

Evaluation of Project Search

In order to monitor how Project Search works in practice for all those involved and determine the benefits of the model, Government will evaluate the results and benefits that the sites deliver. From this we will develop a 'how to' guide which will be used to support sites in a possible future roll out of Project Search.

The evaluation will be led by the Office for Disability Issues and will be carried out by the Centre for Economic and Social Inclusion who are on the DWP Research Framework.

Aims of the evaluation

The Project Search evaluation will aim to:

- demonstrate whether Project Search delivers employment outcomes for people with moderate to severe learning disabilities; these outcomes may include:
 - obtaining permanent paid work with the host organisation or another employer
 - increasing employability by gaining new transferable skills/qualifications
 - progression to other relevant training and education opportunities
- highlight the key success factors needed to make the Project Search model work in practice and make recommendations to inform a possible future national roll out of Project Search
- provide evidence of the benefits to employers that can be used to make a business case for employing people with learning disabilities
- identify the main costs of implementing the Project Search model and describe how it is funded in the different sites to government and public services (at national and local level) and to employers
- identify common themes, issues/barriers, lessons learnt and good practice in assessing the effectiveness of the projects including:
 - partnership working
 - funding models for tutors and job coaches
 - changes in organisational policy, practice and culture
- describe the expectations and experiences of interns, practitioners (ie tutors, job coaches), employers (including

mentors, managers and other staff), the families and carers of interns

- show how Project Search can improve the lives of participants and their families/carers by increasing confidence, changing attitudes, encouraging independent living through social activities, going out, travel, etc.

Evaluation methods

The evaluation will involve collection of data from all the sites, for example to monitor employment outcomes and information on costs. There will also be in-depth research in 4 of the sites – these are two of the established sites at the Norfolk & Norwich University Hospital and NORSE, plus two of the new sites in Kent and Manchester. We will also be conducting telephone interviews across all sites to look at specific topics and differences in how the model is applied for example between schools and colleges. The fieldwork will take place in 3 stages spanning the Project Search to enable us to see how things change and develop over the year.

Timetable

The final report will be published in the autumn 2011.

Further information

For further information about the Project Search evaluation contact Nick Campbell in the Office for Disability Issues (nicholas.campbell@dwp.gsi.gov.uk).