

# Your EmployAbility Newsletter



April – July 2017

EmployAbility is a Supported Internship programme initiated between Round Oak School and National Grid. It took its first cohort of interns in Warwick in September 2013. The programme now runs in Warwick, Hinckley, Solihull, Wokingham and Thorpe Park, providing internships for 25 young people. The programme runs each academic year and gives students the chance to work in different placements developing skills they can use in future employment.

## Business in the Community Awards 2017 – Outstanding Employment - Winner

National Grid won the Outstanding Employment award for our employment programmes: EmployAbility, Apprenticeships, Young Offenders and Get Skilled (the last two programmes have recently moved to Cadent).

Mark Pickles, co-founder of EmployAbility, said: "It's fantastic to have won this award. These programmes are making real positive differences to the lives of young people, many of whom had given up hope of ever gaining meaningful employment. I would like to thank all the people who support these programmes. This award wouldn't have been possible without their passion and dedication to supporting others."



## Working together conference 2017

In July, National Grid hosted around 50 external organisations from employers, education providers and other parties involved in supporting disability. The event aimed to bring together employers and education providers who have started their own Supported Internship programmes as well as organisations interested in launching their own programmes in the near future and finding out more. The conference was an opportunity to share best practice, success stories and lessons learnt.



As Chair of Enabling, National Grid's Employee Resource group for Disability and Executive Sponsor of EmployAbility, David Wright, Director Electricity Transmission Owner opened the event. Taurai Horton, former graduated intern and now National Grid employee, also shared his personal story.

Delegates then had the opportunity to attend a number of master classes led by National Grid and Cadent EmployAbility supporters as well as representatives from our partner schools and colleges to learn from our experience and share best practice.

# Hinckley interns

As they reach the end of their third Internship year at Cadent, Hinckley interns are preparing to move onto new opportunities. **Jake** has accepted a permanent role in Network Strategy (Admin Team), **Liam (Mu)** a full time role in Data Assurance and **Jordan** a full time role in Scheduling and Dispatch (I&C Team) and **Alec** has accepted a part time role in Customer Performance (Management Information (MI) Team).

As a result of links with external employment agencies, **Ryan** begins a work experience placement with a local garden maintenance business and will use this to supplement his college course and further develop his skills. **Josh** and **Liam (Ma)** are moving onto Foundation Skills learning courses at college. The team wish them all the best in the future.

## 2016 - 2017 intern highlights and experiences

Hinckley interns were asked to reflect on their individual journeys and share their benefits and highlights.

**Josh** "I enjoy meeting new people and working on a laptop. My highlight was helping raise money for charity on the EmployAbility tombola"

**Liam** "Being part of a team and meeting new people has really improved my confidence. I have learnt new social and IT skills"

**Ryan** "You get treated like an adult and I am learning new job skills"

**Liam** "I have enjoyed the work and learning new skills. You are treated like an adult."

**Jordan** "It has made me feel more confident and mature and helped me gain more skills and independence"

**Jake** "This internship has improved my life and social skills and I have matured. It has changed my idea of working"

## New Interns in September 2017 - first placements

A successful taster day was held in June for new interns to try out possible first placements. The team continue to explore new placement opportunities and raise awareness in the business and as a result, they have confirmed three new departments for first placements in September:

- Data Assurance (SWAT team)
- Customer Complaints team
- DNCC

## Third placements



Alec – MI Team



Jake – Network Strategy Admin Team



Liam – Porters



Josh – Gas Transporter Team



Jordan – GRSC



Liam – Data Assurance



Ryan – Catering and Reprographics



## EmployAbility programme

Support for the programme continues to grow but the team are always looking to identify new opportunities across the Hinckley site and tasks, which broaden the skill range for each of the intern.

If you think you might be able to offer a short-term placement for the 2017 intake but are unsure whether the task is appropriate, then please discuss this with the Job Coaches Louise Green and Gail Thompson who are based in room B1.2.2.

**Many thanks to all who have supported and continue to support this worthwhile programme.**

# Wokingham interns



**Abigail Hart** has spent the third term in the Control Room where she had to get used to six shift teams! She has been auditing the sub-stations and after a crash course on Visio has been re-drawing some outdated ones as well. She has shown herself to be a quick learner and her attention to detail is outstanding!



**Jamie Kirkwood** joined CSS in the third term and has put his excellent knowledge of Excel (learned in CND) to good use. In his third placement he did not require any crib sheets to do his work and quickly settled into his new team. He also had to learn to do work for two different people but this didn't faze him in the least. His ideal job would either be in IT or working with animals! Talk about two extremes.



**Edward Armstrong** has spent the third term in the NAP group updating the weekly outage Picasso. He enjoyed the challenge as this requires a lot of attention to detail and concentration. He also still helps out in CSC a few times a week – a part he really excels at!



**Ayse Akyildiz** has honed her Reception skills in the third term and is now a valued member of the team. Twice a week she spends a full day on reception and has proven that she can multi-task and remain calm when things get very busy. Her confidence has grown so much thanks to the 14forty team!



**Jeremy Smith** is just completing his second term in SMC. He had the challenge to attend and take part in phone calls which are part and parcel of the role in SMC and it was only in the second term that he felt comfortable and knowledgeable enough to finally achieve this. It's great to see his confidence in his role and in his own words 'I never want to leave'!

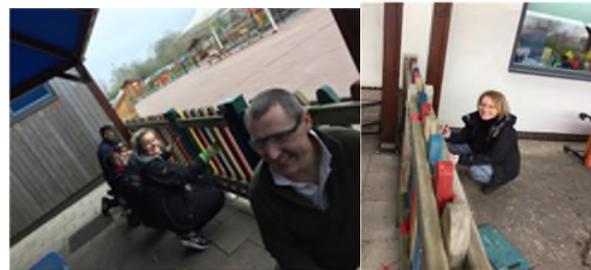
## Autism Awareness Brown Bag Lunch

In April, Wokingham held an Autism Awareness Brown Bag Lunch. Nicole Wisdom, the Autism Co-ordinator from Addington School came and presented a short but illuminating PowerPoint and opened up a good discussion amongst the attendees. The team hope to do more of these in the future.

## Addington School Community Day

In March, Cordi O' Hara, members of her leadership team and the ever-enthusiastic EmployAbility team, joined forces to help bring some colour back to the Addington School grounds.

Armed with a multitude of paints and paint brushes they set about (with the help of some very enthusiastic pupils) adding a beautiful red, blue and yellow fence to the back of the sensory garden. With the fence spruced up, a very sad looking train also got the full National Grid leadership treatment! The Addington Hospitality group provided a well-earned lunch including the well-known Addington cakes.



## Disability Confident – Access to Jobs Fair

In March, the interns and Job Coaches attended Reading's first Disability Confident Jobs Fair hosted by the then Reading MP – Rob Wilson. They took the opportunity to Network with other companies about the EmployAbility programme and had a look at other opportunities that are out there for our interns.

## Addington Staff vs National Grid staff

In May, the National Grid staff challenged Addington School to a FUN (?) Football game. Well! The game only ended when the scores were tied! Needless to say, it was a longer than average game.



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# Thorpe Park intern

EmployAbility at Thorpe Park over the last term has been a great success with **Josh** securing a full time Apprenticeship in Business Admin within Leeds City Council. The whole team are extremely delighted for him having followed his EmployAbility journey from arriving with them back in September, growing in confidence to then gaining full time employment, which shows what can be achieved with the help of the programme. Josh also took part in the Intern tour of the Control Centre Warwick this term, which he found eye opening and very beneficial understanding the roles of various interns and seeing how they differed from the role he did. Josh said "It was brilliant yesterday I had a really good time. Warwick was massive compared to Thorpe Park. Thank you for organising for me to go down there". The team said what a pleasure it had been working with Josh and wished him every success in his new role.

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# Solihull interns

It's been a busy summer term in Solihull, with our six interns continuing to work hard in their placements, some new and some revisited, whilst cramming spare time with preparing CV's, visiting the Job Centre, searching and preparing for job interviews. They received support from our Pertemps Solihull site team with mock interviews giving them good experience for the real thing. National Grid Ventures colleagues also supported - Maxine Long, Head of Domestic Metering took time out of her busy schedule to support with the job hunt, and Sarah Gwilliam, Business Systems Project Manager helped with online application forms. All of these aspects of help really show how the wider businesses within Solihull have grasped the spirit of EmployAbility.

During the year a few of the interns were privileged to meet with some VIPs too, when Jon Butterworth, Director UK Commercial Businesses NGV, invited them to lunch. NGV Group Director, Badar Khan, and Non-Executive Director, Therese Esperdy heard from the interns themselves when they were able to talk direct about the benefits of the programme.



*Interns Regan and Corey with Job Coach, Jayne Wyatt and Jon Butterworth*

So as we reach the end of Solihull's second year, we can proudly say that each of our interns have achieved an ambition which may never have even been possible this time last year.

Following competitive interviews, **Regan Burley** has already started work in the Industrial and Commercial Metering team as a Data Validation Advisor, **Greg Campbell** and **Alex La Fontaine** will soon both join the I&C AMR team in a job shared project role.

Earlier in the year, **Josh Eades** also successfully gained a full time paid role as a Catering Assistant within Jaguar Landrover. **Josh Gain** already has two paid part time jobs and alongside these he is going to continue his academic studies at Sixth Form, and **Corey Galvin** has secured his ambition with a place on a college course studying Sports.

We also bid a fond farewell to Jos Carter who returns to Selly Oak Trust School following maternity cover for Claire, who returns in September. We wish everyone success in their next steps. A positive year for National Grid Ventures and EmployAbility!



Regan Burley



Josh Eades



Greg Campbell



Josh Gain



Corey Galvin



Alex La Fontaine and Jos

Anyone wanting further information on our Solihull EmployAbility Programme or advice on identifying placement opportunities, please contact either Louise Saunders, Mandy King or Lynn Orton.

# Warwick interns



**Ismael Abdulahi** has spent his third placement in Global Procurement. He has had the opportunity to meet with managers and he has a really good understanding of what this department does. Ismael has a college place to do business studies in September



**Callum Bloss** has been with the Customer Liaison Team for his third placement. He has learnt some new skills and has enjoyed his time with the Team. Callum will be going to college in September.



**Olivia Brown** has been working in Shared Services and Corporate Affairs this term. Olivia has really enjoyed the tasks she has been doing. Olivia has a place at college to study business further. She is also continuing to look for employment in an office.



**Angharad James** remained in the Kitchen this placement. She has progressed this term by helping more with food preparation for example using knives to chop salads. She loves the atmosphere in the kitchen and has really grown in confidence since starting in there. Angharad would like to work in a kitchen when she leaves National Grid.



**Faye MacDonald** this term has continued working in the Restaurant running the soup and jacket potato area. She will be missed by the Restaurant Team when her placement comes to an end. Faye has secured a job at the Holiday Inn in Kenilworth in the Catering Department.



**Melanie Mulroney** has had a split placement for the third term. She has been in the Mail Room to complete her experience of 14forty roles at National Grid and also returned to Reception to consolidate her skills learnt from her first placement. She will be staying at National Grid as she has been offered a position to work in the Coffee Shop with 14forty

## Helicopter trip

In early July, the interns across all of the sites had the opportunity to visit the National Grid Helicopter at Turweston Aerodrome, Northamptonshire. Unfortunately, due to technical reasons they were unable to fly in the helicopter. Nevertheless, the interns thoroughly enjoyed the opportunity to find out more information about the helicopter, what it is used for in National Grid and also to have a sit in the helicopter and use the high definition camera equipment on board. Thank you to John Rigby, Chief Pilot, for an interesting and exciting experience and to Mike Hannon, Operations Field Support Manager, for making this possible.

## Ipad donations

Earlier this year, National Grid gifted Ipads to each of the four EmployAbility site teams. These have been extremely useful and have assisted with videoing of the Interns' mock interviews, photographs of interns in work placements and to capture evidence for external examiners. Our thanks go to Nick Isham, Service Strategy Manager, for organising the Ipads for the four sites.

## Graduation – Class of 2016/17

As the end of the school year approaches the interns were looking forward to their graduation ceremonies. These took place across all four sites:

- Hinckley, Wednesday 12 July 2017 hosted by Chris Train, Chief Executive, Cadent.
- Warwick, Monday 17 July 2017 hosted by Vicky Higgin, Head of Commercial & Corporate IS
- Solihull, Tuesday 18 July 2017 hosted by Maxine Long, Head of Domestic Metering
- Wokingham, Thursday 20 July 2017 hosted by Nick Easton, Power System Manager

These ceremonies are an opportunity for the interns to celebrate their achievements and pass on their thanks to their National Grid, Cadent and 14forty colleagues.

## Return dates

<b>Cadent</b>	
Hinckley	29 August 17
Ashbrook Court	6 September 17

<b>National Grid</b>	
Solihull	6 September 17
Warwick	4 September 17
Wokingham	6 September 17

## Further information

[www.employabilityletsworktogether.com](http://www.employabilityletsworktogether.com)

[box.EmployAbility@nationalgrid.com](mailto:box.EmployAbility@nationalgrid.com)

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together