

## SOCIAL SERVICES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

<b>Date of Meeting</b>	22 <sup>nd</sup> October 2020
<b>Report Subject</b>	Project SEARCH in Flintshire
<b>Cabinet Member</b>	Cabinet Member for Social Services
<b>Report Author</b>	Chief Officer (Social Services)
<b>Type of report</b>	Operational

### **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

Only 2% of young people with a Learning Disability in Wales are in paid employment, but Project SEARCH Flintshire aims to change that.

Project SEARCH is an internationally recognised program dedicated to building a workforce that includes people with disabilities.

Project SEARCH in Flintshire is a partnership between Flintshire County Council, Hft, Clwyd Alyn Housing Association and Coleg Cambria which supports young people ages 18-24 access training and work opportunities to support them to access meaningful, paid employment.

On completion of the programme, the young people, many with significant learning disabilities, are employed in non-traditional, complex and rewarding jobs at above 16 hours a week, enabling them to have the skills and resources to have control over their lives in to adulthood.

The hard work of the Intern's and the staff team supporting them has now paid off, with 7 young adults with Learning Disabilities and Autism from Flintshire celebrating their graduation from the Project SEARCH programme on 1<sup>st</sup> September 2020. Many of the interns are now moving in to employment they have secured.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

1	That the Committee notes the progress made through the service partnership with Hft, and the success of the interns in year 1 of the programme.
2	For Members to Champion the programme and support and encourage the development of internships opportunities across the Council.

## REPORT DETAILS

<b>1.00</b>	<b>Project SEARCH in Flintshire</b>
1.01	<p>Project SEARCH is an internationally recognised program dedicated to building a workforce that includes people with disabilities. The program was established in 1996 at Cincinnati Children's Hospital Medical Centre to address staff turnover in entry-level support positions. The successful model has been replicated in hospitals, banks, universities, and businesses in more than 500 locations in the U.S. and abroad. Flintshire's project search is one of only a few programming operating in Wales.</p> <p>Designed as a nine-month unpaid internship program, Project SEARCH places interns in real-world work settings where they learn all aspects of gaining and maintaining employment. Interns are young people aged 18-24 with a Learning Disability.</p> <p>A series of three internships lasting 10-12 weeks allows interns to explore careers and develop marketable job skills. They receive support from department mentors, skills trainers, and worksite accommodations and adaptations. The ultimate goal is for each intern is to secure competitive employment within their community. The program provides individualised job development that is based on the intern's experiences, strengths, and skills.</p> <p>The goal of Project SEARCH is to immerse the interns in a true work environment as much as possible. This includes going through initial induction and training, shadowing other employees, taking normal breaks, eating lunch with peers, signing in and out, providing and wearing the correct uniform, dealing with a supervisor and being evaluated on performance.</p> <p>On completion of the programme, the young people, many with significant learning disabilities, are employed in non-traditional, complex and rewarding jobs at above 16 hours a week, enabling them to have the skills and resources to have control over their lives in to adulthood.</p>
1.02	Project SEARCH in Flintshire is a partnership between Flintshire County Council, Hft, Clwyd Alyn Housing Association and Coleg Cambria. Interns participate in the nine-month employment program in place of a typical school year assignment or adult training program and are referred to as Project SEARCH interns.

	<p>Each intern works in up to three placements during the course of their time in the program. During the internship, the intern learns job-specific skills while having the opportunity to put employability skills into practice.</p> <p>The Interns develop employability skills in a designated classroom at Llys Raddington with a Tutor from Coleg Cambria, and learn job related skills while participating in a variety of internships. These internships included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• McDonald Flint</li> <li>• Court House Café, Clwyd Alyn, Flint</li> <li>• Café, activities assistant and housekeeping duties and at Llys Raddington</li> <li>• Admin duties in Children’s Services and Housing at Council Offices in Flint</li> <li>• Café and pool side at Jade Jones Pavilion with Aura and Newydd</li> </ul> <p>During the internship, appointed mentors, supported by Project SEARCH staff, work with the interns to demonstrate the necessary skills and tasks for the role.</p>
1.03	<p>The pandemic significantly impacted the programme, with workplaces closing down and a number of the interns self-isolating.</p> <p>However, the programme did not stop during this time. The young interns, supported by the tutor and job coaches have continued completing work, updating their CVs and applying for work.</p>
1.04	<p>Their hard work has paid off, with 7 young adults with learning disabilities and autism from Flintshire have celebrated graduating from DFN Project SEARCH programme at an online Graduation on 1<sup>st</sup> September 2020.</p>
1.05	<p>Many of the interns have now gone on to paid employment.</p> <p>O has secured a position in NEWCES stores and is assisting with the delivery of PPE and equipment in the community.</p> <p>L has completed a work trial at a local hotel, and is now moving in to independent living with other young people from the programme.</p> <p>E has an interview at a local restaurant.</p> <p>G made a lasting impression at McDonalds and he has secured a permanent post. He will begin work when it is appropriate to do so.</p> <p>L has been successful in securing a position at Llys Raddington as an Activities Assistant.</p> <p>R will be volunteering at Hwb Cyfle whilst a position is being secured at Clwyd Alyn.</p> <p>J continues to be supported to apply for work by the Job Coaches from Hft.</p>
1.06	<p>The young people have greatly enjoyed their time on the programme and the variety of opportunities they have been able to take part in.</p> <p>At the graduation, a number of the Interns commented that the programme has helped them to grow in confidence, found new friends and independence, and that they felt they would not be where they are now</p>

	without their involvement in Project SEARCH. There was also heartfelt thanks from the Interns and their Parents to the staff who have supported the young people along their journey. We continue to support last year cohort in the search for paid work.
1.07	<p>We are now preparing for the second year of Project SEARCH. Rotations are being secured across partners, building on those secured last year. New internships include opportunities in Benefits in County Hall and with Customer Services/Connects and the Library at Connah's Quay.</p> <p>We are continuing to search for additional opportunities across our teams.</p>
1.08	<p>We continue to seek opportunities for internships and employment within the council to fulfil our commitment to the amazing young people who are part of the programme. New internships include an opportunity in Benefits in County Hall, and with Customer Services/Connects and the Library in Connah's Quay.</p> <p>Due to the pandemic, the classroom will be based at Coleg Cambria's Northop campus until the classroom at Lllys Raddington can be safely accessed.</p>
1.09	<p>We are now scoping the development a programme to support those aged 25yrs and over, who may have not been able to access this type of opportunity in the past.</p> <p>This will be the first programme of its type in Europe.</p>

<b>2.00</b>	<b>RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS</b>
2.01	Project SEARCH is part of the Hft contract for the delivery of Learning Disabilities and contributes to the services Social Value.
2.02	Staff have invested time in supporting the individuals thrive in their placements by becoming mentors. Those acting as mentors will also be offered additional training as part of the next programme, to include accessing ILM in Management, Supervision, Autism Awareness and a Mentoring qualification through our Corporate Training Team.

<b>3.00</b>	<b>IMPACT ASSESSMENT AND RISK MANAGEMENT</b>
3.01	None

<b>4.00</b>	<b>CONSULTATIONS REQUIRED / CARRIED OUT</b>
4.01	The programme is overseen by representatives from all partners. And meet at regular Steering Groups.

	The young people meet with their tutors and job coaches to develop their CVs and access additional training.
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<b>5.00</b>	<b>APPENDICES</b>
5.01	None

<b>6.00</b>	<b>LIST OF ACCESSIBLE BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS</b>
6.01	<p>Project SEARCH website <a href="https://www.dfnprojectsearch.org/">https://www.dfnprojectsearch.org/</a></p> <p>Hft Flintshire Facebook Page <a href="https://www.facebook.com/HftFlintshire">https://www.facebook.com/HftFlintshire</a></p> <p>Image of the Graduates – Class of 2020 <a href="https://www.facebook.com/HftFlintshire/photos/a.182097552405621/661290321153006/">https://www.facebook.com/HftFlintshire/photos/a.182097552405621/661290321153006/</a></p>

<b>7.00</b>	<b>GLOSSARY OF TERMS</b>
7.01	Interns – Young people with Learning Disabilities taking part in Project SEARCH
7.02	Hft – Hft have operated the Council’s Learning Disability and Work Opportunities Services since 2018.