



The Role of an Embedded Job Coach Barts Health NHS Trust, London

This case study looks at why Barts Health NHS Trust made the decision to employ an embedded job coach to support young people who have completed their supported internships and moved onto employment, as well as how this role is funded and its impact.

Introduction

Barts Health NHS Trust, one of the largest hospital trusts in England, comprises five hospitals. It has been a Project SEARCH site since 2013 and currently has 54 young people employed within a wide range of hospital departments, as well as with some of the companies that supply goods and services.

In 2019, the trust decided that there were a sufficient number of young people with additional needs employed by them that it would make good sense to have its own full-time 'follow-on' job coach. In June that year, the job coach began working within the trust to support young people who had been employed following a successful supported internship. There were several reasons the Trust recognised that an embedded job coach was needed:



- There were so many young people who were employed and likely to need support from time to time, either because of the need to learn new skills, adapt to new managers or environments; or because they had personal issues that affected their ability to do their jobs.
- When such issues arose, colleagues of these young people tended to turn to the Project SEARCH team as they saw them as experts. However, this team's role is to support the current cohort of interns; by providing follow-on support to those young people who were employed, they were taking time away from the interns who were still learning.
- Staff were feeling overstretched, particularly the Programme Manager preventing the expansion of the scheme across sites.
- It was unclear to young people who they were working for, since any issues tended to be redirected to the Project SEARCH team, rather than being dealt with by a member of their department or the HR department.

What does the embedded job coach role involve?

The role is not a nine-to-five one. The job coach works flexibly and is not tied to either term times or fixed hours. She works evenings and weekends as required by the employee. There is a wide range of different types of support that young people may need in order to stay in their jobs, including:

- Carrying out workplace and task analysis in new settings that young people are moving to work in
- Teaching or refreshing skills in line with good, supported employment practice
- Mentoring young people, as required
- Applying for Access to Work funding for the employed young people who need support
- Supporting young people with redeployment/new roles if they lose their jobs owing to redundancy.

How is this role funded?

At the outset, the Trust decided to outsource this role to see if it was viable as funding comes from Access to Work, including for young people who need as little as an hour a week on a long-term basis. There are enough young people requiring support that it is hoped a second part-time embedded job coach can be employed in the near future. Kaleidoscope Sabre Associates, who provide job coaching skills to the programme, agreed to act as employer during this pilot phase.

What has been the impact of the having this role?

It has helped to establish a normal employer-employee relationship, in which employers expect clear behaviours and performance from employees and deal with any issues and concerns. This means young people are clearer about their responsibility being to the NHS Trust, and Hospital staff can still call on someone with expertise without reducing the support for other young people on their supported internships. It has also made it possible to continue to grow the number of young people employed, whereas a ceiling would probably have been reached in the near future if a job coach had not been recruited.

In addition, during COVID -19, it has allowed the majority of young people to remain in work. Regrettably, five young people have been made redundant, but in all cases these jobs were with suppliers to the NHS rather than within the Trust itself. The embedded job coach has been ill herself, but fortunately was able to maintain contact and to support anyone who had to shield/self-isolate during lockdown. All the young people are now back at work and the job coach visits them wherever they are located in the Trust.

This is what the Business Liaison person from Barts Health NHS Trust had to say about the role of the embedded job coach:

“ The value to the individual is enormous. The 54 young people we have employed are making a great contribution; they come from a special needs environment and have additional needs so they may need some extra support from time to time. ”

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