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## **Teenagers make a great impression on B&NES Chairman**

A class of teenagers with learning disabilities proudly shared their experiences of working at the Royal United Hospital with the Chairman of Bath and North East Somerset Council, Cllr. Peter Edwards this week.

The six students are five months into a year's internship at the RUH, working and learning life skills to increase their prospects of achieving full employment.

Project SEARCH works in partnership with Fosse Way School and B&NES Council's adult social services, and aims to help people with learning difficulties acquire the skills needed to get a job.

The students have been working in the Medical Equipment Library, Finance, Pharmacy, Oncology Outpatients, Fracture Clinic and Oral Surgery outpatients.

They also learn independent living skills to help them to make the successful transition from school to adult life.

Cllr. Edwards says: "I was most impressed with the enthusiasm generated by these teenagers. Project SEARCH is a wonderful project, conducted in such an important working environment. These students are now nearly half-way through their internship, I urge them to remain enthusiastic and enjoy the remainder of the course. I hope that their endeavours will be justly rewarded by way of obtaining full employment."

Co-ordinator Jan Marsh says: "We're delighted that Cllr. Edwards has paid us a visit. The students were very excited to tell him about their working day at the RUH.

"Project SEARCH is a really important development for young people with special needs in their last year of schooling. This collaboration with the RUH, which is in its third academic year, gives them the opportunity to be supported in their introduction to the workplace, with a real prospect of gaining employment by the end of the year.

"The value of Project SEARCH is evident if we look at how many of the students - 9 so far - have secured jobs at the end of their year.

"Project SEARCH challenges traditional perceptions about employing people with learning disabilities, proving that with good instruction and tuition, they can perform jobs as well as non-disabled people."

Interest in the project is growing and the RUH has been classed as an outstanding site by Project Search, Cincinnati.

Hospital Chairman, Brian Stables says: "The RUH is extremely proud to be working with students from across the Bath and Wiltshire area. We've been involved with Project SEARCH from its inception. We are proud of our staff for embracing the concept and creating such great opportunities for the interns."

**Ends**

**Notes to Editors**

More about Project Search  
<http://www.projectsearch.us/>