



Virtual Insight Day – NHS- RCHT site - Evaluation

Planned and delivered during the Autumn Term 2021/2022

Context and background information

The pandemic brought disproportionate disruption to SEND settings and pupils ([Quantifying learning loss for pupils in special schools and colleges | Nasen](#)). In response to Career Leaders in SEND settings concerned about pupils and their families facing transition decisions without being fully aware of the options available in their areas, our Team decided to explore remote/virtual delivery of Employer Encounters and Experience of the world of Work, linking to Gatsby BM 5 and 6.

Pilot Introduction and purpose

During the Autumn Term, our EC for SEND settings collaborated with one of our Enterprise Advisers employed within the HR Team at Royal Cornwall Hospital Treliske.

We promoted this opportunity within SEND settings from the local area and gathered interest from an ARB (Richard Lander).

We then linked with Richard Lander's Career Leader and the Career Coordinator in the ARB to design, plan and implement an offer for a small group of students.

Working around everyone's availability and requirements, we agreed on 3 sessions (1hour and 45 minutes each) to be deliver on the same weekday and time over 3 consecutive weeks.

The EA engaged with 3 of her colleagues managing departments which would typically present opportunities for supported employment: Hospital Porters, Reception and Catering.

Each of the managers were asked to design a task for the students based on their working day, and they produced the following:

[X Ray Portering Activity](#)

[Catering Activity](#)

[Receptionist Activity](#)

We then shared these briefs with the Career Coordinator at Richard Lander who coordinated the technical side and learning support during the delivery.

We produced a lesson plan which was agreed with the school and the employer:

[Lesson Plan - Virtual Insight day -Hospital](#)

The sessions took place on Microsoft Team and were moderated by the EC with the support of the Enterprise Adviser S.D.

A survey was produced and the Career Coordinator was asked to complete this with the students after the activity: [Virtual Insight Days Evaluation](#)



Feedback Summary and Evaluation

Survey results:

[survey data \(VWex insight Day RCHT\)](#)

Career Coordinator Feedback:

“Hi Francesco, what a great session, they really enjoyed listening to Mark and loved working on the task. Attached are evaluation forms which provoked a good discussion about skills needed in the workplace and if they would want to work in a hospital. I think the perception that you’ll just see a lot of blood in a hospital needs addressing – surely there are jobs where you won’t see much of it !! Something to discuss next time. Thank you for setting this up everyone, so worthwhile.”

EC Feedback:

- The biggest challenge was matching staff availability (for each department) with the school timetable. School staff availability was initially agreed; the EA asked department managers willing to collaborate to confirm availability for those dates. We had no idea about the student aspirations before starting the activity and when we asked this question as an “ice breaker” at the beginning of the first session, we soon realised that none of the students were gravitating around roles available within an hospital setting. Despite this the activity seemed to generate a good interaction. The students, from time to time, had the chance to interact with a HR professional (EA), Department Managers (1 or 2 at each of the 3 sessions) and myself, presenting their work and receiving feedback.

During the activity, they worked within their group with the support of school staff. This allowed everyone else involved to effectively commit only 45 minutes of their time during the delivery. If we add this to approx. 45 minutes needed to draft an activity, the total time required by operational staff can be quantified in 4.5 hours (3x1.5 hours), not including the time required for the triage. The verbal feedback received by the Hospital Staff involved has been positive and the EA reported that colleagues enjoyed the interaction with the students as well as seeing the value of the activity. The staff saw value and satisfaction in educating the young people about what s behind the scenes in an hospital setting. The students gained knowledge and experience which helped them to recognise skills and to understand situations they might find themselves facing either working in similar roles or as a patient/customer.

The survey was only completed once instead of after each session as planned; This is because staff felt the answer provided wouldn’t have really changed. Data collection is something we will need to improve when planning similar activities. The sample is also too small to allow a meaningful data analysis.

**Conclusion:**

This project allowed 5 students with additional support needs to access multiple employer encounters and apply skills to a real work situation. The project contributed towards meeting BM2,3,4,5,6. The material produced can be used with other small cohorts of SEND students and schools could be encouraged to link with their local hospital sites, benefitting from a resource already available. There is no cost and very low risk involved in this project, making this option quite attractive for schools. The natural progression for individual students aspiring to a career within an hospital setting would be to liaise with one of the departments to arrange an “in person” work experience for the following term/academic year. This experience will also help the students to decide in regard to the type of roles presented to them, providing information which could then help school staff to identify further work experience opportunities in different settings.

The project also helped students to identify and recognise skills and relate those to a work environment (see survey results).

Collaborating on similar projects, helps Hospitals and local NHS Trusts to achieve good E&D and Inclusion standards, justifying the time invested. This was something staff involved in the project highlighted through their verbal feedback.

Follow up and suggestions:

None of the students involved in this first Cohort expressed interest in an “on site” work experience – those would have been challenging to set up during this academic year due to the disruption caused by Covid infections.

When replicating the experience next year, we could look at a different and larger cohort which will hopefully include a few students aspiring to work in an hospital setting. This information could be gathered at the planning stage.

Covid permitting, small cohorts of students could arrange site visits to those departments, developing an ongoing engagement with their local NHS Trust. The engagement will benefit both schools and NHS Team, enhancing staff awareness around both careers and disability.

Data could be collected and recorded in order to measure and assess the impact of this model of work experience.

