

Lexington Catering becomes largest partner in Westminster Supported Internship Programme, opening pathways for young people with SEND

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[Lexington Catering](#) has shown its commitment to creating real career opportunities in catering and hospitality for young people with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) by becoming the largest partner in Westminster City Council's Supported Internship Programme.

The London-based B&I caterer prioritises long-term employment opportunities, ensuring that interns' work experience translates into sustainable careers – to date, 11 young adults have completed the programme, with three finding employment directly with Lexington and three securing jobs externally.

The programme equips participants with the skills, confidence and coaching they need to thrive in the workplace. Internships last eight to ten weeks during the school term, combining hands-on experience across Lexington's Central London sites with classroom learning one day a week. Alongside their placements, interns also study English, maths and employability qualifications at Westminster City Hall.

Each intern receives personalised one-on-one training in line with the Lexington standard, with the goal of securing long-term roles within the company and beyond.

A standout success story is Etienne, who began as a supported intern and has since secured a part-time role as a vending operative at one of Lexington's key sites in the capital.

Etienne said: "I work in a friendly environment where people treat me happily and make me feel like I'm

part of the team, which I am. The support I've received has helped me gain skills and confidence and now I have a real job that I enjoy."

Matt Wood, managing director of Lexington, said: "Rates of paid work amongst people with SEND are as low as [5%](#). So, it's incredibly rewarding to help someone gain the skills and coaching they need to start their career. Our priority is to create genuine pathways into long-term employment. Seeing interns like Etienne thrive is a testament to what's possible when businesses commit to inclusion and support."

Lexington works closely with WCC and a supported internship officer to guide interns throughout the programme. As well as placements, the company runs mock interviews and skills sessions. Everything culminates in internship graduation ceremonies organised by WCC – including a recent event hosted by the Lord Mayor of Westminster, celebrating interns' achievements and marking milestones in their professional journeys.

Terrence McKnight, supported employment officer at WCC, said: "Young adults with SEND can achieve incredible things when given the chance. Through this partnership with Lexington, we've seen doors open that were once closed, creating meaningful employment opportunities and a more inclusive workplace for everyone."

Looking ahead, Lexington plans to expand the programme to more sites, continuing to open up brilliant career opportunities for SEND students while helping businesses benefit from talented, motivated employees.