

Enhancing employability: Additional Support Learners

The City of Glasgow College Additional Support Learners (ASL) team has developed the first *Project Search* initiative in Glasgow.

Project Search is a franchise, originally developed in the USA. It aims to help people with ASL needs to enter full employment by providing supported employment opportunities. The project's overall aims include increasing the low numbers of people who require additional learning support who are currently in paid employment or workplace training.

The college Project Search initiative is carried out with Glasgow's Victoria Infirmary as the host employer. Key ingredients for success include the positive and imaginative partnerships between the College and NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde, the City of Glasgow Supported Employment Service and Project Search advisers. The college also carried out very thorough preparation before the start of the project, which helpfully 8 identified areas of potential difficulty and resolved them at an early stage.

A college lecturer and a job coach from City of Glasgow College Supported Employment Service jointly undertook a two-week induction period to learn the skills required for work as porters, domestics and catering assistants. They drew on this experience to teach learners how to carry out these jobs correctly. In turn, college staff provided NHS staff with training and advice about how best to support these learners in the workplace. In 2013-14, twelve learners undertook three ten-week rotational placements in the domestic, catering and porter departments of the hospital, supported by their college lecturer, job coach and a hospital buddy.

The learners gained valuable vocational skills in the three areas. They also developed confidence and a range of relevant employability skills. Ten of these learners progressed successfully to employment in the NHS. The project is in its second year, and now also involves the medical records department. The project has challenged perceptions positively amongst hospital workers about the capacity of ASL individuals to succeed in the workplace. The college is working with others in the city to extend this successful model into new areas of employment.