

Project SEARCH at GSK

The business case for embracing diversity and widening participation in employment

June 2013



Produced by Spark!

Commissioned by London Borough of Hounslow and the Department for Education

Supported by GSK's Project SEARCH Team, HAFAD and West Thames College



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Alongside the Steering Group, host employers at GSK, as well as the young people on the first year of the programme have kindly taken the time to share insights into their experience of Project Search.

Thank you to you all. Any errors in the analysis (hopefully few and far between!) remain the responsibility of the Spark! team.

Foreword

It is well documented that the employment rates of adults with a learning disability have not risen at the same pace as other disability groups. Only 7% of adults with learning disabilities of working age are currently employed. GSK's Project SEARCH programme set out to deliver twelve paid jobs for all the young people by September 2013. Through Project SEARCH the young people recruited to year-long internships are learning relevant, marketable skills while immersed in the day-to-day requirements of GSK's business.

This evaluation report was commissioned by the London Borough of Hounslow as part of the Local Authority's involvement in the final year of the Department for Education-funded RPA (Raising of the Participation Age) trials. These 'locally led delivery projects' (2012-13) have enabled Local Authorities and their partners to test out new approaches to support 16 and 17 year olds in preparation for RPA, which comes into force from September 2013.

Whilst it is too early to evidence whether the 100% employment outcome will be achieved, this research already demonstrates the power of the Project SEARCH approach to advance the Work Readiness of the young people engaged – and four now have their next destination after completing the programme provisionally confirmed; and one has transitioned early into full time employment.

More profoundly our research shows that Project SEARCH has contributed towards a strengthening of the culture and atmosphere at the global HQ of one of the UK's largest employers; their staff now appreciate more than ever the benefits of continuing to build diversity into their workforce.

These encouraging results, nine months into year one, mean GSK are committed and recruiting for year two of the programme.

Despite the tough economic backdrop, when we combine this demonstrable success with changes to the education funding formula, the prospects look brighter than ever for persuading other employers in West London and beyond to adopt Project SEARCH or similar models.

All the project partners look forward to continuing to disseminate the lessons learned. It is hoped that the lessons learned from this project will support the future development of this type of provision both within GSK and within other large employers in Hounslow and beyond.

Andrew Dakers, Director, Spark!

“Not only does this programme increase the employability of the young people involved by unlocking their individual talents, but it helps GSK in its journey to becoming a disability confident organisation.”

Martin Swain, VP
Employee Relations, GSK

1. Context and approach

Raising the Participation Age

Raising of the Participation Age (RPA) was introduced under the 2008 Education and Skills Acts and reinforced within the Coalition Government's White Paper (The Importance of Teaching) in 2010. RPA will be phased in so that from September 2015 all young people will be required to remain in learning until their 18th Birthday (unless they already have a level 3 qualification).

Professor Alison Wolf's independent review of vocational education, commissioned by the Secretary of State for Education, was published in March 2011. Her report considered how vocational education for 14- to 19-year-olds could be improved in order to promote successful progression into the labour market and into higher level education and training routes. The recommendations were wholly accepted by government and have shaped much of the most recent curriculum and funding reforms in education.

Amongst Wolf's recommendations was the introduction of new principles to guide the development of study programmes for post 16 learners to ensure that they gain the skills which will lead to progression into a variety of jobs and further learning. The new criteria and associated funding arrangements will enable (from September 2013) young people to follow learning programmes tailored towards and funded according to their needs, rather than purely based upon qualifications studied. As discussed later in this report, this funding arrangement is likely to be more supportive of work-based learning programmes such as Project SEARCH.

Learners with Learning Difficulties and/or Disabilities and progression to employment

Young people with Learners with Learning Difficulties and/or Disabilities (LLDD) face many difficulties in the transition from a structured school environment to long-term employment and figure disproportionately in data regarding the numbers Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET) and unemployment figures. For example 13% of Hounslow's young people who are NEET have a statement of Special Educational Needs compared to 2% of those in the 16-18 cohort as a whole.

Project Search offers a model which can lead to positive employment outcomes for a range of LLDD.

Project SEARCH – GSK’s response

Project SEARCH is a pioneering work-based learning programme for people with learning disabilities developed in the USA. Project SEARCH’s Core Model Components¹ are as follows:

- Programme success is defined as competitive employment in an integrated setting for each young person on Project SEARCH. (I.e. Year-round work, 20 hours/week or more, Minimum wage or higher)
- A business-led programme. This means that young people learn relevant, marketable skills while immersed in the business and those businesses are active partners, participating without subsidies.
- True collaboration among partner agencies is essential. This leads to seamless transition services and sustainability through braided funding streams. True collaboration requires a willingness among partner organisations to share resources and adapt policies and procedures. The following are active partners:
 - Businesses
 - Education / Schools
 - Vocational Rehabilitation
 - Community Rehabilitation Providers
 - Long-term Support Agencies
 - Families
 - Social Security Administration
- The programme focus is on serving young adults with a variety of learning disabilities.
- Programme participants experience total immersion in the workplace. Young people are on site at the business each school day for a minimum of six hours for an entire academic year.
- Partners provide consistent on-site staff including a special education teacher from the school district and job coaches (usually funded by Vocational Rehabilitation and a supported employment agency and/or the school).
- Data is submitted to a global Project SEARCH database.
- Program activities are tied to these federal IDEA (2004) Indicators:

1 - Graduation

¹ Program Model Fidelity, <http://www.projectsearch.us/OurPROGRAM/ProgramModel.aspx> [Accessed: 3 March 2013]

2 - Dropout Rates

5 - Least Restrictive Environment

8 - Parent Involvement

13 - Compliant (Quality) IEPs and Transition Goals

14 - Post School Outcomes

- Project SEARCH graduates receive effective follow-along services to retain employment.
- Each Project SEARCH programme site has a licensing agreement signed with Project SEARCH Cincinnati through Cincinnati Children's Hospital Medical Center.

GSK, headquartered in Brentford, decided in 2011 to trial the scheme with a number of partners for the first time in the UK private sector. The company aspires to become an exemplar employer of disabled people.

This approach sets Project SEARCH apart from other disability employment projects, which usually begin with disabled people and their advocacy organisations trying to persuade employers to participate. With Project SEARCH and GSK the reverse has been true and a Steering Group chaired by the Global VP Employee Relations, Inclusion and Diversity was formed in January 2012.

Read more at www.projectsearch.us or read Daston, Riehle and Rutkowski (2012) – full references in 'Resources and further reading'.

2. Project SEARCH at GSK

The GSK Project SEARCH programme

The initiative commenced in January 2012 with the formation of the project steering group. Delivery started on site at GSK House in September 2012 with 12 young people with a learning disability starting to receive employability skills training and work experience across a variety of business areas, including security, retail, finance, catering, leisure and information technology.

Project partner roles:

- **Project SEARCH** – Bring the methodology and best practice from the USA;
- **GSK** – Enabling and facilitating the project on the ground GSK has funded staff time, provision of training space within their HQ and import of the methodology from the USA. They have actively championed the project to secure placements within their business and supply chain;
- **West Thames College** – Drew down funding from the Skills Funding Agency to recruit and outplace a specialist tutor at GSK House;
- **Hammersmith and Fulham Action on Disability (HAFAD)** – This local disabled peoples' organisation secured a £60,000 grant from the Trust for London for the job coach to be based at GSK House providing one-to-one support to each participant to progress them into paid employment;
- **Spark! London's Original Education Business Partnership** – Hosted at GSK House, Spark! supported the company in the start-up phase of the project engaging local special schools and West Thames College, as well as providing advice and support on relevant vocational qualifications. Spark! was awarded a £10,000 grant by the Department for Education/ London Borough of Hounslow to support the project and evaluate its success as a pilot response to the Raising of the Participation Age.

Recruitment and selection

The intern recruitment and selection process involved:

- **An open evening at West Thames College** for young people and their parents was attended by over 100 people. Application forms were given out and questions answered. 20 young people applied with 12 being recruited. In year two 29 young people applied for 12 places.

“I am positive that working in partnership in this way has a real and lasting impact for the 12 young individuals. The initiative shows that with the right attitude and support from business disabled people can and want to work.”

Kamran Mallick,
Director, HAFAD

- **An open evening also took place at GSK House** for potential applicants.
- **An assessment day at GSK House** for shortlisted candidates with interviews, practical exercises and informal assessment.
- **Feedback** was given to all unsuccessful candidates.

In the year two recruitment process, GSK and West Thames College have been more targeted in which of the applicants are most likely to benefit from the programme. This builds on the experience of year one.

Profiles of the young people

Twelve young people were recruited: 2 from Hammersmith and Fulham, 3 from Richmond, 1 from Ealing and 6 from London Borough of Hounslow. Their average age on starting the programme was 18 and nine months. The youngest participant was 18 and the oldest 24. Eight young men and four young women were recruited. The young people have a variety of learning disabilities including Downs Syndrome and Autism. Their average academic attainment level was typically Entry 2.

Process of engaging staff and young people

The process of engaging staff to volunteer as mentors on the programme was initiated with a presentation by the Business Liaison Co-ordinator from GSK. This was followed up further workshops led by the Business Liaison Co-ordinator and individual meetings with host managers and mentors. Peer support to the young people was provided by volunteers from GSK's Industrial Placement programme.

Induction

The young people's induction started on 3 September 2012 and included an introduction to the City & Guilds Employability and Personal Development qualification, initial assessment at West Thames College, GSK House orientation and team building activities. The tutors did a great job of getting young people ready for placement which they started on Monday 1 October 2012. In the second year of the programme the length of the induction will be reduced as it is felt that so long in the classroom did not deliver optimal outcomes.

Learning programme structure

The young people's day starts at 9am with an hour and a half of qualification work in the classroom. They then move into their workplaces. The working day lengthened as the year went on. At the start of the year their working day commenced at 10.30am and by the end of the year 9.30am. Initially they had a finish time of 3pm and towards the end of the programme this was 3.30pm. A debrief is held at the end of the day where pastoral issues and work preparation is carried out.

The learners are all undertaking the City & Guilds Employability and Personal Development qualification at Entry 2 or Entry 3. All 12 young people will complete the qualification. Spark! had previously extensively road tested this qualification in three local schools through its Spark! Factor programme.

Work experience opportunities

The programme aimed to offer three 'rotations' each of up to 10 weeks in length. GSK's Inclusion & Diversity Manager led on identifying placement hosts. Partner service providers based at GSK House were encouraged to offer rotations as well as internal departments. The majority of the rotations have been with partner service providers, although the balance continues to evolve over time.

As the programme developed it became clear that 10 week placements were going to be difficult to source for the whole year. As such placements have been organised in 2013 that see some interns splitting their days between different areas of the business. This has had the added advantage that it is increasing the flexible working abilities of the young people.

Travel and lunch arrangements

All the young people have Freedom Passes for travel. Over the summer 2012, four of the young people on programme were supported by the Travel Buddy Service at London Borough of Hounslow to develop safety awareness and independent travel training skills.

Generally the young people bring lunch from home. A few buy their own lunch, just as they would if they were on campus at West Thames College.

Evolving the Project SEARCH methodology

The US Project SEARCH approach has been adapted in the following ways to meet the local requirements of GSK:

- The programme started by asking, for example, for five days a week of hosting from September to December; this has now evolved so that young people can now be placed for shorter chunks of time with particular teams.
- The promotion of the programme has shifted in some instances to encouraging employee volunteers to share their expertise with young people on Project SEARCH and teaching them new skills through a real work activity. This way they are picking up a wider range of marketable skills.
- The City & Guilds Employability and Personal Development qualification has been a successful addition to the Project SEARCH model giving the young people the confidence that they are successful learners and can go on to learn more. (See further detail below.)

Outcomes

The GSK project steering group's objective is that 100% of the young people end up in employment and achieving the qualification. This is ambitious – higher than the past outcomes in the USA at 80%² and recent UK results at 33%³.

Employment opportunities were brokered from January 2013 onwards by HAFAD. Four of the young people now have their next destination after completing the programme provisionally confirmed; and one has transitioned early into full time employment. Two young people left the programme early, but completed their City & Guilds Employability & Personal Development qualification.

² Project SEARCH US has been reported to be very successful. Eighty per cent of interns who completed the programme in 2006-07 are now reported to be in full time employment. (GODI, 2012)

³ Part-time and full time employment from 2009-11 pilots (GODI, 2012)

3. Research methodology

Approach to evaluation

Our research approach has combined quantitative and qualitative data gathered through surveys, participation in project meetings, one to one interviews, intern portfolios and desk research. Given the relatively small number of host employers and interns involved in the programme the data is not statistically significant and should be viewed alongside other research into the effectiveness of Project SEARCH and similar models.

As Spark! has had representation on the Project Steering Group since its inception, this means that we have also been involved in the same action learning journey as the rest of the project team.

Data sources

Our research has drawn on the following data sources:

- Desk research – national study on Project SEARCH and reports on changing education funding in UK
- Baseline survey (Readiness for Work questionnaire)
- Structured interviews with mentors
- Recorded feedback from classroom sessions
- Informal records/quotes captured in newsletters, blog and videos

Timeline for data collection

Data and insights in this report have been gathered between January 2012 and March 2013.

4. Data and analysis

Project SEARCH around the UK

Research for the Government Office for Disability Issues (GODI, February 2012) looking at recent Project SEARCH delivery in the UK showed:

- One-in three interns gained either full-time or part-time employment as a result of participating in the Project SEARCH demonstration year.
- A Project SEARCH employment rate higher than current estimates of the employment for people with learning disabilities (between 8 per cent and 16 per cent).
- Project SEARCH interns reported a positive experience of the programme.
- Parents, project partners and interns themselves all reported that their confidence, motivation, decision making, self-esteem and health had all improved as a direct result of being on the programme.

Research by Social Value Lab for North Lanarkshire Council (April 2013) concluded that for every pound of investment in Project SEARCH £3.96 social value is created. Furthermore, they concluded that if a duration of five years is assumed, not unlikely, the SROI ratio increases to £5.59:£1.

The changing education funding picture in the UK

The GODI research found the biggest challenge for many of the demonstration sites was the availability of funding for Project SEARCH delivery. Assuming a group size of ten interns in a site it costs around £10,500 per participant per year.

In the first year of the programme (2012/13) West Thames College assigned a specialist teacher full time to the programme – and the college's teachers' contracts assume delivery of 840 hours. While the teacher has been providing 1:1 support on top of the group teaching, the model has not been cost effective and there is work to be done in designing a delivery model which better reflects the funding.

In the second year of the programme, from September 2013, for young people aged 16-18 or 19-24 with High Needs, West Thames College will draw down £4,000 per student. Funding guidance states that this is to deliver between 540 and 600 guided learning hours over the year. The programme to be delivered within those hours includes a vocational qualification, English and Maths at the appropriate level, employability skills, including work experience and other enrichment opportunities.

“Tijo is quite a lively character... He’s been really ... helping our team to clear heavy workload and meet deadlines. He has a very good memory... a great asset, especially with sorting mail.”

Glen Briggs,
Tijo’s Manager

In addition to the £4,000 per student, each student can trigger £6,000 Additional Learning Support (provided this has been agreed by their resident Local Authority) and in some cases further additional learning support might be allocated depending on the level of need. This is to be used to meet the individual support needs of the student which will vary considerably from student to student. This can mean 1:1 support outside the classroom or in-class support, for example.

The young people's experience at GSK

Young people's views starting the programme

The young people completed a survey prior to starting the first rotation. They were supported in completing this survey with the help of illustrative examples to explain what was meant by often quite complex questions and language. The data should be read with some caution given that the ability to self-reflect can be very limited in a number of the young people on the programme.

Generally this indicated that the cohort were confident about being successful in life, getting a job, their work experience and about themselves. Where there was striking neutrality what the idea of 'doing things on their own' (see Fig.1).

The young people were less confident when it came to their resilience and determination. The majority of young people were happy or neutral about the idea of 'keeping their cool under pressure', not giving up on something difficult, concentrating on a task and being organised. The majority of young people were more positive, happy, about getting things done on time (see Fig. 2).

Figure 1. Confidence - How confident do you feel.....?

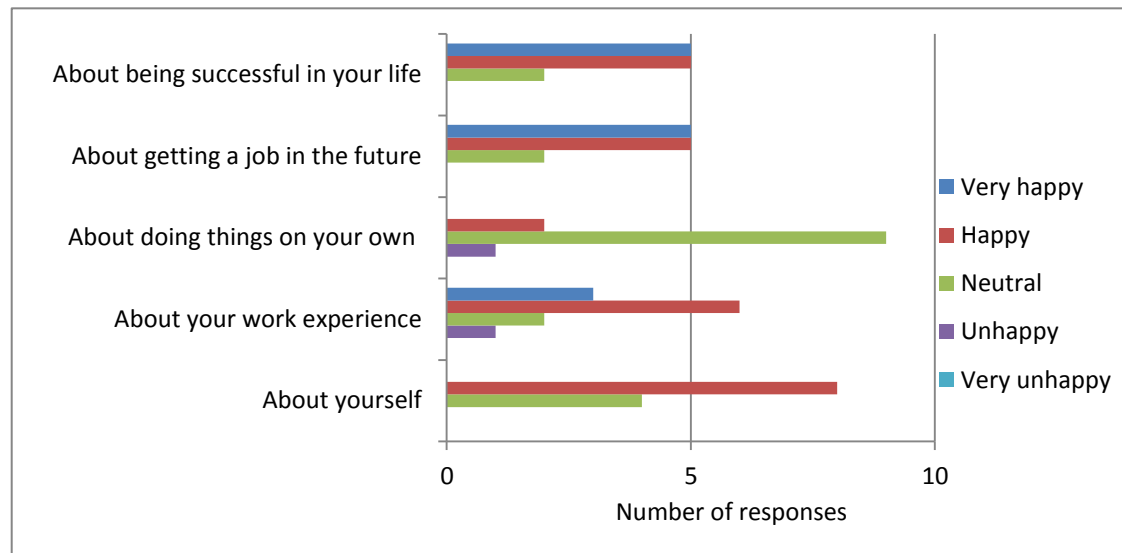
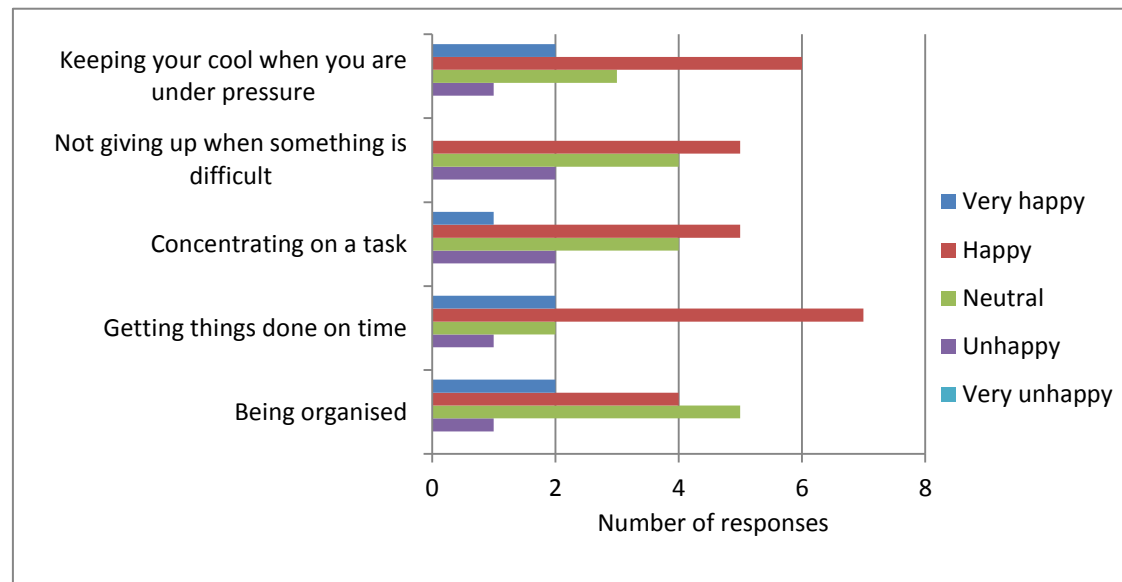
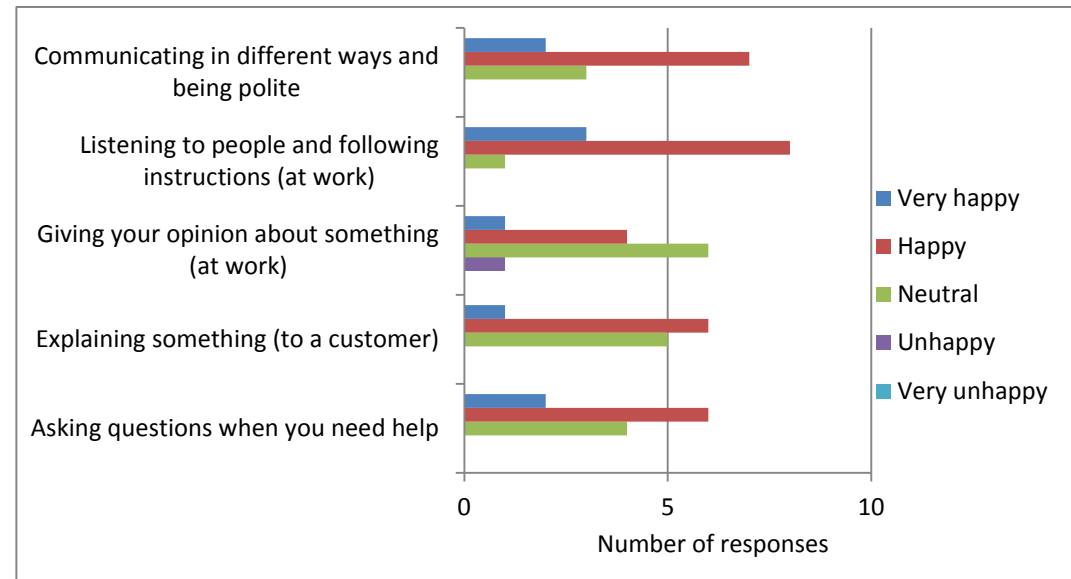


Figure 2. Resilience and Determination - How good are you at.....?



When it came to communication, a majority of young people felt happy about the prospect of being polite, listening to people and following instructions. The majority of young people were happy or neutral about the prospect of giving their opinion about something at work, explaining something to a customer and asking questions when they need help (see Fig. 3).

Figure 3. Communication Skills - How do you feel about?



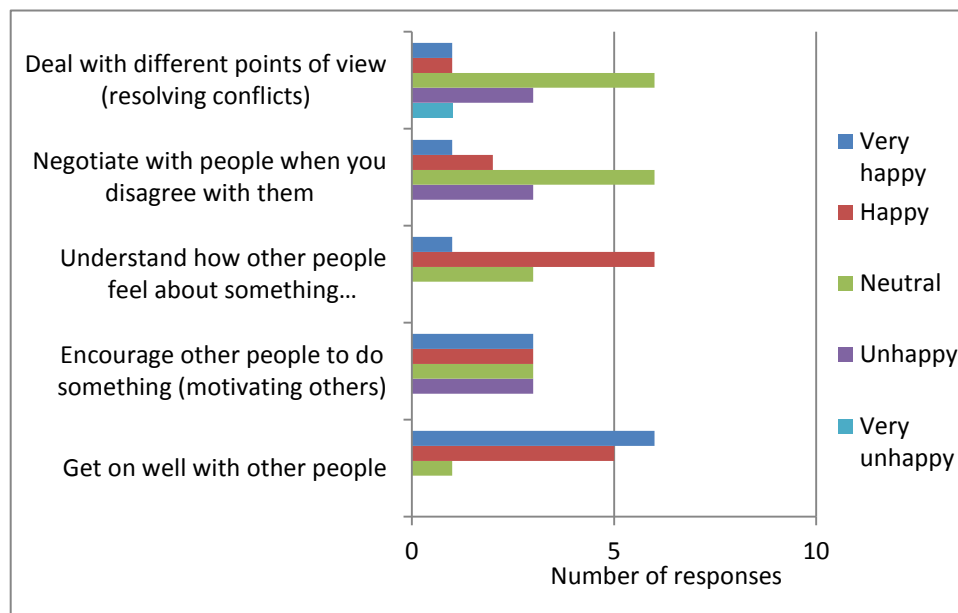
In the skills area of problem-solving and creativity, the majority of young people felt happy or neutral about setting and achieving goals, research, suggesting different ways of doing things and deciding a course of action. The majority of young people felt happy about solving problems, identifying risks and trying something learnt in a new situation (see Fig. 4).

Figure 4. Planning, Problem solving and Creativity - How good are you at.....?



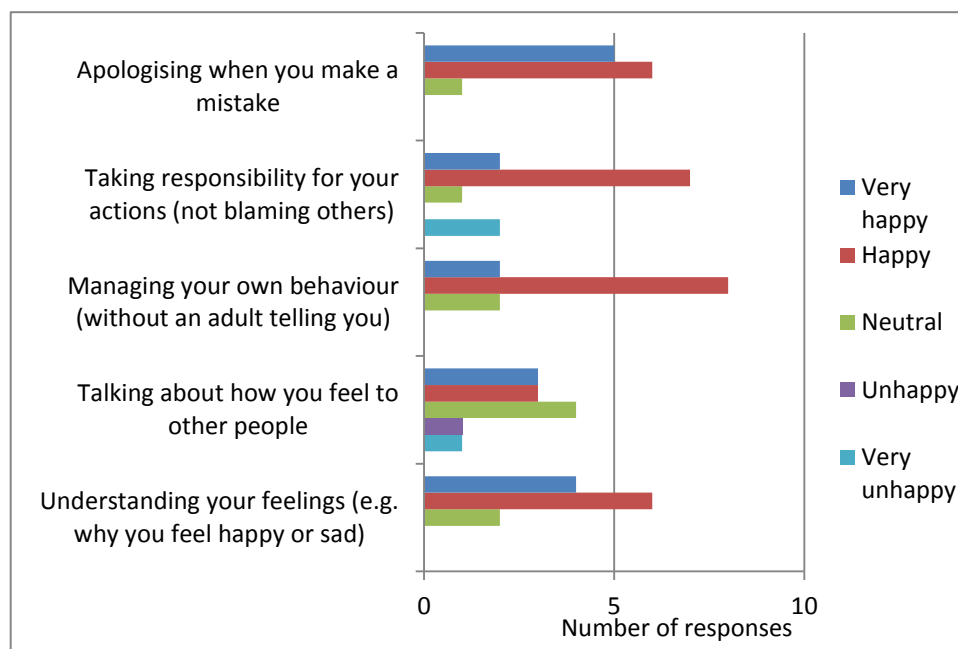
The majority of young people were happy or very happy with their sense of ease at 'getting on with other people'. The majority were happy or neutral about their ability to 'understand how other people feel about something'. The majority were less confident, expressing neutral or unhappy emotions about 'dealing with different points of view' and 'negotiating with people when you disagree with them'. Feelings were completely divided over the prospect of 'encouraging others to do something' (see Fig. 5).

Figure 5. Relationships and Leadership - How easy do you find it to....?



When it came to managing their feelings, a majority of learners were very happy or happy about understanding their feelings, managing their own behaviour, taking responsibility for their actions and apologising when they make a mistake. Feelings were divided from very unhappy to very happy about the idea of talking about how they feel to others (see Fig. 6).

Figure 6. Managing your Feelings - How good are you at...?



Classroom insights

The City & Guilds Employability and Personal Development qualification has provided a framework to supplement Project SEARCH. The qualification aligned well to the Project SEARCH model and the demands of the GSK workplace. Students covered three units during the year at Entry 2 or 3 level:

Planning for progression

Unit aims - To help the learner to plan for progression by understanding his/her programme and the facilities and support available and by being able to recognise and build on personal strengths.

Learning outcomes - There are four learning outcomes to this unit. The learner will be able to:

1. Understand own study or training programme
2. Know the facilities and support available in the place of study or training
3. Recognise personal strengths (skills, qualities and attitudes) needed for learning and work
4. Agree an action plan for self improvement

Effective skills, qualities and attitudes for learning and work

Unit aims - To help the learner to be able to demonstrate positive qualities, attitudes and behaviours for learning and work, to understand why effective communication is important and to be able to work effectively under frequent supervision.

Learning outcomes - There are three learning outcomes to this unit. The learner will be able to:

1. Demonstrate a range of positive qualities, attitudes and behaviour for learning and work
2. Understand why effective communication is important
3. Work effectively under frequent supervision

Career planning and making applications

Unit aims - To help the learner to be able to recognise and apply for a suitable job, training programme or course.

Learning outcomes - There are five learning outcomes to this unit. The learner will be able to:

1. Agree a suitable career pathway
2. Know where to look for a job, training programme or course
3. Recognise suitable jobs or training opportunities
4. Apply for a job, training placement or course
5. Understand the interview process

The GSK employers' perspective

Interviews with GSK mentors

Of twelve host employers within the GSK business that were invited to participate in the survey, seven were able to meet with our interviewers. Interviews were conducted face-to-face at GSK House in Brentford and responses have been made anonymous.

Key conclusions from a host employer's perspective:

- Successful intern roles can be shaped out of existing departmental workload.
- On average host employer confidence improved by thirty-one percent in the second rotation.
- An initial host employer training session was attended by all hosts except for one that could not find the time to attend. This covered:
 - Learning disabilities
 - The Safeguarding of Vulnerable Groups Act 2006
 - General disability awareness
 - Workplace risk assessments
 - Accessibility
 - Unconscious Bias
 - Inclusion and Diversity
 - Discussion of any other expectations/ concerns
- Opportunities exist to improve the bespoke training provided to host employers in the business on how best to support the needs of specific young people and their behaviours. Determining how much information about each young person is appropriate, relevant or necessary to share can be challenging.
- There is an overwhelming sense of positivity about how the programme has improved working relationships within teams and also positively impacted on the culture and atmosphere at GSK House.
- Senior staff at service partner organisations and within GSK backed the programme before it was launched. The survey data indicates

Figure 7. On a scale of 1 to 10, how confident were you taking on your first young person and on the same scale how confident were you taking on your second young person?

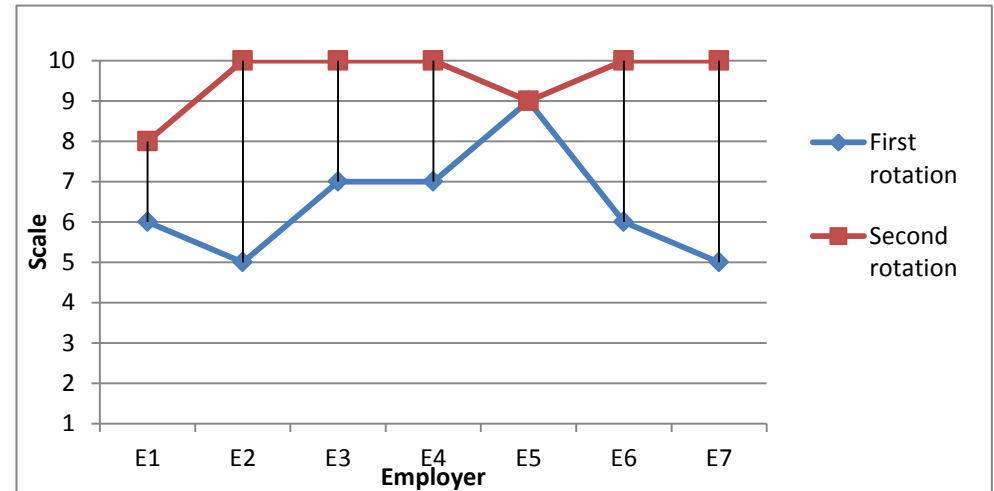
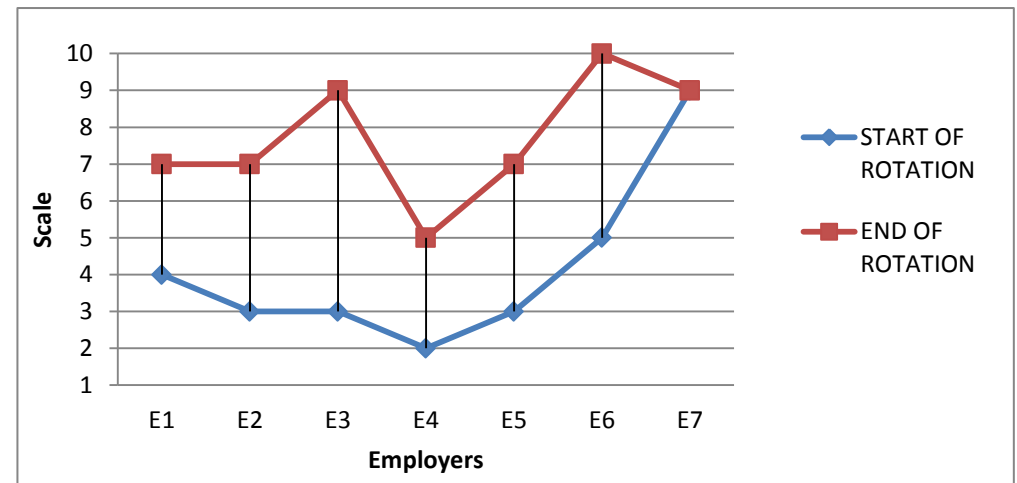


Figure 8. On a scale of 1 to 10, with 1 being 'not work ready' and 10 being 'work ready', how work ready to you feel the young person was at the beginning and again on the same scale how 'work ready' do you think the young person is now?



that a majority of more junior managers felt they were generally told to take part, rather than volunteering to participate in the programme. This may be something that changes in year 2 of the programme as awareness and confidence grows.

- Issues faced by host employers have varied from external factors affecting the learners, to behaviour and on the job challenges.
- Interns were reported to successfully be completing tasks, but some were sometimes finding it difficult to concentrate.
- Training and support was delivered to interns through 1 to 1 demonstrations, how to guides, mentoring, supervision and positive feedback.
- It had proven possible for some, but not all the interns, to be given opportunities across the whole team in which they were placed.
- Internships had provided a wide range of opportunities for the young people to learn to work independently.
- Communications and customer service skills are examples of where host employers felt a bit more training and development before young started on placement would be helpful. These skills area are being addressed by the programme tutors through role play exercises, but ultimately these skills need to develop through the on the job placements.
- Host employer confidence in their ability to host a young person increased substantially between the first and second placement (see Fig. 7).
- Host employer confidence in the learners' 'readiness for work' generally showed a marked improvement, thirty-six percent, between the start and end of the placement (see Fig. 8).



5. Lessons learned and future potential

A range of lessons can be learned to inform the development of Project SEARCH at GSK, as well as when it is rolled to other employers.

What went well...

- An overwhelming sense of positivity about how the Project SEARCH programme has improved working relationships within teams and also positively impacted on the culture and atmosphere at GSK House; staff now appreciate more than ever the benefits of continuing to build diversity into their workforce.

- The induction programme helped learners take up their placements, feel comfortable in GSK House environment and feel confident about the journey ahead.
- Training and support was delivered to young people through 1:1 demonstrations, how to guides, mentoring, supervision and positive feedback.
- Host employer confidence in their ability to host a young person increased substantially between the first and second placement as did their confidence in the learners' 'readiness for work'
- The City & Guilds Employability and Personal Development qualification has been a successful addition to the Project SEARCH model giving the young people the confidence that they are successful learners and can go on to learn more. The programme provides an experiential learning journey where they can bring insights discovered back into the classroom on a continual basis incorporating this back into their qualification evidence portfolios. One learner has gone on to do a three day Passenger Assistance Training course.
- Regular meetings of the Steering Group provided a focal point for leadership and development of the programme, bringing together a wide range of stakeholder expertise and perspectives from within and outside GSK.
- The Project SEARCH model was refined to ensure that it worked successfully in the GSK context, for example, transitioning to the young people undertaking a variety of placements across the business simultaneously. This was more manageable from a host employer perspective and developed the young people's ability to work flexibly in a number of contexts.
- Critically four young people have their next destination after completing the programme provisionally confirmed; and one has transitioned early into full time employment.

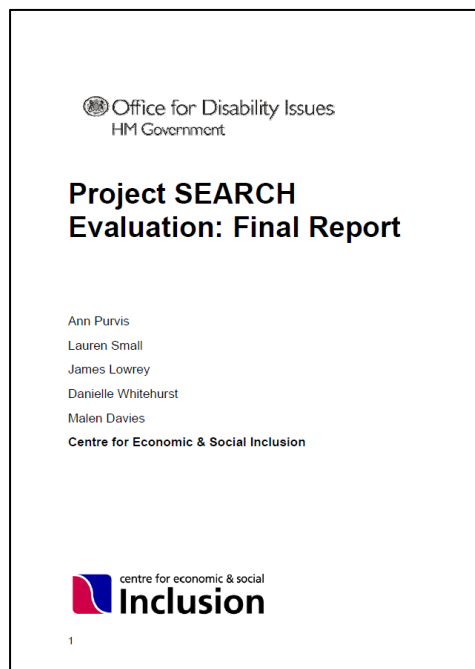
Even better if...

- In the year two recruitment process the project team has been more targeted in which of the applicants are more likely to benefit from the programme. This already builds on the experience of year one.
- The project team continue to reframe how the placements are introduced to host employers: The young people are here to learn from hosts and be taught new skills in a business environment. This resource intensity is leading to a greater diversity in the length of placements.
- The team improve the bespoke training provided to host employers in the business on how best to support the needs of specific young people and their behaviours. However, determining how much information about each young person is appropriate, relevant or necessary to share can be challenging.

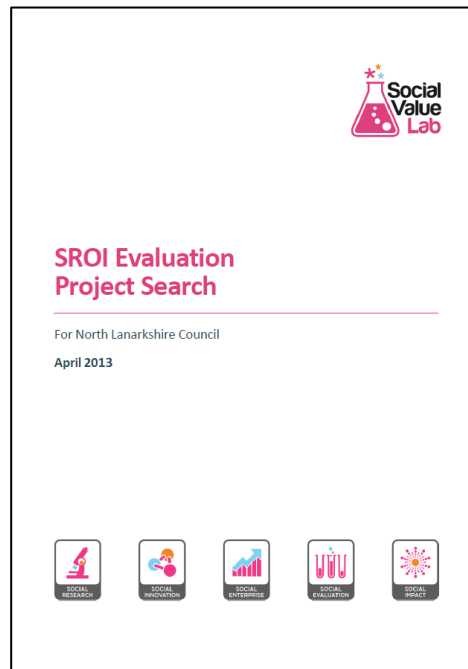
Resources and further reading

Programme teaching resources, Recorded Observation resources and Young people survey available on request from Lorna Misra lorna.j.misra@gsk.com

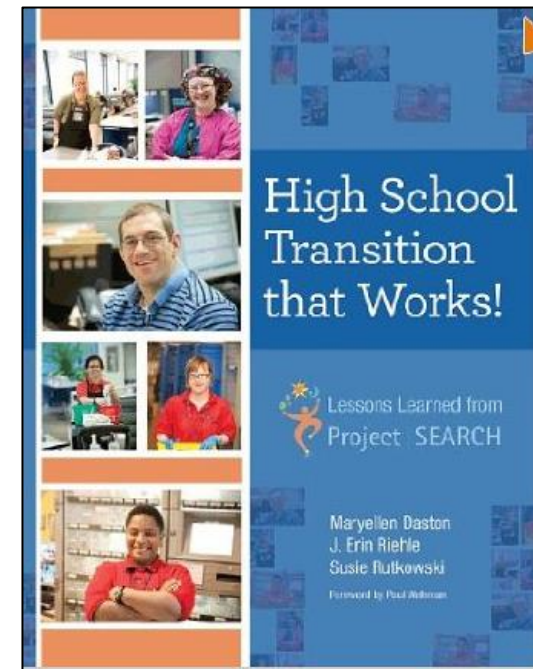
The employee survey template is available on request from andrew.dakers@sparklondon.org



Project SEARCH Evaluation: Final Report, February 2012, ODI and the Centre for Economic and Social Inclusion
<http://odi.dwp.gov.uk/docs/wor/pro/project-search-report.pdf>



SROI Evaluation Project Search, April 2012, Social Value Lab for North Lanarkshire Council
http://www.employabilityinscotland.com/media/210812/sroi_report_project_search_finalv2.pdf



High School Transition that Works! Lessons Learned from Project SEARCH, 2012, Daston, Riehle and Rutkowski
<http://www.amazon.co.uk/High-School-Transition-That-Works/dp/1598572490/>



Formerly Hounslow Education Business Partnership, Spark! was founded in 1980 and has been working with young people, schools and businesses creating new opportunities and igniting careers for over thirty years.

GSK House, 980 Great West Road, Brentford, TW8 9GS

Company Number: 7409565 | Charity number: 1138697