remploy.co.uk/downloads/file/193/raising\\_aspiration\\_-\\_widening\\_participation\\_in\\_supported\\_internships.pdf](http://www.remploy.co.uk/downloads/file/193/raising_aspiration_-_widening_participation_in_supported_internships.pdf) [Accessed 28th March 2017].

27. Luecking, R.G., and Fabian, E.S. (2000) Paid internships and employment success for youth in transition. *Career Development for Exceptional Individuals*, 23(2), 205–221.



Supported employment provides another approach for transitioning young people with SEND into employment. It is similar to the concept of the supported internship. Supported employment is a job coach focused model, the rationale for this is that there are many small but meaningful differences in how work tasks and social customs are performed across different workplaces. Training individuals in day or training centres is unlikely to be able to replicate workplaces with any degree of fidelity which poses problems for the individual with SEND who may then struggle to transfer the learning. In the USA several studies revealed that given small-scale, individual teaching, young people described as having moderate and severe learning disabilities could master complex real work tasks, and these tasks should be taught on the job.<sup>28 29 30 31</sup> This worked because behavioural analysis was applied to the training; tasks were broken down into simple IF – THEN actions taught through reinforcement.<sup>32</sup> It stood in direct contrast to previous thinking which suggested the skills needed to be in place before work placement began. These initial findings were then replicated to actual workplaces where training for existing jobs occurred<sup>33</sup> and were shown to be effective for people with different levels of disability.

However, not all research is so positive. Supported employment has been found to be much easier where the individuals with SEND have milder learning disabilities. The employer organisations involved may struggle to deal with individuals with significant disabilities.<sup>34</sup> SEND users of this service have reported a lack of confidence in the system.<sup>35</sup>

### **Paid or Unpaid Work Experience**

The Department for Education (2017) reports on the work experience placements undertaken by secondary school age children.<sup>36</sup> They classify work experience as being for Year 10/11 students (typically around 8 days of work experience), Year 11/12 (typically around 12 days of work experience) or supported traineeship (available to those individuals with SEND, typically around 30 days of work experience). Work experience may involve elements of actual work tasks and shadowing others in their roles. Ninety-three percent of schools without a sixth form offered work-related activities to their students and seventy one percent of schools with a sixth form offered work-related activities to both over and under 16's students.<sup>36</sup>

28. Bellamy, G. T., Horner, R. H., and Inman, D. (1979). *Vocational Habilitation of Severely Retarded Adults: A Direct Service Technology*. Baltimore: University Park Press.

29. Rusch, F. R., and Schutz, R. P. (1979). Non-sheltered competitive employment of the mentally-retarded adult – research to reality. *Journal of Contemporary Business*, 8(4), 85–98.

30. Wehman, P., Hill, J. W., and Koehler, F. (1979). Helping severely handicapped persons enter competitive employment. *AAESPH Review*, 4(3), 274–290.

31. Wehman, P. (1982). *Competitive Employment: New Horizons for Severely Disabled Individuals*. Baltimore: PH Brookes.

32. Vogelsberg, R. T., Richard, L., and Nicoll, J. (1990). Supported employment in Pennsylvania. In Rusch, F.R. (Ed.) *Supported Employment: Models, Methods, and Issues*. Sycamore, IL: Sycamore Publishing Company.

33. Simmons, T.J., and Flexer, R.W. (1992). Community based job training for persons with mental retardation: An acquisition and performance replication. *Education and Training in Mental Retardation*, 27(3), 261–272.

34. Ineson, R. (2015). Exploring paid employment options with a person with severe learning disabilities and high support needs: An exploratory case study. *The British Journal of Occupational Therapy*, 78(1): 58–65.

35. Schneider, J. (2008). Supported-employment practice in the UK: Evidence about an emerging occupational group. *Disability and Rehabilitation*, 30(23), 1819–1828.

36. NatCen Social Research and SQW. (2017). *Work Experience and Related Activities in Schools and Colleges*. UK: Department for Education.

It can be more difficult for young people with SEND to find and make the most out of work experience.<sup>36</sup> Only sixty-three per cent of work experience coordinators surveyed in the 2017 DfE report stated that their school or college offered work-related activities to students with SEND and of these just a quarter (26 per cent), offered their students supported internships (SIs).<sup>36</sup> Young people with SEND report feeling excluded from such activities which they see as being primarily for students who are most able and closest to the labour market.<sup>26</sup> A second issue is that whilst schools might offer some enhanced support for young people described as having SEND to facilitate work experience, there is not an overarching strategy to enhance access for them.<sup>37</sup> Thirdly, employers themselves may create barriers as they are often unable or unwilling to make the necessary adjustments to support these young people; this is compounded by employers often perceiving disabilities as a risk.<sup>24</sup>

### **Employment Preparation Programme Participation**

Employment preparation programmes help participants prepare to find employment typically via a series of activities that might include: development of their own self-awareness, goal setting, action plan formation, job searching and application, and learning how to use labour market information. Several reviews have concluded there is multiple evidence that employment preparation programmes have

been effective in helping young people with SEND transition into employment.<sup>38 39</sup>

### **Enterprise Education**

Young Enterprise run a number of different programmes for children and young adults in the UK that are designed to develop awareness of enterprise as a potential career, provide practical and real world experiences of enterprise and develop a range of enterprise skills. The Team programme offered by Young Enterprise is aimed specifically at young people with SEND aged between 15 and 19. Participants are offered a structured enterprise learning opportunity where they run an actual business and are mentored and advised by a local business professional.<sup>10</sup>

### **Social Skills Training**

Some degree of social skills are an inherent requirement for successful working lives and consequently the provision of social skills training has been an important part of successful transition for some time. This form of training is particularly relevant for individuals with autism spectrum disorders,<sup>40</sup> emotional disorders<sup>41</sup> and learning disabilities<sup>42</sup> – social skills are cited as a specific area of concern to parents and professionals when employment is sought for young people with SEND in the retail sector.<sup>43</sup> Concerns are voiced regarding the young person's ability to answer customer queries, or work at a speed appropriate to meeting customers' needs. An 'outstanding' (Ofsted rating) example of good practice

37. McTier, A., Macdougall, L., McGregor, A., Hirst, A., and Rinne, S. (2016). Mapping the employability landscape for people with learning disabilities in Scotland. Available from <http://www.sclid.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2016/08/Employability-Key-Findings-1.pdf> [Accessed 15th May 2017].

38. Landmark, L. J., Ju, S., and Zhang, D. (2010). Substantiated best practices in transition: Fifteen plus years later. *Career Development for Exceptional Individuals*, 33(3), 165–176.

39. Kohler, P.D. (1993). Best practices in transition: Substantiated or implied?. *Career Development for exceptional individuals*, 16(2), 107–121.

40. American Psychiatric Association (APA). (1994). Diagnostic and statistical manual of mental disorders. 4th Ed. Washington, DC: APA.

41. Wehman, P. (2006). Applications for youth with emotional and behavior disorders. In Wehman, P. (Ed.) *Life Beyond the Classroom: Transition Strategies for Young People with Disabilities*. 4th Edition. Baltimore, MD: Paul H. Brookes, pp. 505–534.

42. Crites, S. A., and Dunn, C. (2004). Teaching social problem solving to individuals with mental retardation. *Education and Training in Developmental Disabilities*, 39(4), 301–309.

43. Sankardas, S., and Rajanahally, J. (2015). Skills training for young adults with special educational needs for transition into employment. *Support for Learning*, 30(3), 252–267.

in this area features Foxes Academy (a residential training hotel and college for young adults with learning disabilities).<sup>44</sup> Assessment, support or supervision feature strongly in Foxes Academy's approach; 'this is planned and regularly reviewed to ensure learners progress as quickly as their understanding and abilities allow' (p.2). Focus is placed on a wide range of employee skills, including a learner's ability to complete tasks as part of a team within a reasonable timeframe, and on delivering good customer service.

## Student Focussed Planning

### Self-determination Training

Practitioners and researchers established some time ago that self-determination training is a key best practice for effective transitioning<sup>38</sup>; having self-determination means having agency and taking responsibility for the self and the future.<sup>38</sup> Training programmes designed to develop self-determination might help the individual develop their decision and choice making skills, problem solving skills, goal setting and action planning skills, learn about risk taking and safety, become more self-aware, reflective and evaluative, promote self-advocacy and leadership and develop an internal locus of control (believe that the

individual is the core agent of change).<sup>38</sup> Self-determination training for those with learning disabilities may allow them to set achievable goals and understand their learning disability.<sup>45 46</sup>

## Family Involvement

Involving the young person's family is key to successful transitioning and is well established as effective practice. Family involvement is important because family not only provide a network of opportunities,<sup>47 48 49</sup> but also play an important role in career decisions for individuals with disabilities.<sup>48 50</sup> Furthermore they are in a position to provide background information concerning the skills and likely training needs of their children. It has also been noted though that family carers can be over-protective, limit exposure to new experiences and developmental opportunities and act as a barrier to developing independence and progression of young people with SEND.<sup>51</sup> Family members who provide care are often found to be dissatisfied with professionals.<sup>52</sup> However, dissatisfaction is reduced when the professionals working with them provide clear and appropriate information on interventions and acknowledging the parents' involvement, expertise and needs.<sup>53</sup>

44. Ofsted. (2014). Outstanding collaboration with employers: Foxes Academy. Available from [https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/392071/Foxes\\_20Academy\\_20-20Good\\_20Practice\\_20Example.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/392071/Foxes_20Academy_20-20Good_20Practice_20Example.pdf) [Accessed 15th May 2017].

45. Gerber, P. J., Ginsberg, R., and Reiff, H. B. (1992). Identifying alterable patterns in employment success for highly successful adults with learning disabilities. *Journal of learning disabilities*, 25(8), 475-487.

46. Goldberg, R. J., Higgins, E. L., Raskind, M. H., and Herman, K. L. (2003). Predictors of success in individuals with learning disabilities: A qualitative analysis of a 20-year longitudinal study. *Learning Disabilities Research & Practice*, 18(4), 222-236.

47. Hasazi, S. B., Gordon, L. R., and Roe, C. A. (1985). Factors associated with the employment status of handicapped youth exiting high school from 1979 to 1983. *Exceptional Children*, 51(6), 455-469.

48. Wagner, M., Newman, L., Cameto, R., Garza, N., and Levine, P. (2005). *After High School: A First Look at the Postschool Experiences of Youth with Disabilities. A Report from the National Longitudinal Transition Study-2 (NLTS2)*. Menlo Park, CA: SRI International.

49. Wise, W. E., and Matthews, C. L. (1987). *A Study of the Relationship of Education and Transition Factors to the Job Status of Mildly and Moderately Handicapped Students*. Washington: Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services (ED).

50. Lindstrom, L. E., and Benz, M. R. (2002). Phases of career development: Case studies of young women with learning disabilities. *Exceptional Children*, 69(1), 67-83.

51. Bowey, L., and McGlaughlin, A. (2005). Adults with a learning disability living with elderly carers talk about planning for the future: aspirations and concerns. *British Journal of Social Work*, 35(8), 1377-1392.

52. Liptak, G. S., Orlando, M., Yingling, J. T., Theurer-Kaufman, K. L., Malay, D. P., Tompkins, L. A., and Flynn, J. R. (2006). Satisfaction with primary health care received by families of children with developmental disabilities. *Journal of Pediatric Health Care*, 20(4), 245-252.

53. Case, S. (2001). Learning to partner, disabling conflict: Early indications of an improving relationship between parents and professionals with regard to service provision for children with learning disabilities. *Disability & Society*, 16(6), 837-854.

## The impacts of transition programming

Unsurprisingly, the range of career outcomes related to transition programmes for those identified as having SEND are diverse and unpredictable given the complexity and variety of the individuals, situations and programmes involved. However, overall there are a number of high quality pieces of research (Rated 4 on the Early Intervention Foundation's rating scale<sup>54</sup> see Figure 2) which provide evidence that some transition programme interventions are effective. The impacts of the key elements of transition

programmes are discussed below and the nature of the evidence for each using the Early Intervention Foundation (EIF) rating scale is summarised in Figure 3. The Careers and Enterprise Company set of outcomes/impacts associated with career interventions and EIF rating and description of the programme and evidence is summarised in Figure 4.

**Figure 2: Early Intervention Foundation (EIF) rating scale for quality and strength of evidence**

EIF rating	Description of program	Description of evidence	Evidence or rationale for programme
4	Consistently effective	Established	Multiple high quality evaluations with consistently positive impact across population and environments
3	Effective	Initial	Single high quality evaluation with positive impact
2	Potential effective	Formative	Lower-quality evaluation showing better outcomes for programme participants
1	Theory-based / Innovative	Non-existent	Logic model and testable features, but no current evidence of outcomes or impact
0	Unspecified / Unfounded	Non-existent	No logic model, testable features, or current evidence of outcomes or impact
-1	Ineffective / Harmful	Negative	Evidence from at least one high quality evaluation indicating null or negative impact

54. Early Intervention Foundation. (2017). Early intervention foundation guidebook. EIF. Available from <http://www.eif.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2016/07/What-do-the-EIF-ratings-mean.pdf> [Accessed 2nd May 2017].

**Figure 3: EIF ratings applied to evidence in the literature for SEND transition programmes**

Programme Type	Strength of evidence for SEND population	Evidence type
Career guidance activities	1 – Theory based/ innovative	Logic model and testable features but no current evidence for this particular group of young people
Supported employment	3/4 – Effective / Consistently effective	Multiple evaluations and reviews in USA, not necessarily all high quality (often lacking 'control' conditions) but typically show positive outcomes/ effective <sup>28 30 31 33</sup>
Supported internships	3 – Effective	High quality evaluation of the Marriott Foundation's Bridges to Employment Programme <sup>27</sup>
Work experience	4 – Consistently effective	Multiple studies and reviews but only in the USA <sup>27</sup> 55 56 57 58 59 60 61 62
Self-determination training	3 – Effective	Several studies in America <sup>38</sup>
Social skills training	4 – Consistently effective	Several reviews in America and one high quality evaluation in the UK <sup>10 38 41 42 43</sup>
Enterprise education	3 – Effective	Single high quality evaluation <sup>10</sup>
Employment preparation programme	4 – Consistently effective	Several reviews conclude it is effective <sup>38 63</sup>
Family involvement	4 – Consistently effective	Several reviews demonstrate the importance of involving family <sup>64 65 66</sup>

55. Benz, M. R., Lindstrom, L., and Yovanoff, P. (2000). Improving graduation and employment outcomes of students with disabilities: Predictive factors and student perspectives. *Exceptional Children*, 66(4), 509–529.

56. Fabian, E. S. (2007). Urban youth with disabilities: Factors affecting transition employment. *Rehabilitation Counseling Bulletin*, 50(3), 130–138.

57. McDonnall, M.C., and Crudden, A. (2009). Factors affecting the successful employment of transition-age youths with visual impairments. *Journal of Visual Impairment and Blindness*, 103(6), 329–341.

58. Karpur, A., Clark, H. B., Caproni, P., & Sterner, H. (2005). Transition to adult roles for students with emotional/behavioral disturbances: A follow-up study of student exiters from Steps-to-Success. *Career Development for Exceptional Individuals*, 28(1), 36–46.

59. Hoerner, J. L., and Wehrley, J. B. (1995). *Work-Based Learning: The Key to School-to-Work Transition*. New York: Glencoe/McGraw-Hill.

60. Colley, D. A., & Jamison, D. (1998). Post school results for youth with disabilities: Key indicators and policy implications. *Career Development for Exceptional Individuals*, 21(2), 145–160

61. Bailey, T. R., Hughes, K. L., and Moore, D. T. (2004). *Working Knowledge: Work-Based Learning and Education Reform*. New York: RoutledgeFalmer.

62. Hughes, C., and Carter, E. (2000). *The Transition Handbook: Strategies that High School Teachers Use that Work*. Baltimore: Paul H. Brookes Publishing Company.

63. Kohler, P. D. (1993). Best practices in transition: Substantiated or implied? *Career Development for exceptional individuals*, 16(2), 107–121

64. O'Toole, D.G. (2014). *Review of Different Approaches to Work Skills Development for Disabled Young People (14–25) and Disabled Working Adults in the UK and Internationally*. London: Institute for Policy Studies in Education (IPSE), London Metropolitan University.

65. Heal, L. W., Gonzalez, P., Rusch, F. R., Copher, J. I., and DeStefano, L. (1990). A comparison of successful and unsuccessful placements of youths with mental handicaps into competitive employment. *Exceptionality: A Special Education Journal*, 1(3), 181–195.

66. Sample, P. L. (1998). Postschool outcomes for students with significant emotional disturbance following best-practice transition services. *Behavioral Disorders*, 23(4), 231–242.

**Figure 4: The outcomes of transition programmes as identified by the literature**

<b>Outcomes</b>	<b>Findings in the SEND literature</b>	<b>Strength of evidence (EIF scale)</b>
Satisfaction with provision	Parental involvement <sup>67</sup>	2 - Formative evidence
Personal effectiveness	Resilience, self-determination and self-confidence <sup>10 59 60 61 68</sup>	3/4 - Initial evidence/ Established evidence
Career readiness	Self-awareness, goal and action planning, job search skills are demonstrated outcomes from self-determination training <sup>38 63</sup>	3/4 - Initial evidence/ Established evidence
Employability skills	Communication skills, entrepreneurial activity, organisational skills, are demonstrated outcomes from self-determination training <sup>10</sup>	3/4 - Initial evidence/ Established evidence
Social capital	Networking skills <sup>68 69</sup>	3/4 - Initial evidence/ Established evidence
Career outcomes	Increased likelihood of employment/ increased earnings <sup>32 33 38 55 56 57</sup> Number of paid jobs	4 - Established evidence
Educational outcomes	Attainment/level of qualification <sup>70 71 72</sup>	4 - Established evidence

67. Neece, C. L., Kraemer, B. R., and Blacher, J. (2009). Transition satisfaction and family well being among parents of young adults with severe intellectual disability. *Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities*, 47(1), 31-43.

68. Miller, K. D., Schleien, S. J., Rider, C., and Hall, C. (2002). Inclusive volunteering: Benefits to participants and community. *Therapeutic Recreation Journal*, 36(3), 247-259.

69. Balandin, S., Llewellyn, G., Dew, A., Ballin, L., & Schneider, J. (2006). Older disabled workers' perceptions of volunteering. *Disability & Society*, 21(7), 677-692.

70. Baer, R. M., Flexer, R. W., Beck, S., Amstutz, N., Hoffman, L., Brothers, J., Seltzer, D., and Zechman, C. (2003). A collaborative followup study on transition service utilization and post-school outcomes. *Career Development for Exceptional Individuals*, 26(1), 7-25.

71. Halpern, A. S., Yovanoff, P., Doren, B. and Benz, M.R. (1995). Predicting participation in postsecondary education for school leavers with disabilities. *Exceptional Children*, 62(2), 151-164.

72. Repetto, J. B., Webb, K. W., Garvan, C. W., and Washington, T. (2002). Connecting student outcomes with transition practices in Florida. *Career Development for Exceptional Individuals*, 25(2), 123-139.

## 5. Key practices



### Transition services

Community or agency collaboration during transition was substantiated by Kohler<sup>63</sup> but was the least empirically substantiated with only two studies of appropriate methodological rigour demonstrating that individuals who had follow up services with support agencies were more likely to be employed than those without.

### Student development

#### Career education, vocational and personal guidance

Findings suggest that career education, vocational and personal guidance in the UK has been most effective with young people with SEND when the individual receives not only face-to-face careers guidance but is also assisted into employment – where the 'career service' has been able to act as a placement service (i.e. has links with employers and can find potential positions) and in this capacity it also provided intervention services such as support with work experience.<sup>24</sup>

#### Supported internships/employment

Research in the UK suggests initially that supported internships do facilitate transition into employment for young people with learning difficulties but that the evidence needs developing and should consider the broader SEND population.<sup>24</sup> However in the USA, the Marriott Foundation's Programme findings<sup>27</sup> showed

that of those participants contacted, 68% were employed at six months after completing their internships, and of those not in employment almost half had gone into post-secondary education. Those who completed the internship were four times more likely to be employed. Key internship behaviours were number of hours worked per week and days absent – those who worked more hours and were absent less were more likely to be employed.

Employment at six months was more likely for those students with learning disabilities rather than any of the other disability categories. At 12 months, 53% of 493 students in the data set who were successfully contacted were in employment and again of those not employed almost half reported this was due to being in post-secondary education. Completing the internship was a significant predictor of employment with hours worked per week being key. At 18 months the only significant finding was that those with emotional disabilities were significantly less likely to be employed. This was a longitudinal group study but without an explicit control group, although they were able to compare those who started the internship but did not complete with those who did complete.

Supported employment has been shown to be successful at placing people with intellectual disabilities<sup>73,74</sup> and people with an autism spectrum disorder into employment.<sup>75,76</sup> For those with intellectual

73. Beyer, S., and Robinson, C. (2009). A review of the research literature on supported employment. A report for the cross-government learning disability employment strategy team. London: Department of Health. Available from <http://www.Researchonline.org.uk/sds/search/download.do> [Accessed 15th May 2017].

74. Beyer, S., and Kaehne, A. (2008). Transition programmes for young adults with SEND. What works?. *Journal on Developmental Disabilities*, 14(1), 81–90.

75. Howlin, P., Alcock, J., and Burkin, C. (2005). An 8 year follow-up of a specialist supported employment service for high-ability adults with autism or Asperger syndrome. *Autism*, 9(5), 533–549.

76. Hillier, A., Campbell, H., Mastriani, K., Izzo, M. V., Kool-Tucker, A. K., Cherry, L., and Beversdorf, D. Q. (2007). Two-year evaluation of a vocational support program for adults on the autism spectrum. *Career Development for Exceptional Individuals*, 30(1), 35–47.

disabilities, research suggests that these individuals can develop what are referred to as adaptive skills as they move into competitive employment from supported employment (working in the competitive workforce may be particularly useful for developing adaptive skills).<sup>77</sup>

A small scale European study into good supported employment practice for adults with SEND (aged between 24–54), identified the Supported Employment agency and in particular the intervention of a Job Coach as key to success.<sup>78</sup> Specifically, the research highlighted the important role played by the Job Coach in coordinating support measures helpful to both employer and employee which included assistance with completion of complex paperwork and administrative issues. In two of the ten examples, the Job Coach’s specialised knowledge of diagnosis was of value to the guidance of both employer and employee. Other features identified as good supported employment practice included on-the-job support with specialised training, coordination by the job coach of the agencies involved, job tasting of a range of tasks, wage subsidies/financial support and proactivity by the employer, employment services and other external services.

The Real Opportunities project in the UK<sup>79</sup> was aimed at young people aged 14–25 with “severe and complex needs”, primarily those with an intellectual disability, and those with an autistic spectrum disorder. The project adopted a work preparation

and employment support model delivered by small job coaching teams. The team’s role was to find work experience placements, support people in these to learn work experience tasks, and then to find jobs when the individuals left school. Importantly this project increased skill development by placing individuals into competitive traditional work roles after the supported employment placement. The project was able to show that it is possible to get young people with SEND into multiple supported work experiences and that doing so helps young people build skills. The authors concluded it is an effective vocational learning model and that if effective job coaching services were to be sourced and funded for people aged 16-19 years many more would be able to develop skills and move into paid employment.

### **Paid/unpaid work experience**

The Careers & Enterprise Company will be publishing a new review looking at the evidence base for work experience.<sup>80</sup> However, this reveals there is very little evidence that is specifically aimed at young people with SEND. There is more evidence available from the USA where there is multiple evidence that having one or more paid jobs during secondary school is a strong predictor of post-school employment for those with SEND and these benefits were also found with unpaid work experience.<sup>55</sup> <sup>56 57</sup> There is a reasonable evidence base for work experience helping to develop a student’s self-esteem, teach and develop

77. Stephens, D. L., Collins, M. D., and Dodder, R. A. (2005). A longitudinal study of employment and skill acquisition among individuals with developmental disabilities. *Research in Developmental Disabilities*, 26(5), 469–486.

78. Jones, S., and Morgan, J. (2002) Success in supported employment for people with learning difficulties: A study of good practice in supported employment for people with learning difficulties. Joseph Rowntree Foundation. Available from <https://www.jrf.org.uk/report/success-supported-employment-people-learning-difficulties> [Accessed 21th March 2017].

79. Beyer, S., Meek, A., and Davies, A. (2014). *Regional SEN Transition to Employment Initiative (Real Opportunities): Supported Work Experience and its Impact on Young People with Intellectual Disabilities, their Families and Employers*. UK: Real Opportunities.

80. Buzzeo, J. and Cifci, M. (2017). *Work experience, job shadowing and workplace visits. What Works?*. London: The Careers and Enterprise Company.



academic and technical skills, promote understanding of work place cultures and norms, develop networks for future employment, develop career readiness and contribute to subsequent employment.<sup>27 59</sup>  
<sup>60 61</sup> Work experiences have also been found to help identify the workplace support that young people with disabilities need in later employment.<sup>62</sup>

### Employment preparation programmes

Several reviews have concluded there is multiple evidence that employment preparation programmes have been effective in helping young people with SEND transition into employment.<sup>38</sup>

### Enterprise education

The Team programme by Young Enterprise was independently evaluated using a pre/post-test methodology.<sup>10</sup> Data was collected using a range of methods from 20 schools running the programme; the sample included rural, urban, specialist and mainstream schools of varying sizes and the programme engaged 200 young people with mild to moderate learning difficulties. Both teachers and participants felt that the Team programme was an excellent opportunity for learners to develop and evidence a range of skills for employment with the following demonstrating significant increases after taking part:

- Resilience
- Confidence
- Communication skills
- Entrepreneurial activity

- Organisational skills
- Problem solving skills
- Team working skills
- Financial capability

Additionally activities inherent to the programme encouraged the participants to be self-reflective and be able to evaluate their strengths and weaknesses – a key career management skill.

### Social skills training

Several studies which provide evidence for this form of training's ability to aid transition have been identified.<sup>38</sup> A recent study<sup>10</sup> on the Young Enterprise Team Programme, designed especially for young people with SEND, demonstrated that participation in the programme was associated with improvements to confidence, resilience and communication skills.

### Student focussed planning

#### Self-determination Training

There are a number of studies that show self-determination training is effective

and is associated with a range of positive impacts<sup>81</sup> including academic performance and productivity<sup>82</sup> and post school outcomes<sup>83 84</sup>. It has also been shown to increase the length of time individuals remain in post.<sup>85</sup> Self-determination training may have these impacts because it allows the individuals to understand their disability and set appropriate goals which in turn increases the chance of success.<sup>46</sup>

### Family involvement

Family involvement is substantiated as effective practice.<sup>38</sup> When parents are moderately to highly involved in the transition

planning process, individuals with SEND (moderate to severe) are more likely to earn higher wages, work more hours, remain in employment for longer,<sup>38</sup> have better community adjustment outcomes and live more independently.<sup>86 87 65 88</sup>

81. Martin, J. E., Van Dycke, J., D'Ottavio, M., and Nickerson, K. (2007). The student-directed summary of performance: Increasing student and family involvement in the transition planning process. *Career Development for Exceptional Individuals*, 30(1), 13–26.
82. Konrad, M., Fowler, C. H., Walker, A. R., Test, D. W., and Wood, W. M. (2007). Effects of self-determination interventions on the academic skills of students with learning disabilities. *Learning Disability Quarterly*, 30(2), 89–113.
83. Wehmeyer, M., and Schwartz, M. (1997). Self-determination and positive adult outcomes: A follow-up study of youth with mental retardation or learning disabilities. *Exceptional Children*, 63(2), 245–255.
84. Wehmeyer, M. L., and Palmer, S. B. (2003). Adult outcomes for students with cognitive disabilities three-years after high school: The impact of self-determination. *Education and Training in Developmental Disabilities*, 38(2), 131–144.
85. Martin, J. E., Van Dycke, J., D'Ottavio, M., and Nickerson, K. (2007). The student-directed summary of performance: Increasing student and family involvement in the transition planning process. *Career Development for Exceptional Individuals*, 30(1), 13–26.
86. Schalock, R. L., Holl, C., Elliott, B., and Ross, I. (1992). A longitudinal follow-up of graduates from a rural special education program. *Learning Disability Quarterly*, 15(1), 29–38.
87. Schalock, R. L., Wolzen, B., Ross, I., Elliott, B., Weberl, G., and Peterson, K. (1986). Postsecondary community placement of handicapped students: A five-year follow-up. *Learning Disability Quarterly*, 9(4), 295–303.
88. Sample, P. L. (1998). Post-school outcomes for students with significant emotional disturbance following best-practice transition services. *Behavioral Disorders*, 23, 231–242.

## 6. Lessons for practice



The evidence base identifies five key areas which a successful transition programme should focus on. The following areas should be viewed as a description of proven practice. This does not mean that other approaches do not work. Rather, the evidence base should be used as a stimulus for further innovation.

### **1. Start young and maintain support across the life course/until the young person is established in the labour market**

It is important that transition programmes are started early in secondary school.

As with career education, information, advice and guidance for all young people, those with SEND need time and space to explore their strengths and needs, engage with face to face guidance, explore and develop their own skills, access meaningful employer and employee encounters and have supported work experiences. This needs to be carefully planned, coordinated and managed and will require the interplay of multiple teams, organisations or agencies. This needs to continue until the young person is firmly established within the labour market.

### **2. Ensure access to support (this can include career guidance, teacher support, agency support)**

There is evidence to suggest that taking a 'developmental' approach to transition programmes (where the individual with SEND is continually supported by a dedicated individual or team throughout school and into post school activities)

is more likely to result in a successful transition than what has been termed the 'booster' approach (where the individual with SEND is responsible for their own progression and seeks help as and when they need it). The developmental approach is more likely to ensure that young people with SEND are aware of all the relevant support and developmental opportunities available to them in their area and is more able to facilitate access to these. Schools should ensure dedicated adult support for young people with SEND.

### **3. Involve families in the transition**

There is strong evidence to suggest that involving the individual with SEND's family in transition programming is very important to the success of the programme. Families not only have insight to the young person's unique strengths, needs and capabilities but are also likely to be involved in supporting them through the transition. It is important therefore that they are included in the planning.

#### **4. Provide encounters and experience with employers, working people and workplaces**

As with all young people, multiple encounters with work facilitate effective transitions after school. Young people with SEND are significantly more likely to be employed after school when they have had some form of work experience. To be effective work experience should involve mentoring or individual job coaching in the workplace, have a clear, individualised/personalised training plan for the individuals with SEND and include reinforcement of work-based learning outside of work.

#### **5. Ensure that career and employability learning and support continues in the workplace**

Young people with SEND will continue to require work that is aligned to their evolving strengths, interests and needs and that retains precise expectations and feedback. Clear, personalised training plans that make use of on the job training are required with ongoing assessments of support needs. Mentoring or individual job coaching by trained staff is of benefit.

## 7. How should the evidence base be developed?



There is a lot of good research which we can use to support the development of transition programmes. However, the evidence base is too reliant on evidence from the USA. It is necessary to build a strong culture of research and evaluation of SEND transition programmes in England.

Key areas for further research include:

- the need to properly evaluate the supported internship programmes that now run in the UK and to compare their outcomes to effective programmes in the USA such as the Marriott Foundation's programme.
  - further research on the impacts of careers and enterprise programmes and labour market information on young people with SEND.
  - exploring effective inter-agency working and looking at how this can best be organised in the context of England to support transition.
  - the role of employers, how they can be engaged and how they can be supported through the process of training and skill development.
- Another way in which the evidence base should be developed is through the design of programmes and evaluations. The programmes themselves should be based on logic models which are evidenced as valid and:
  - consider the type and severity of disability as some elements of transition programmes may be more effective for particular types or severity of disability.
  - consider demographic variables such as gender and location which may affect the availability of services and strength of outcomes.
  - consider a range of outcomes including individual, educational, career, employment and community to reflect the wider range of factors which can reflect 'success' for someone with SEND.

In terms of design, programmes and their evaluations should look at larger groups of individuals and where possible include control groups to determine the exact outcomes of participating in programmes.

## 8. Conclusion



Transition programming for young people with SEND provides an essential, individualised set of opportunities for active learning about the self, careers, work and entrepreneurship and can provide a structured environment in which to develop the broad range of life, social and employability skills necessary to transition successfully from school. The evidence suggests that the specific elements of transition programmes that are established as effective are:

- work experience
- supported internships/employment
- employee preparation programmes
- self-determination training
- family involvement

There is some evidence to suggest that social skills training and enterprise education may also be effective. The evidence base highlights the importance of beginning the process early, raising awareness of the availability of face-to-face, personalised guidance, involving the family and developing a multiagency, developmental approach to transition with an individualised plan. Young people with SEND benefit from multiple experiences of work but this must only be embarked on after a careful assessment of the strengths and needs of the individual and development of a structured,

individualised training plan. Careful attention to work experiences are important; they need:

- Clear programme goals
- Clear roles and responsibilities for worksite staff
- On-the-job learning
- Clear, individualised/personalised training plans
- Clear expectations and feedback
- Assessments to identify skills, interests, and support needs
- Reinforcement of work-based learning outside of work
- Appropriate academic, social, and administrative support for all partners
- Mentoring or individual job coaching available in the workplace

When transition programming includes these elements and work experiences are run in this way, the evidence suggests that they are more likely to be effective in achieving their goals.

Nonetheless transition programming remains a resource heavy, complex process which in the UK would benefit from more funding into research, practice and evaluation.

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