

JULY 2022

CAREERS NEWSLETTER

In this issue:

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- The impact of work experience on students
- Review of this term's careers events
- Supported internships – who are they for?

Our July issue covers services that are available to support our students who have greater needs. Whether this is around support with learning about the options available after completing GCSEs, to help with decision making from our allocated PfA Advisor on what students may wish to do next, there are a number of options available for each and every individual student. We have also covered some information on the value of work experience to hopefully alleviate the fears of work experience and improve engagement. We will also add a write up on the careers events that have taken place to each issue.

If there are any specific areas you would like to know more about in future issues please let us know by emailing:

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Meet Ian Harden...

Ian is a Preparing for Adulthood (PfA) Advisor who works with all Exceptional Ideas students on behalf of Essex County Council to help them prepare for the future. We interviewed Ian to find out more about his role. Here's what he said:

Why do we have a Preparing for Adulthood Team?

The Preparing for Adulthood (PfA) Service supports young people aged 14 to 25 with an Education, Health and Care plan, with preparing for adult life. The PfA Advisors involve the young person's family and their school, college, or other education provision in this preparation. PfA Advisors provide support at key transition points (such as moving from school to college, changing colleges or leaving education). They will explore what a young person likes at school/college; their interests; what they are good at and their ideas for when they leave education. The advice and information is unbiased so that a young person identifies the best option for them. It is focused around the four preparing for adulthood areas: Employment, education and training, good health, community inclusion and independent living

To enable the authority to work towards these outcomes, there are 4 teams in Essex, 1 in each quadrant, north, south, west and mid. I work in the mid team.

Tell us about what you do in your role...

My role consists of engagement with young people, their parents/carers on a 1:1 basis or during EHCP review meetings to help prepare them for moving forward into adulthood. I

advise them on post 16/19 education choices, help them make decisions around employment or career pathways by listening to what they want to do and also match outcomes to their hobbies and interests. This allows me to think outside the box when giving advice and guidance. I generate action plans to summarize our discussions and forward them to the young people and their families/carers.

I also work closely with my education providers and assist them with advice and guidance too and provide vacancies and other opportunities that their students may be interested in.

What does an average day look like for you?

Every day is met with different challenges. Whilst one would argue that a lot of work is similar, you are often met with new challenges and problems to deal with. One day can be spent typing action plans and responding to emails, whilst another I will be in school delivering 1:1 interviews with young people or attending EHCP review meetings. I also conduct home visits to see the young people and their families and deliver my advice and guidance sessions in their homes. I also go into colleges as well to do all the above.

Some days, I can do everything above and that makes for a very hectic schedule, luckily, in some aspects, teams and virtual meetings takes the travel time out of the equation and makes it a little less stressful!

What do you enjoy most about your job?

I enjoy helping people and giving meaningful advice and guidance. I enjoy bringing services and people together to help a young person on their chosen pathway. I also enjoy meeting the young people in person and speaking to them on a 1:1 basis or joining in group sessions in the schools and colleges. Seeing a young person follow through with advice or suggestions that they might want to consider and then achieving it and being happy, is a great moment and makes you feel proud and that you have done a good job.

How will you help our students and their parents?

Throughout their time at the school/college from age 13 to 25, I will see them regularly over their time at the provision. I will see them 1-2 times and maybe more when I conduct drop-in sessions. I will help them and their parents with queries, contact services on their behalf and make referrals and applications for college courses if they cannot do it themselves. I will furnish them with the information to make informed decisions for their futures and support them if they need it. I do a lot of work with parents too.

I will see the students at their EHCP reviews, 1:1 meetings, and drop in sessions that I have across all the sites every 2 months.

How often will our students see you?

Generally, once at a review and 1 x 1:1 meeting if needed. However, if they require more support sessions or request to see me outside of drop in's, I'm always happy to see them on an ad-hoc basis. I will also track the students' progress throughout the year and in the summer term confirm that they have applied for a college course or apprenticeship and update their records.

How can students and parents contact you if they need to?

If anyone would like to contact me, they can email ian.harden@essex.gov.uk or call 0333 0131422 or 07825 995836

Work experience – 10 reasons why it's worth doing!

Our students will all be offered the opportunity to do some work experience during their time with us. We provide the level of support our students need, whether that is full time mentor support 1:1 or someone who can be nearby if support is required. Alternatively, students can attend alone if they prefer this. There are so many reasons why attending a work experience placement can be such a fantastic opportunity:

1. You can improve on some of your transferable skills e.g. listening, communication, time management and prioritisation.
2. You can try out what it is like to have a full-time job for real and learn what an employer expects from their employees.
3. It will give you an opportunity to learn about different industries and jobs as well as challenge your abilities.
4. You will gain excellent experience to add to your CV.
5. A positive work experience will improve your confidence levels and self-esteem.
6. Based on your good performance, your placement would be likely to give you a good reference for any jobs you want to apply for in the future.
7. Trying out different jobs can help you decide what you want (and don't want!) to do as a job.
8. It might even lead to a full time job after you have finished studying.
9. You will get to challenge yourself, you might be surprised by what you can actually do.
10. Work experience helps students see the links between what they are learning and what they need to know for work. It can increase engagement in lessons because the information becomes more relevant or they can see the need to make improvements to meet entry requirements for courses they really want to do.

So next time you are offered the opportunity to do some work experience, whether this is at school or at home during the holidays, don't immediately say no. Think about the positive opportunities that might arise from it and challenge yourselves to try something new.

Careers events – Summer Term

Natural dyes workshop



A combined art and careers trip, this event was due to be a fun trip to a smallholding where the owner grows plants for creating her own natural dyes. What we hadn't really anticipated was that it would pour with rain... ALL DAY!! However, despite this, our students were beautifully behaved and tried very hard to engage in the activity. Even though they weren't able to have a tour of the smallholding to pick their own plants for the process, the students did get the opportunity to learn about the different plants and to dye paper with plants. Some of their efforts are shown here. They also spent some time learning about sustainability in the fashion industry and the impact of this on the environment.

Police careers with PC Andy Holmes, Essex Police

Schools Liaison Officer, PC Andy Holmes came to teach the students about the different types of careers available in the Police Service. Students were impeccably behaved, asked lots of questions and were interested to learn that PC Holmes has grown up struggling with school having to overcome his own learning difficulties. The event was labelled the best careers event ever after Andy allowed students to try on kit, learn how the riot shields are used to and be locked up in the custody unit in the Police Van!



Spotlight on....

Supported Internships

Supported internships are quite similar to Apprenticeships. The main difference between the two is that young people will receive much greater support on a supported internship. To be able to complete a supported internship a student would need to have a current EHCP in place. This makes them a perfect option for someone who isn't quite at the stage of being independent enough to go to college or enter the workplace without support.

Supported internships offer a mix of study and job coaching to enable young people to build workplace skills while studying a course that is related to the work they are doing. While completing a supported internship young people can gain qualifications, develop their confidence and work towards obtaining a good reference. Interns are unpaid but the placements aim to help the young person gain paid employment at the end of the programme. Supported internships are available in a range of job sectors including catering, maintenance, hospitality, retail and horticulture as well as many other areas.

Key dates:

4.10.2022 - Careers event 1: Labour Market Information Game: Learn about different jobs and the salaries that you can expect to be paid for each of these in a fun game that everyone can play.

1.11.2022 – Year 11 mock exams due to start

30.11.2022 - Careers event 2: Workplace Scavenger Hunt: In mixed teams of staff and students, find and photograph a list of different workplaces to win a team prize.

20.12.2022 – Year 11 colleges applications due. While it is always possible to apply to colleges later than this, at Exceptional Ideas we prefer to get our college applications done by the end of term to ensure that we have plenty of time to help our students adjust to new environments, new people and changes to routines as well as get their references done.

Next Issue: December 2022