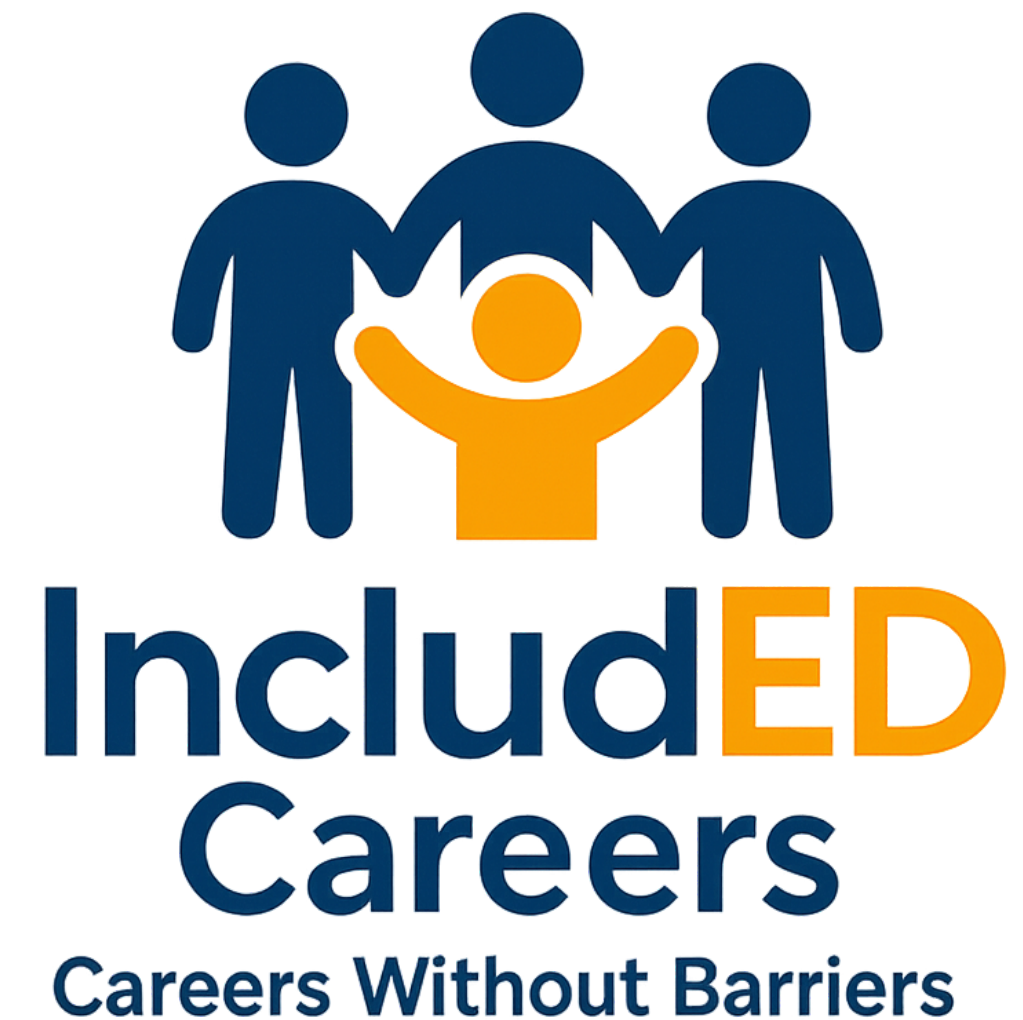


Inclusive Education  
Resources

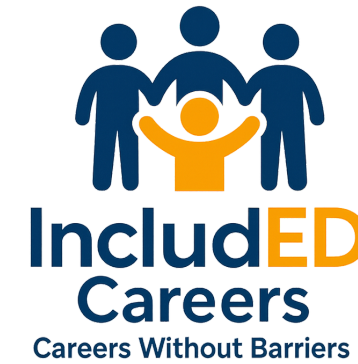
# 15 CREATIVE WAYS TO DELIVER MODERN WORK EXPERIENCE FOR SEND LEARNERS

Inclusive Models Beyond  
Traditional Placements



A Professional Resource for Educators

# INTRODUCTION



Modern work experience should be progressive, inclusive, and adaptable for learners with SEND. Traditional placement models often present barriers that can exclude or disadvantage students with additional needs. By embracing a diverse range of workplace encounter models, we can ensure every learner has meaningful opportunities to develop employability skills, build confidence, and explore career pathways in supportive environments.

Modern work experience is not one model—it is a graduated range of authentic employer encounters and workplace experiences that can be tailored to meet individual needs, strengths, and aspirations.

# MODELS 1-3

## SHORT EXPOSURE MODELS



### Family-Inclusive Workplace Visits



Core Theme: Introduce & Inspire



Core Theme: Investigate & Explore

Workplace visits where parents or carers are invited to join part of the experience to support understanding and confidence around work and pathways.

Builds reassurance, shared understanding, and informed decision-making, helping families support realistic next steps and aspirations.

### Micro-Placements



Core Theme: Introduce & Inspire



Core Theme: Investigate & Explore

Short, structured work experience opportunities (2–4 hours or one day) that give SEND learners a supported introduction to a role or workplace.

Reduces anxiety, builds familiarity with work environments, allows learners to try tasks in manageable steps, and supports confidence-building before longer or more complex placements.

### Workplace Safari



Core Theme: Introduce & Inspire



Core Theme: Investigate & Explore

A planned visit programme where SEND learners experience multiple workplaces in one day or across a short period, completing simple, supported tasks in each setting.

Builds understanding of different work environments, supports comparison and choice, and helps learners identify preferences in a low-pressure, exploratory way

# MODELS 4-6 IN SCHOOL MODELS



## In-School Employer Takeovers



Core Theme: Introduce & Inspire



Core Theme: Investigate & Explore

Employers bring the workplace into school through pop-up work zones, role-play areas, or mini enterprise activities, supported by school staff

Provides a familiar, structured, and sensory-considered environment while enabling real interaction with employers and hands-on task practice.

## Employer Co-Delivered Curriculum Projects



Core Theme: Investigate & Explore



Core Theme: Apply and Demonstrate

Curriculum-linked learning projects co-delivered by schools and employers, using real workplace tasks within classroom lessons..

Makes learning meaningful and relevant, helping learners safely connect classroom learning to real work skills in structured, familiar settings.

## Creative “Simulated Workplaces” in School



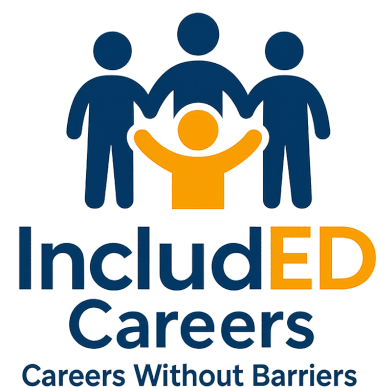
Core Theme: Introduce & Inspire



Core Theme: Investigate & Explore

Transform a classroom into a permanent/semi/temp simulated environment (hotel reception, office, mini warehouse)

Allows repetition and skill rehearsal in a low-stress environment. Ideal for pre-placement readiness and anxiety reduction



# MODELS 7-9

## APPLIED/ REAL WORK MODELS



### Community Pop-Up Placements



Core Theme: Investigate & Explore



Core Theme: Apply and Demonstrate

Short, supported work experience activities delivered in community settings through partnerships with local organisations and employers.

Provides real-world practice in familiar local spaces, building confidence, independence, and transferable social and work skills.

### Reverse Placements ("School in the Workplace")



Core Theme: Introduce & Inspire



Core Theme: Investigate & Explore



Core Theme: Apply and Demonstrate

A small group of SEND learners attend a real workplace where the school delivers learning on-site for a short, planned period.

Builds familiarity with a real work environment while maintaining trusted routines, staff support, and a structured learning approach.

### Supported Job Sampling



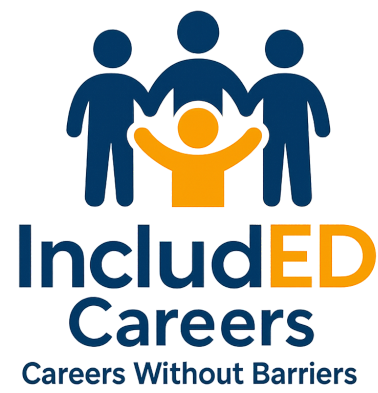
Core Theme: Investigate & Explore



Core Theme: Apply and Demonstrate

Short, repeat work experience sessions where SEND learners try a specific task or role within a real workplace, typically one session per week over time

Predictable routines and repeated exposure build confidence, independence, and real work behaviours while maintaining consistency and manageable expectations.



# MODELS 10-12

## ALTERNATIVE FORMATS



### Themed Industry Weeks



Core Theme: Introduce & Inspire



Core Theme: Investigate & Explore

Immersive, themed weeks co-designed by schools and employers that combine lessons, employer input, and project-based activities around a specific sector or theme.

Provides structure, predictability, and motivation while allowing learners to explore a sector in manageable steps through a mix of learning styles.

### Virtual Work Experience



Core Theme: Introduce & Inspire



Core Theme: Investigate & Explore

Structured digital work experience sessions combining live employer input, interactive challenges, and remote tasks, facilitated by schools or colleges.

Removes travel and sensory barriers, supports learners who find change difficult, and builds confidence with digital communication in a familiar environment.

### Project-Based Work Experience (Hybrid or In-School)



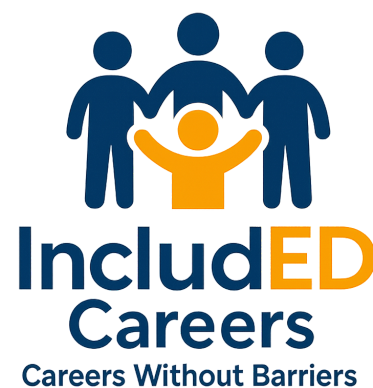
Core Theme: Investigate & Explore



Core Theme: Apply and Demonstrate

A real employer-set work challenge completed in school or college, supported by staff and job coaches

Accessible and flexible while remaining authentic. Learners engage in real work tasks without travel barriers, sensory overload, or unfamiliar environments.



# MODELS 13-15

## READINESS

## PREPARATION

## MODELS



### Mock recruitment sessions

A structured, employer-led simulation of a real recruitment process. Learners take part in a series of short activities such as:

mini interviews  
application tasks  
group problem-solving activities  
meeting different staff  
employer feedback discussions



Core Theme: Investigate & Explore



Core Theme: Apply and Demonstrate

Reduces anxiety around interviews . Supports communication development  
Provides structure and predictability and Builds confidence and self-identity

### Inclusive Enterprise Projects



Core Theme: Introduce & Inspire



Core Theme: Investigate & Explore



Core Theme: Apply and Demonstrate

Structured enterprise activities where SEND learners design, make, and sell products or services, supported by schools and employer input.

Develops creativity, teamwork, communication, and money skills through real business tasks in a supportive, scaffolded environment

### Mentoring & Skills Workshops



Core Theme: Introduce & Inspire



Core Theme: Investigate & Explore

Short, skill-focused sessions delivered with employer input, designed by schools to link learning directly to real workplace skills.

Builds confidence, communication, and self-awareness in a supportive setting while establishing trusted relationships with employers before placements.

# REFLECTION PROMPTS

Take a moment to consider how these 15 models could transform work experience provision for your SEND learners:

- Which models are already present in your provision?
- Which could be introduced this term?
- Which learners would benefit most from each approach?



**IncludED**  
**Careers**

Careers Without Barriers

The goal is not to find the perfect placement, but to build a graduated pathway of meaningful employer encounters that develop confidence, skills, and self-awareness.

# DESIGNING MEANINGFUL & INCLUSIVE WORK EXPERIENCE

Use the checklist below to test your design:

A Meaningful Experience Should...

- Have a clear purpose shared with employer and learner
- Be underpinned by appropriate learning outcomes
- Include two-way interaction with employees
- Provide access to a range of workplace staff/roles
- Include real tasks / authentic work
- Include employer feedback
- Include structured learner reflection

**To Make It Inclusive, Consider:**

- Preparation before the experience
- Adjustments during delivery
- Support/scaffolding required
- Communication/access needs
- How success will be evidenced
- How reflection will be adapted



**IncludED**  
**Careers**  
Careers Without Barriers