

# DFN Project SEARCH

## Data Class of 2020-21



# The DFN Project SEARCH model



DFN Project SEARCH has a number of model fidelity components that define the programme, its values and goals. These critical components include:

1. The outcome of the programme is integrated, competitive employment that is:
  - In an integrated setting
  - Year-round work (not seasonal employment)
  - 16 hours/week or more
  - Paid the prevailing wage
2. The focus of the programme is on serving young adults with learning disabilities and autism who can benefit from personalised support in an intensive year of career development and internship experience.
3. The programme is a collaborative partnership using support and resources from: Education, Local Authorities, Adult Supported Employment Agencies, Families and Host Businesses.
4. The programme is business focused.
5. The programme is committed to continuous improvement.
6. The programme leads to acquisition of competitive skills.

## Why is this needed: the facts

Only **5.1%** of people with a learning disability known to local authorities in the UK are employed.

Over **1 million** people are receiving SEN support in UK schools.

There are 1,5 million people with a learning disability in the UK. About **900,000** are of working age.



Around **350.000** have an EHC (37% more than 5 years ago).

65% of people with a learning disability in the UK want to work.

The UK has over **1.4 million** unfilled vacancies.

# Why do we only count Employment as the outcome?

**Wellbeing** – Research show that the benefits of **paid work** are **transformational**, enabling people to feel valued, integrate with their community and **achieve financial, emotional, social independence and natural supports**<sup>1,2,3,4</sup>. Interns and their families are directly benefited.

**Financial savings** (Education)– It is estimated that each young person with learning disability **employed** could **save** on average £14,000 per year for local authorities in the form of special schools fees. Interns can be as young as 17 when they start the programme and their **outcomes** are **as high as** those of older interns.

1. Robertson, J., Beyer, S., Emerson, E., Baines, S. and Hatton, C., 2019. The association between employment and the health of people with intellectual disabilities: A systematic review. *Journal of Applied Research in Intellectual Disabilities*, 32(6), pp.1335-1348.
2. Meek, A., Vigna, E., Beyer, S. and Meighan, J., 2019. Engage To Change: DFN Project SEARCH. Report On An Internship Programme For Young People With Learning Disabilities And/Or Autism: The First Three Years.
3. Kilsby, M. & Beyer, S. (1996). Engagement and interaction: A comparison between supported employment and day service provision. *Journal of Intellectual Disability Research*, 40, 348-357.
4. Moseley, C. R. (1988). Job satisfaction research: implications for supported employment. *Journal of the Association for Persons with Severe Handicaps*, 13, 211-219



# Why do we only count Employment as the outcome?

**Financial savings (DWP)** – Early employment develops skills and experience that will help interns to continue employed throughout their life, dispensing with Universal Credit.



**Financial savings (NHS)** – Employed people with learning disability do not need to use the health system as often. Employment is good for your health! <sup>1</sup>

**Financial Sense** - An independent evaluation of Project SEARCH for North Lanarkshire Council showed that £3.96 social value is created for every £1 invested in the form of financial, emotional and social gains for interns, their families, the NHS and government. <sup>2</sup>

**UK Economy** – According to the Centre for Social Justice, a rise of five percentage points in the disability employment rate (not only those with learning disability) would lead to an increase in Gross Domestic Product of £23 billion by 2030.<sup>3</sup>

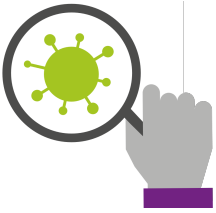
1. [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/209782/hwwwb-working-for-a-healthier-tomorrow.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/209782/hwwwb-working-for-a-healthier-tomorrow.pdf)

2. [https://www.centreforsocialjustice.org.uk/core/wp-content/uploads/2017/03/CSJJ5158\\_Disability\\_report\\_220317\\_WEB.pdf](https://www.centreforsocialjustice.org.uk/core/wp-content/uploads/2017/03/CSJJ5158_Disability_report_220317_WEB.pdf)

3. <http://www.socialvaluelab.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2013/09/SROI-Report-Project-Search-Final.pdf>



# The impact of covid between late 2020 and early 2022



Despite an increase in the first quarter of 2022, **employment rates** were still lower than in the pre-covid period [1]

Economic impact of covid had a **disproportionate effect** on disabled people. [2]

In April 2021, the ONS reported that 40% of disabled people in Great Britain said the pandemic had negatively affected their ability to access healthcare for non-coronavirus related issues [2]

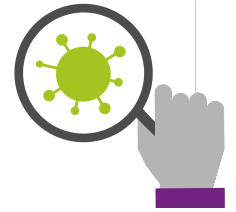
Disabled people continued to have on average **poorer well-being** ratings than non-disabled people across measures such as life satisfaction, feeling that things done in life are worthwhile, happiness and anxiety [3]

[1] <https://www.ons.gov.uk/employmentandlabourmarket/peopleinwork/employmentandemployeetypes/bulletins/employmentintheuk/june2022>

[2] <https://lordslibrary.parliament.uk/covid-19-pandemic-impact-on-people-with-disabilities/#:~:text=In%20April%202021%2C%20the%20ONS,for%20non%2Dcoronavirus%20related%20issues.>

[3] <https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/healthandsocialcare/disability/articles/coronavirusandthesocialimpactsondisabledpeopleingreatbritain/march2020todecember2021>

# The impact of covid between late 2020 and early 2022



**Unemployment** rates for minority ethnic groups were higher than average before the pandemic and saw a larger increase than average from January-March 2020 to October-December 2021 [1]

The youngest and oldest workers are most likely to have **lost jobs** since the beginning of the pandemic [1]

In December 2021, 72% of disabled people reported being very or somewhat worried about the **impact of covid on their employment** [2]

**Only 5.1% of** people with a learning disability are in paid employment, the **lowest level** ever [3]

[1] <https://researchbriefings.files.parliament.uk/documents/CBP-8898/CBP-8898.pdf>

[2] <https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/healthandsocialcare/disability/articles/coronavirusandthesocialimpactsondisabledpeopleingreatbritain/march2020todecember2021>

[3] <https://www.base-uk.org/employment-rates>

# DFN Project SEARCH Key findings – Class of 2020-21



- ✓ Employment rates were incredibly high and close to pre-covid levels, **71%**
- ✓ **58%** of the jobs met the criteria, which is higher than the previous cohort
- ✓ Highest proportion of interns from ethnic minority backgrounds, **28%**, when previously it was around 24% and the UK population is 14%
- ✓ Interns from Ethnic Minority Groups continued to earn more on average than White interns and work about the same number of hours

## Key findings – Class of 2022-21



- ✓ Interns worked in similar roles and industries regardless of their gender, ethnicity or primary disability although men might be more likely to work in maintenance and landscaping, and women in food service and patient care
- ✓ For the first time women worked almost the same number of hours per week as men, 25 and 27 respectively
- ✓ Interns continue to earn significantly more than the minimum wage for their age group
- ✓ Young interns (under 18) had very high employment outcomes and earned **80% more** than the minimum wage on average

# DFN Project SEARCH Employment Outcomes



**188** (71%) interns secured employment



**148** (58%) interns found full-time, non-seasonal jobs paid at prevailing wage and in an integrated workplace.



Average hourly wage was **£8.83**



Interns work on average **26 hours** per week.



# DFN Project SEARCH Employment Covid years (2019/20 and 2020/21)



**397** interns secured employment



**323** interns found full-time, non-seasonal jobs paid at prevailing wage and in an integrated workplace.



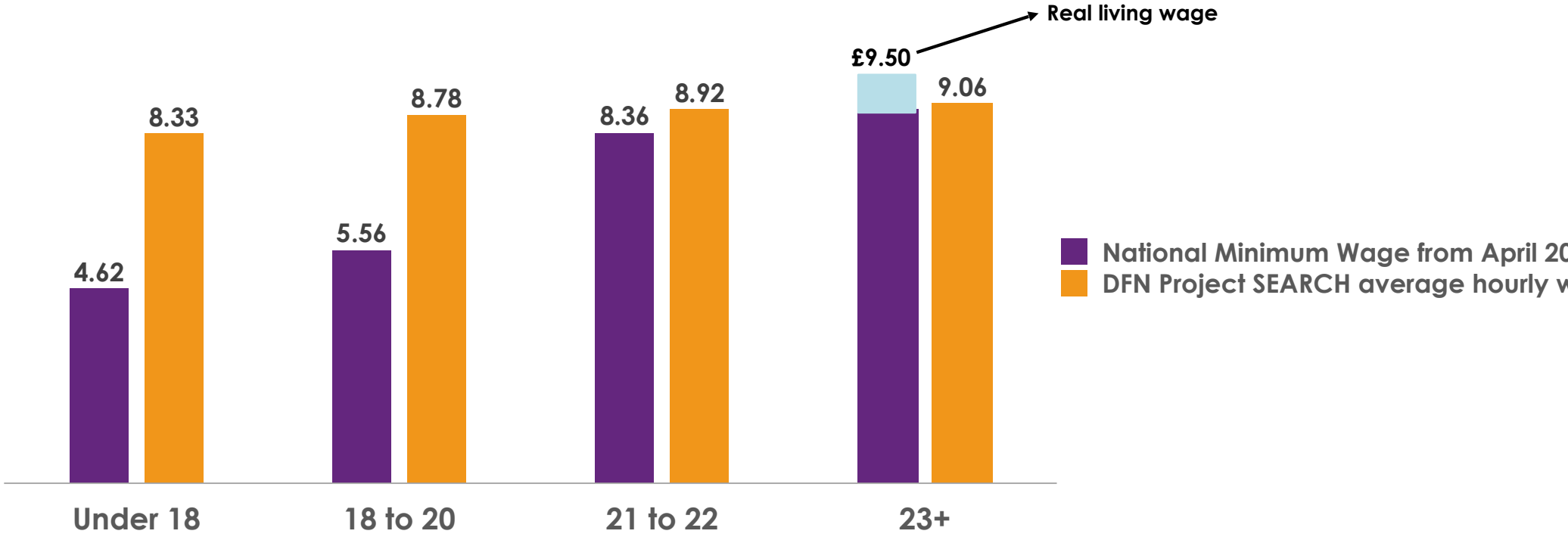




## DFN Project SEARCH Outcomes by Age

- ✓ Younger interns had very high **employment** outcomes
- ✓ **Average** wage was higher than the minimum wage for all age groups
- ✓ Younger interns were more likely to have a job that met the **criteria**
- ✓ Younger interns were also more likely to have **completed** the programme
- ✓ Interns **under 18** received **80% more** than the minimum wage on average
- ✓ **18-20 years** old Interns received **58% more** than the minimum wage on average

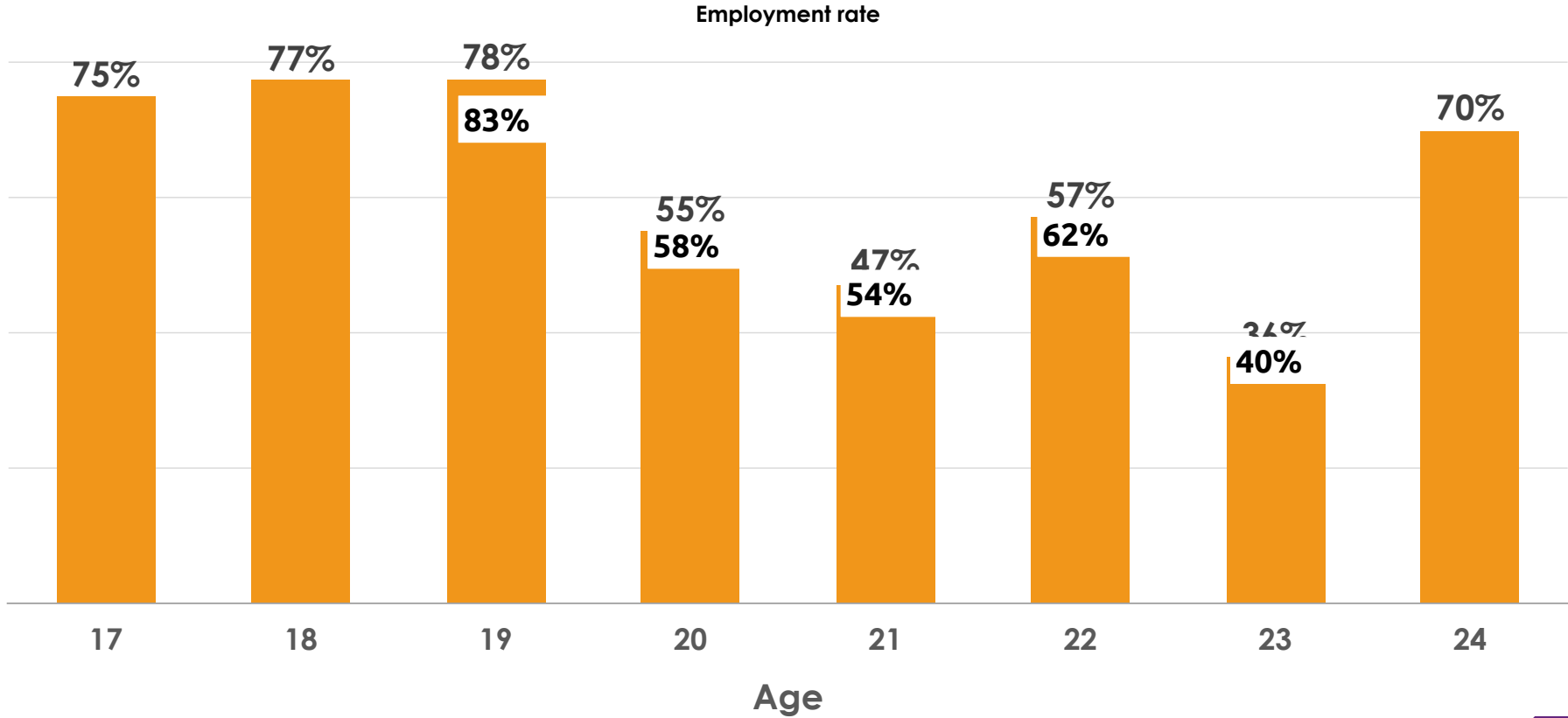
# National Minimum Wage from April 2021 and DFN Project SEARCH Wages by Age (2020/21)



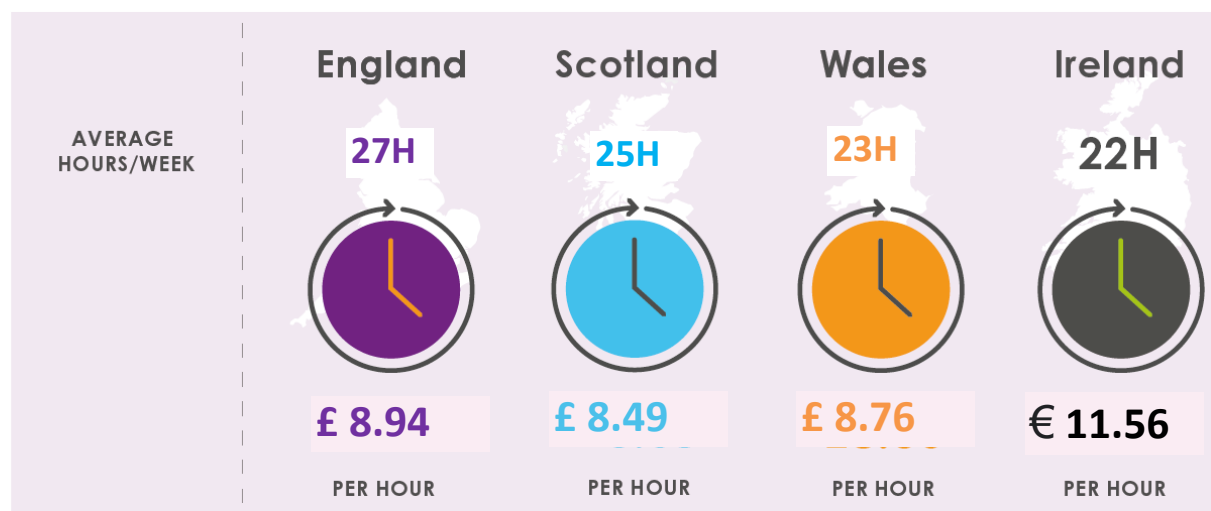
<https://www.gov.uk/national-minimum-wage-rates>



# Employment by age



# Average hours and wages per country

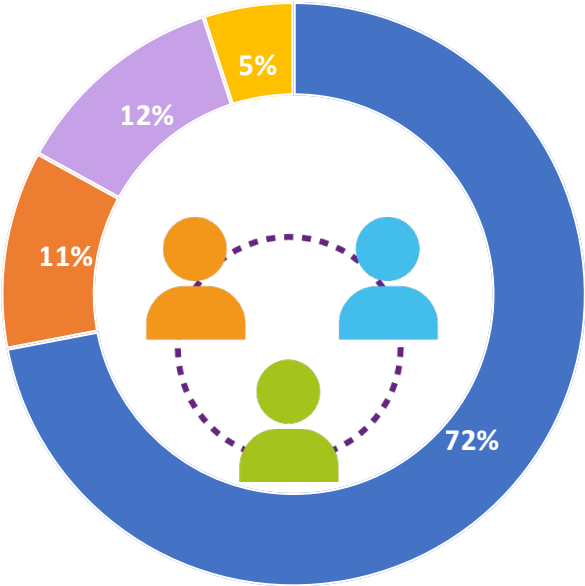


# Interns from Ethnic Minority Groups

- ✓ Highest recruitment ever of interns from Ethnic Minority Groups, 28% while the average was 24%
- ✓ All large ethnic groups represented on our programme
- ✓ Interns from Ethnic Minority Groups earn the same or more than White/European on average
- ✓ Interns from Ethnic Minority Groups work the same number of hours per week on average
- ✓ Interns from Ethnic Minority Groups work in the same roles and sectors as White/European interns



# Enrolment by Ethnicity



● White    ● Asian or Asian British    ● Black, African or Black British    ● Other

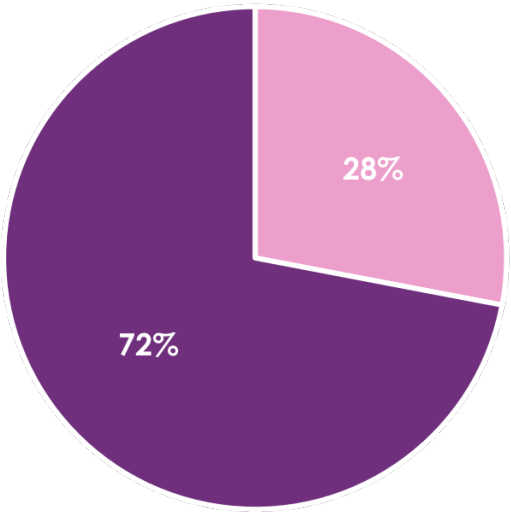
UK Ethnic Minority population:  
14%

DFN Project SEARCH Ethnic Minority interns: 28%

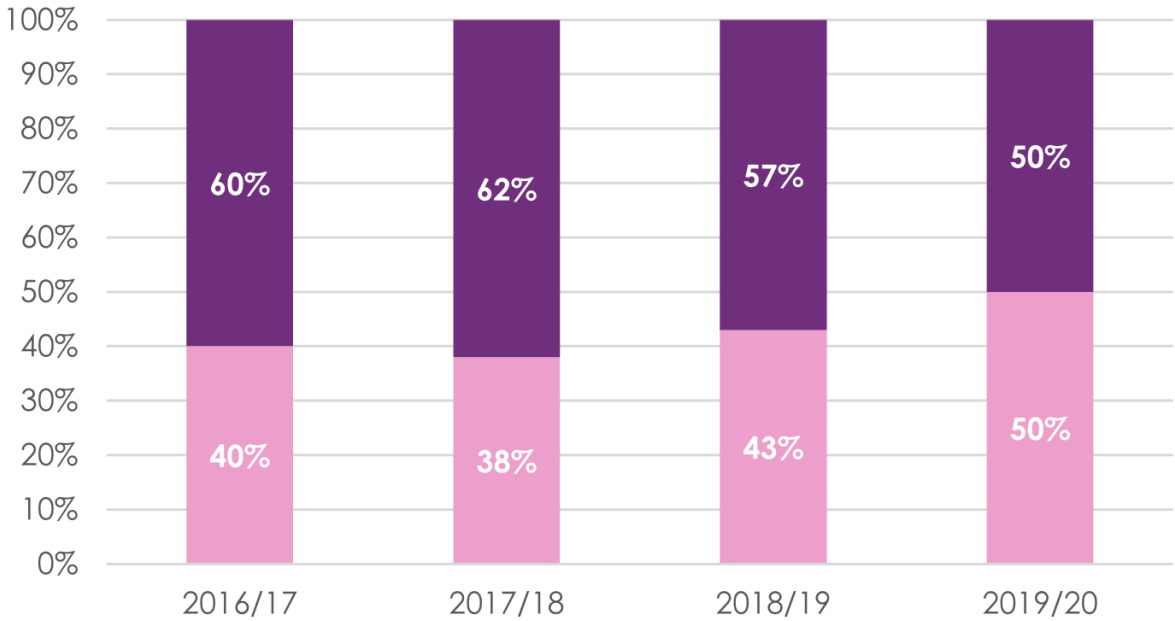


# Host Business and External Employers

2020/21



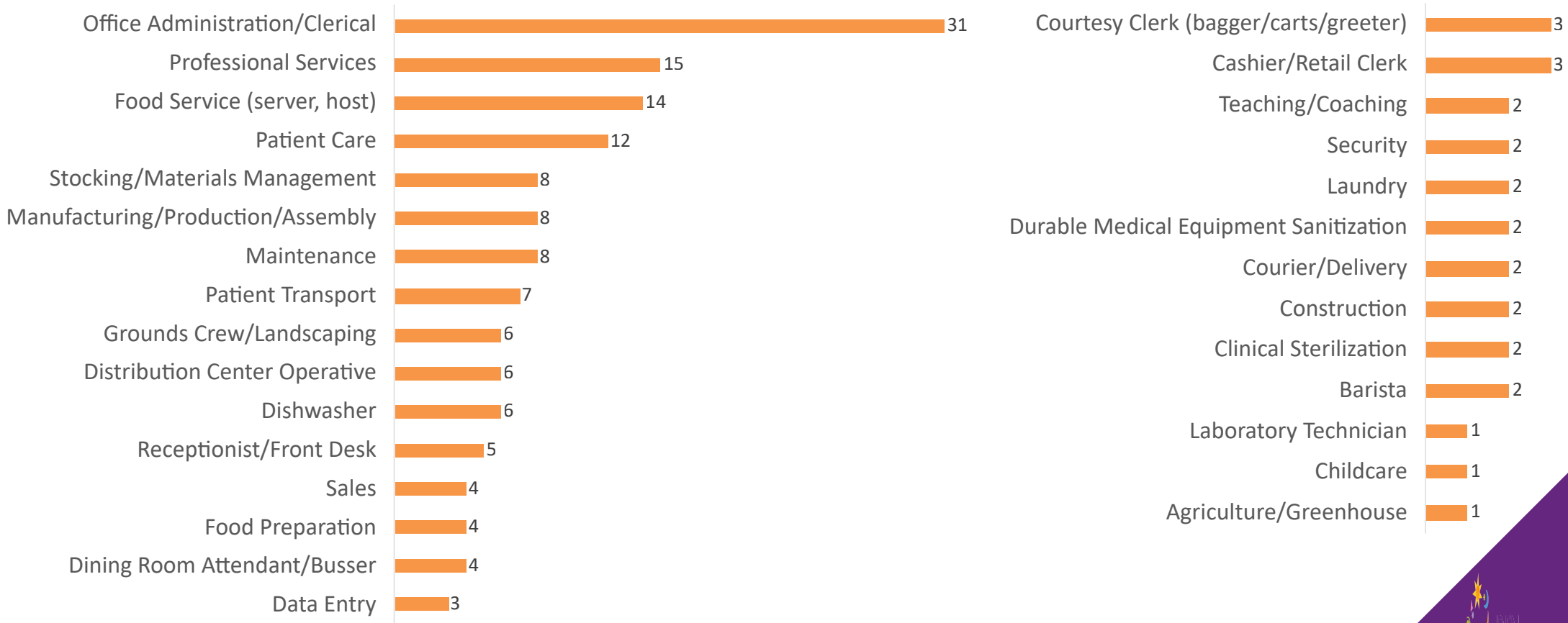
■ Host Business ■ External



■ Proportion Host Business ■ Proportion Other

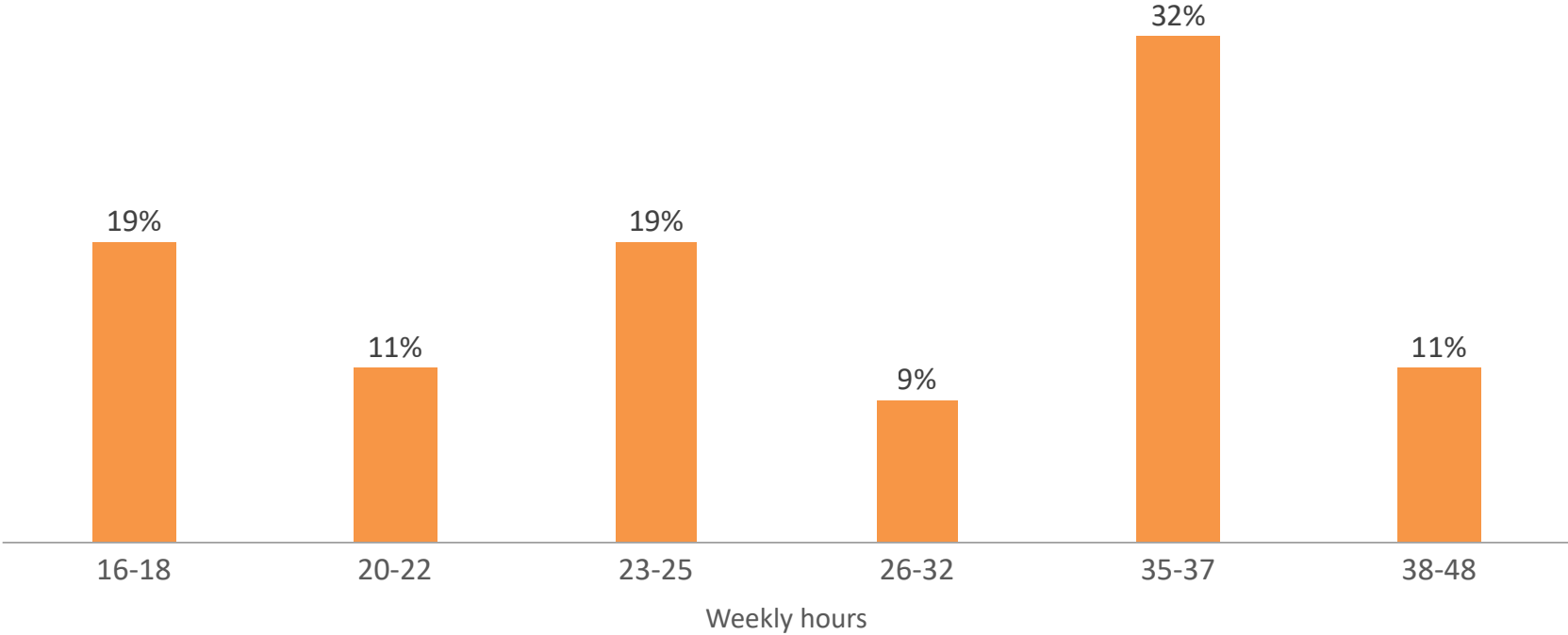


# Number of jobs by role





# Weekly working hours above 15 hours



# Reasons for not meeting Project SEARCH criteria

- Job was under 16 hours per week: **14%**
- Wage was lower than the prevailing wage: **1%**
- Job was seasonal: **8%**
- Job was not in an integrated workplace: **1%**

## Strategic Partnership with Europe's biggest employer

- ✓ **Strategic partners** of NHS England, NHS Employers, NHS Improvement and Health Education England.
- ✓ **42** new DFN Project SEARCH sites within NHS settings – including NHS arms length bodies.
- ✓ We can reach an additional **500 interns** a year.
- ✓ Collaborating with providers such as Project Choice and Mencap to bring together best practice to meet areas of un-met need.

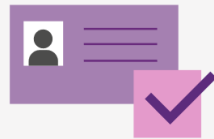


# NHS Data from 2020/21



50%

Nearly 50% of our sites were in NHS hospitals.



62%

The NHS employed 62% of our interns (96 in total).



Of those employed by the NHS are from Ethnic Minority Groups



We are starting 42 new NHS sites in England

# Case study – Succeeding in the hardest of time



The pandemics did not stop the team at **DFN Project SEARCH Whipps Cross University Hospital** from supporting **10 incredible interns** into work!

**Nihal** enjoyed her rotations in the Community Midwives as an Administrative Assistant. She went to secure a job as an Administrative/Receptionist in the Orthotics department at Whipps Cross Hospital.

**Nouman** did his rotation in GP X-ray and in the Eye Treatment Centre. Recognising his excellent customer services, he was offered a full time employment as an Orthoptist Administrative Assistant in the Eye Treatment Centre at Whipps Cross Hospital.

During his rotations, **Filip** realised that he wanted to work for Linet Beds. The on-site team didn't have any connections with Linet Beds but e-mailed the Director of Linet Beds who agreed to meet Filip over a Teams meeting. Filip is soon employed by them and is working across the Barts sites.

**Bilal** did his rotations in the Pathology, X-Ray and Ultrasound Departments. He is now working full time as an Ultrasound Imaging Assistant at Whipps Cross Hospital.



# Case study – Succeeding in the hardest of time



**Jayden** loves helping people and found the perfect full time job working for Serco as a Patient Porter Assistant.

After doing rotations in the laundry and domestic store, **Joshua** went into Endoscopy where he completed all his compliance training, securing a job as a Decontamination Technician at The Royal London Hospital.

**Simran's** first rotation was an Outpatients Receptionist Assistant. He then went to the Eye Treatment Centre and in the Pharmacy department, which was his dream. He thrived there and is now employed by Day Lewis Pharmacy and doing a retail and dispensing NVQ Level 2 apprenticeship.

**Louie's** first rotation was with our Business Liaison as a Facilities Assistant. He then did rotations at GP X-Ray and the Deceased Holding Unit. He is now employed full time at Whipps Cross Hospital's GP X-Ray.

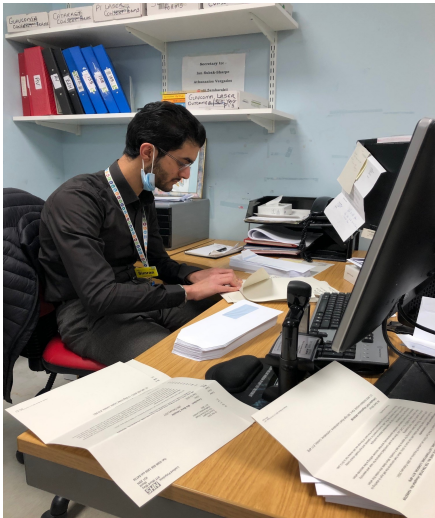




# Case study – Succeeding in the hardest of times

**Nishat** started her first rotation as a picker/packer decided to do the following rotation in the Ward Host. She is now employed by Serco at Whipps Cross Hospital as an evening Ward Host.

**Padraic** really liked his rotations in as a Goods Distribution Officer delivering goods across the hospital. He found employment as a Main Stores Goods Delivery Operative at Royal London Hospital.



# How are we further improving our data?



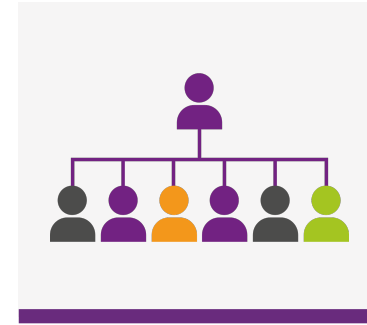
## Gender research

Completed an in-depth research on employment rates and weekly working hours of women



## Longitudinal data

Designing a system to understand the long-term outcomes of interns.



## Sharing learning

Developing new visualisation tools to summarise our research and data

# How are we further improving our data?



## Listening to interns

Started to systematically collect opinions of every intern about their experience in the programme and changes in emotional, social and work skills



## Highest performing sites

Finalising a piece of research on how to increase outcomes of sites



## Monitoring

Acquired a new management software to streamline current tools and smarten up the monitoring of the programme



## Intern Satisfaction Survey - 2022

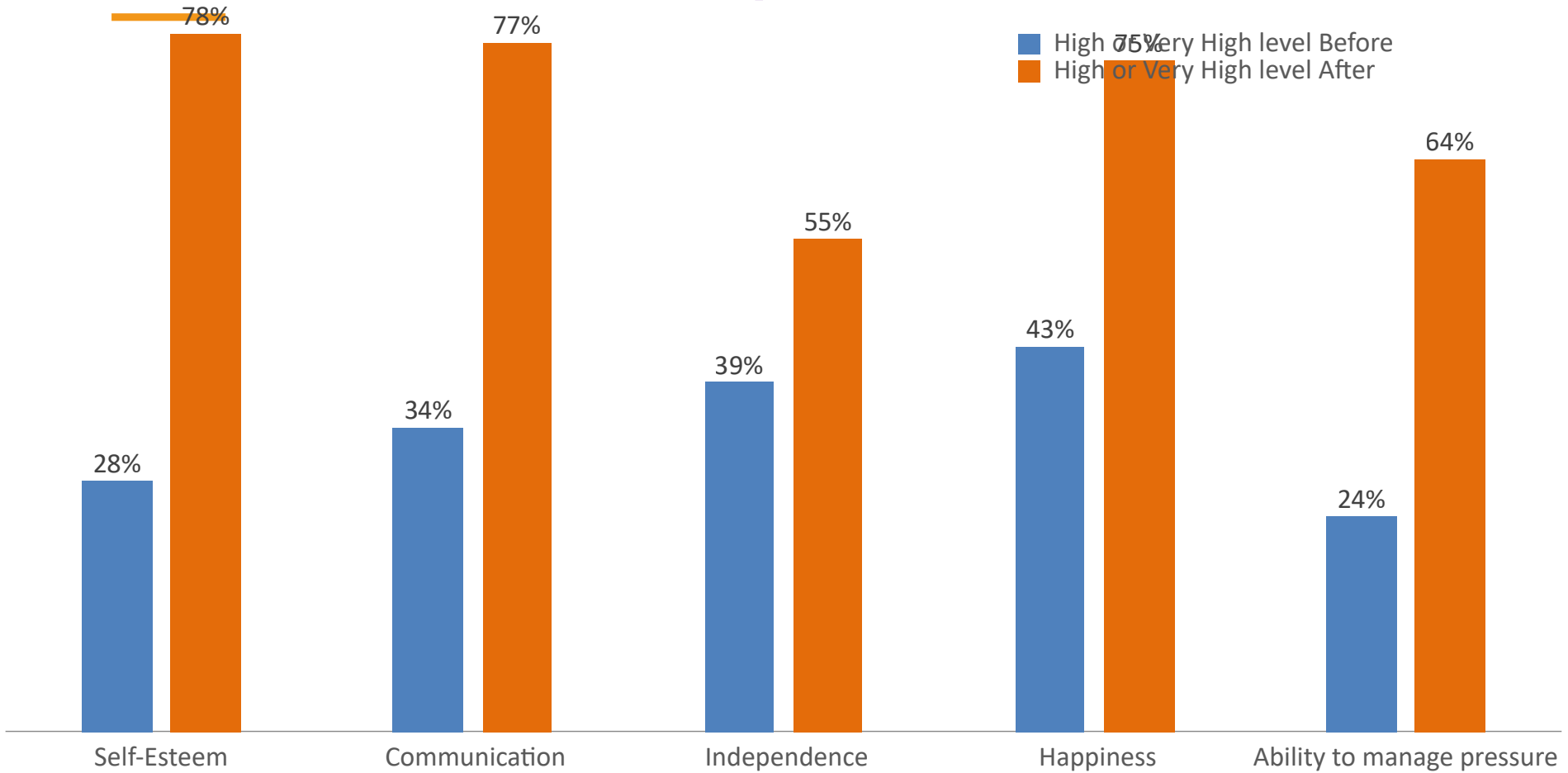
For the first time we asked interns to share their experiences during the programme. They reported massive improvement in all 10 areas, which covered wellbeing, interpersonal and work skills.

99% of them thought the programme was useful

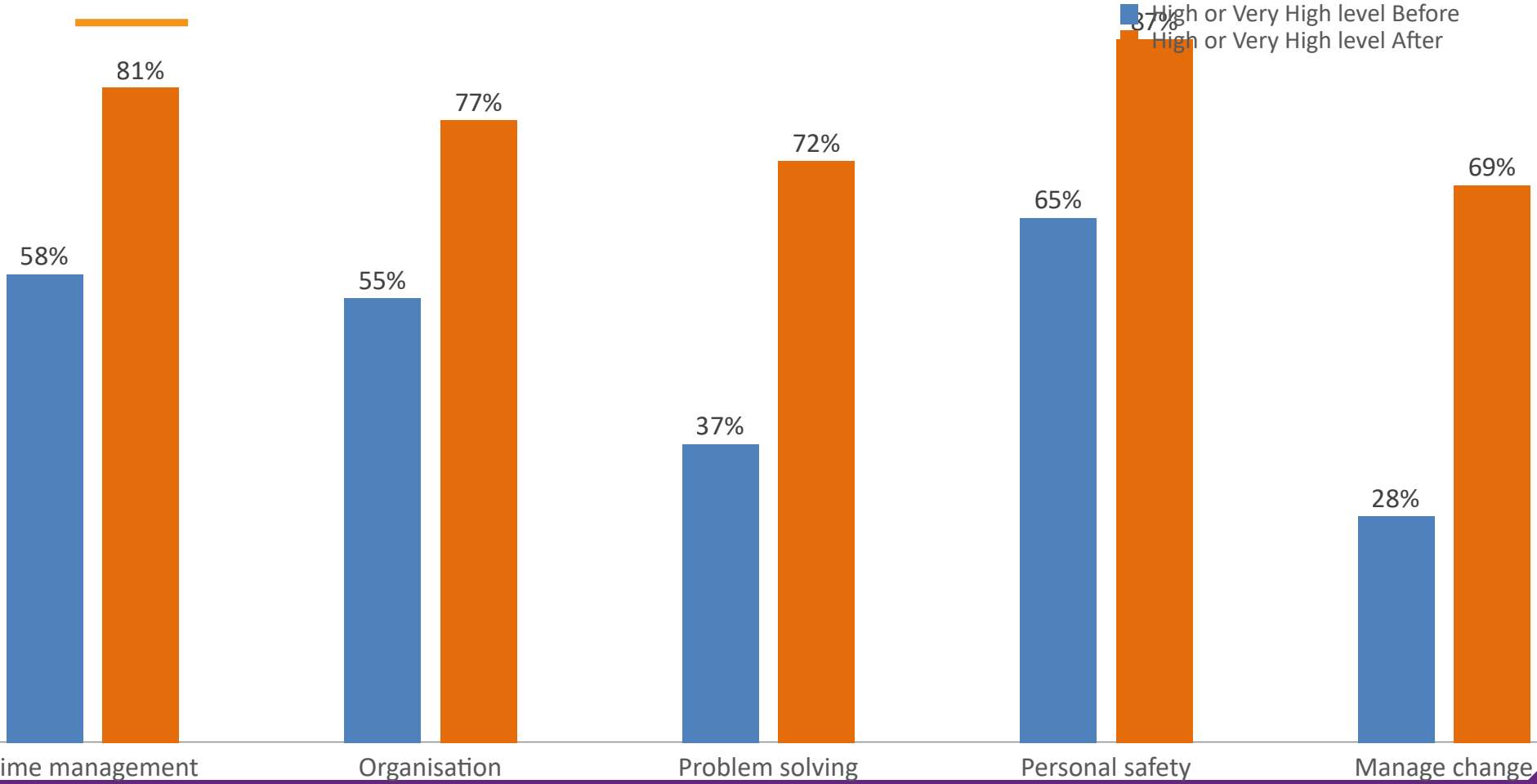
They said the best things about the programme were:

- Rotations
- Learning new skills
- Making friends / socialising
- Support received
- Working
- Training (safeguarding, CV writing, interviews)

# Intern Satisfaction Survey



# Intern Satisfaction Survey



## Intern Satisfaction Survey – Interns' quotes



"[DFN Project SEARCH] has just been the best experience of my life"

"[DFN Project SEARCH] changed me"

"I think it is such an amazing programme for someone to help them to get ready for the world of work and to develop their job ready skills whilst being supported"



# Social Return on Investment

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## Assessment of Economic & Social Benefits of DFN Project SEARCH

*Report by Frontier Economics*

18 October 2022



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frontier economics



# Executive Summary



DFN Project SEARCH is an international transition to work programme committed to transforming the lives of young people with learning disabilities and autism.

## Target audience

- Young people (16-32) with a learning disability, autism or both<sup>a</sup>
  - 50% of programme participants have a learning disability as their primary disability
  - Around 40% have autism as their primary disability
  - Majority are between the ages 18-24
  - Around a third are women
- England, Scotland and Wales

DFN Project SEARCH has asked Frontier to assess the **impact** of the programme on participants, carers and the society. Given data constraints, the scope of work was limited to **gross benefits** – where feasible, in monetary terms and otherwise, illustrating qualitatively.

## Expected Impact

### Benefits to programme participants

- Improved employment prospects and ability to find a job
- Improved earnings
- Exposure to multiple industries
- Improved health and well-being

### Benefits to family / carers

- Reduction in care-givers fatigue
- Increased opportunity to join the workforce and add potential earnings
- Improved health and well-being of carers

### Benefits to society

- Lower welfare payments for employed graduates of the programme
- Expanded labour force

## Gross benefits

*Note that the benefits listed are non-exhaustive.*

- **Improved employment opportunity and earnings.**
  - Internal DFN Project SEARCH assessment shows that **65% of programme participants find a job**<sup>a</sup> – much higher than the average of 5.1% for individuals with a learning disability<sup>b</sup>.
  - Employed graduates of the programme had an **average earning of £7.92/h** in 2016-17 **to £8.83/h** in 2020-21.
  - The average hourly pay for employed graduates of the programme was between **22-33% higher** than the National Minimum Wage or National Living Wage depending on the age & year of comparison.
- **Improved well-being in self-reported measures among programme participants.**
  - **56% happier** after the programme
  - **60% feel more independent**
  - **69% have higher self-esteem** after the programme compared to before
- **Increased opportunity to join the workforce and add potential earnings among carers of programme participants.**
  - **25h per week** potentially freed from care work for use in other work

All analysis based on DFN Project SEARCH data, other quoted sources and Frontier calculations.

<sup>a</sup> The figure is slightly lower at 60% if considering programme participants who find a job working at least 10h per week. Note that this includes cohorts that joined during the pandemic, who would drive down the overall impact.

<sup>b</sup> 'Employment Rates for People with Disabilities 2020-21.' Available at: <https://www.base-uk.org/employment-rates> [accessed on: 26 September 2022]

<sup>c</sup> See Annex C for details. Wage comparisons are based on age group and cohort.

# The expected impact of the project is wide-ranging, affecting participants, their families and carers, & wider society



- **Improved employment prospects and ability to find a job.** DFN Project SEARCH participants have improved chances of finding employment following their participation in the programme.
- **Better work and social skills.** Programme participants take part in training to first develop their employability and functional skills, and move to additional skills, including social skills.
- **Enhanced earnings.** Employed graduates of the programme have additional earnings from employment.
- **Exposure to multiple industries.** Employed graduates of the programme have had placements across the labour market, e.g. aviation, pharmaceuticals, social care, etc.
- **Improved well-being.** Participants of the programme reported increased levels of mental well-being on a post-programme survey conducted by DFN Project SEARCH .



- **Reduction in care-givers fatigue.** As participants engage with the programme or join the workforce, carers are able to cut down on the hours spent caring for the participants directly – reducing fatigue.
- **Increased opportunity to join the workforce and add potential earnings.** With care hours freed up, carers of programme participants could choose to re-join the labour market, and enjoy associated earnings.
- **Improved health and well-being of carers.** The freed up time can provide the much needed break for carers to recharge, or supplement their earnings. The variety in potential activities and reduced fatigue are likely to improve health and well-being of carers of the programme participants.



- **In alignment with the objectives of the New National Disability Strategy.** The government plans to increase the number of disabled people in employment, tackling the disability employment gap. The outcomes of this programme are in alignment with the government objectives.
- **Lower welfare payments for employed graduates of the programme.** Some welfare payments, such as the Universal Credit, are affected by earnings via employment. Programme participants who successively find employment will be less reliant on these forms of support.
- **Expanded labour force.** Programme participants who previously may not have joined the labour force, and some carers, will likely join the labour market, reducing the numbers of those inactive or unemployed.

# Internships Work



Internships WORK



# Summary



A collaboration between:

- The National Development Team for Inclusion (NDTi)
- British Association for Supported Employment (BASE)
- DFN Project SEARCH

Provides a support and training offer to Local Authorities to enable them to set up, develop and grow their employment forums.

**Doubles the current supported internship provision** in England to 4500 per year.

Supports over **800 Employer Champions** across England

Provides training to **760 job coaches** across England.

Supports over **1000 new employers** offering supported internship placements by the end of the programme.



# DFN Project SEARCH Delivery

Internships  
WORK

(les)

# Our new website is live!

<https://www.dfnprojectsearch.org>

We have completed redesigned our website to ensure it is fully accessible.

Just like the app, we have added a feedback form so anyone can anonymously help to shape our programme.

The screenshot shows the homepage of the DFN Project SEARCH website. At the top, the heading "Opening Doors For The Workforce Of The Future" is displayed. Below this, a paragraph states: "DFN Project SEARCH is a transition to work programme committed to transforming the lives of young adults with a learning disability and autism or both." A central orange button reads "WATCH OUR PROMO VIDEO".

The main content area features four statistics in large, bold numbers, each with a corresponding description below it:

- 1900+** Interns now employed. Description: "The reason we fight to create a legacy of lasting change."
- 100+** Sites. Description: "We have successful sites in England, Scotland, Wales, Ireland and Portugal."
- 60%** Into fulltime employment. Description: "DFN Project SEARCH graduates who achieve full-time permanent roles, compared to the national average of 5.1% of people with a learning disability who are known to local authorities."
- 10000** Number of interns served By 2030. Description: "DFN Project SEARCH aims to support 10,000 young adults with a learning disability, or autism spectrum condition, or both, in the UK into paid employment by 2030. The charity has supported almost 2,000 people into paid employment to date."

At the bottom of the page, there are two call-to-action boxes:

- Find a Programme** (purple background): "The world of work is ready for you to make your mark. Find your perfect opportunity today." Includes a button "START YOUR CAREER".
- Start a Programme** (blue background): "Help change the lives of young adults with a learning disability or autism spectrum condition, or both. A DFN Project SEARCH team member can present to your local partners to generate excitement and provide knowledge about the programme." Includes a button "MAKE A CHANGE".



# Our new app

Our new app is packed new with resources and is a quick way to get in touch with us and find out more what is happening.

You can download it for free on App Store (Apple) or Play Store (Android)







## Current sites

Click the link below for an interactive version of the map

<https://tinyurl.com/sehzm5de>

# Contact US



Claire Cookson  
Chief Executive Officer

**Telephone**  
07760 225637

**Email**  
[Claire.Cookson@dfnfoundation.org](mailto:Claire.Cookson@dfnfoundation.org)

**Office Location**  
Bridge House, 181 Queen Victoria Street – London EC4V 4EG