

Who we are:

Project Choice is a national **Specialist Post-16 College** providing a person-centred, individually-tailored Supported Internship to young adults with learning difficulties, disabilities and/or Autism. Through the Internship, **16-24 year olds** gain work experience, develop independence skills and increase their employability.

What we do:

Our service is **bespoke, offering tailored support to each Intern**, and employment opportunities are **matched to the individual's skills**. Project Choice aims to empower Interns and build their confidence as individuals in the workplace, while also offering life experience beyond their home and school environments.

Who can apply for the Internship?

The Internship is for 16-24 year olds with SEND needs such as learning difficulties, learning disabilities and autism. There are **no academic requirements** to join the Internship, however individuals will need to have an **aspiration to work** and a **current Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP)** in place. Project Choice will need to be named in the EHCP as the transitioning provision, so parents and/or carers will need to be in discussion with the local commissioning authority for this to be arranged.

What is the engagement process?

Project Choice holds formal awareness sessions at schools and other local authority venues but we are also happy to come and speak with interested young people and parents and/or carers in other settings, e.g. at home or school on a one-to-one basis.

What is the assessment process?

Potential interns will be invited to a fun day for us to meet the young person and assess whether Project Choice can meet their needs.

How long is the Internship?

The Internship is **one academic year** in length and comprises of up to three placements, lasting 10-12 weeks each. Students who successfully complete their Internship will leave the College with an employability qualification accredited by NCFE. And where appropriate, a math and English qualification at a level higher than previously achieved.

What kind of work experience roles are available to Interns?

The Project Choice Supported Internship is delivered within NHS organisations, the independent sector and private business. Project Choice Interns have provided valuable assistance in a huge variety of roles, including:

- Care
- Pharmacy
- Clinical Coding
- Human Resources
- Information Services
- Education
- Grounds Maintenance
- Receptions
- Domestic Services
- Catering
- Post Room
- Central Stores

What does a typical week look like for a Project Choice Intern?

Interns spend four days per week in work, with one day in the classroom. In the classroom, Interns learn about employment and develop employability skills, as well as having study time to improve Maths and English. All of the education is delivered by our in house functional skills team, learning support assistant and college staff.

It is expected that the education day for the Manchester Cohort will be held in at our HEE offices at Piccadilly Place in Central Manchester.

What support is provided?

Interns are supported by a Workplace Mentor (employee of the workplace), Project Coordinator and a Project Manager and job coaches where appropriate.

How are staff trained to support Interns?

Project Choice offers robust stakeholder training which can include:

- Mentor training
- Mental health first aid
- Autism awareness training
- Training in systematic instruction
- Job coach training

We also use job coaches where Interns require additional support.

The College employs specialist tutors directly. We have an ESFA-approved curriculum, and all of our education provision is subject to Ofsted Inspection and DFE regulations. In January 2020 Project Choice was awarded a **Good Provider Rating by Ofsted**.

What support is available at the end of the Internship?

Our staff continue to support our Interns post completion of the Internship. Sustaining employment is key to us, and we are committed to helping Interns achieve their goals.

This support includes:

- Pastoral support
- Professional support in meetings, e.g. appraisals, occupational health, etc.
- Coaching preparation for progression interviews

Within Greater Manchester we have three employers who are ready to offer placements to our interns (HEE North West, Penine Care NHS Trust & The Christie NHS Trust).

Please take a look at our website - <https://www.hee.nhs.uk/our-work/project-choice-supported-internships>

Please take a look at our you tube channel where you can see our interns in action! - <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCsEp7uGQkvhScXNXGSouDug>

We will be hosting some Q&A drop in on:

1. Friday 10th February @ 2pm
2. Friday 24th February @ 2pm
3. Friday 10th March @ 2pm

If you would like to attend please contact me on the email or number below

If you would like to arrange an awareness session for your staff or provision please contact:

Steph Walker – Regional Manager – 07866757262 – Stephanie.walker@hee.nhs.uk

If you would like have a young person who is interested in the provision for a September 2023 start please complete an online application form:

<https://projectchoice-etrack.cloud.maytas.co.uk/etrack/application.aspx?th=n&App0=n&lp=n&Moduleid=A1&AppF=n&rurl=https://www.hee.nhs.uk/our-work/talent-care-widening-participation/supported-internships-project-choice>

Testimonials

Interns:

“Project Choice has made me have hope and also it gave me an idea of what I want to do when I leave the course”

“I feel like an adult. I have travelled to work independently, done my job and travelled home independently – just like the other workers. I’m so proud of myself, I want to keep working”

Parents and Carers:

“The Project Choice Team have gone the extra mile to help him, and I can’t thank the programme enough for helping him make steps to increase his chances of not just having a job, but of reaping all of the benefits that having a job bring”

“We are very grateful to Project Choice for the very caring and down-to-earth way they have provided for our daughter who has moderate learning disabilities and is on the autistic spectrum... We have been especially impressed that she was found a very appropriate work placement at the local hospital and that there appears to be close cooperation and coordination between the Project Choice staff and its management”

“The difference in my son is enormous; he is proud and excited to go to work. He has a purpose and it has transformed his life.”

Employers:

“The student we have worked with fitted into the office atmosphere with ease. It was a great experience for both us and for him too. It was a pleasure to see his confidence grow as he became more involved in the day to day operations”

“Without exception, Project Choice students have showed an unparalleled work ethic. The time invested in their training has shown dividends in the department and it has been a pleasure working with them”