



# Supported Employment in Wales: How we are achieving employment for people with intellectual disabilities and autism

Stephen Beyer, Elisa Vigna,  
Andrea Meek



# Aim

**To create and support long-term youth employment opportunities by engaging young people and employers.**

The project is funded by **The Big Lottery Fund's Getting Ahead 2 grant** and is aimed for:

- 16 to 25 years old
- Intellectual disability and/or Autism, Specific Learning disabilities
- NEET (Not in education, employment or training)



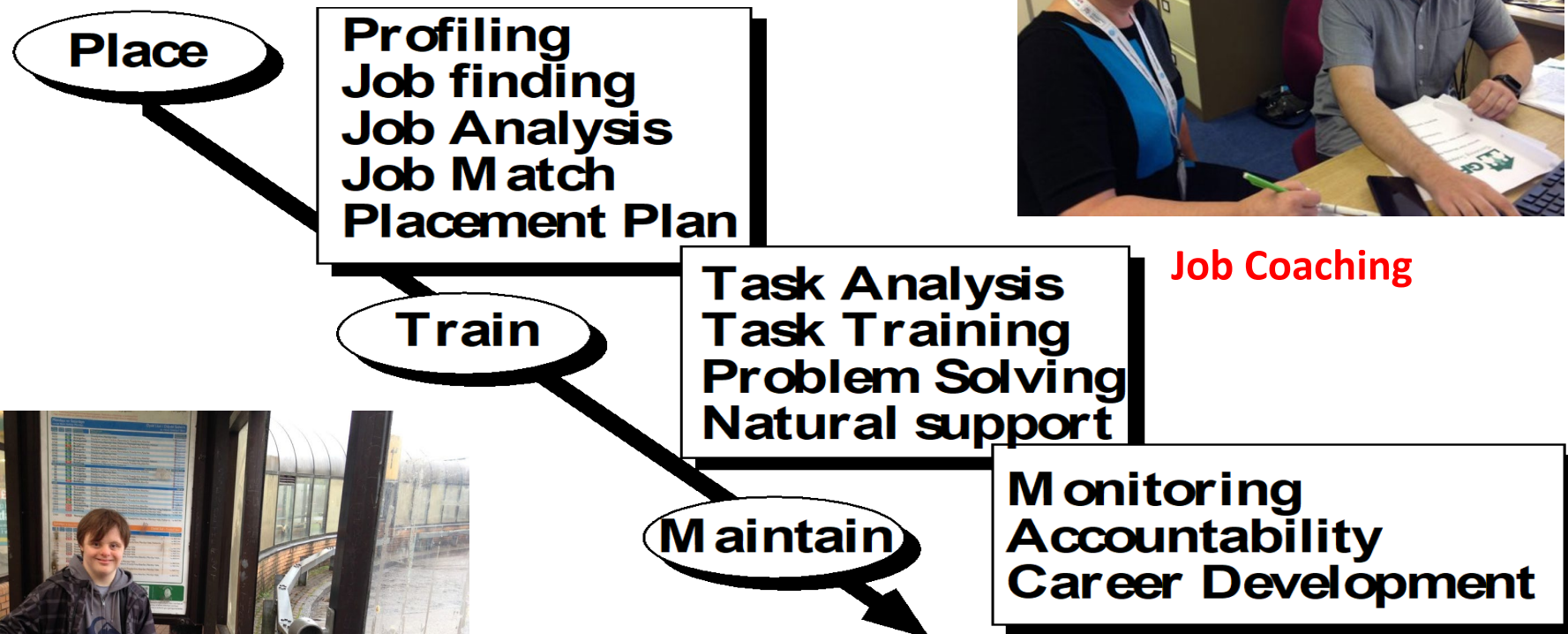
# The consortium



DFN Project | SEARCH



# Supported Employment



**Travel Training**

Job Coaching central to  
the Supported  
Employment Model



# How many people are we working with?

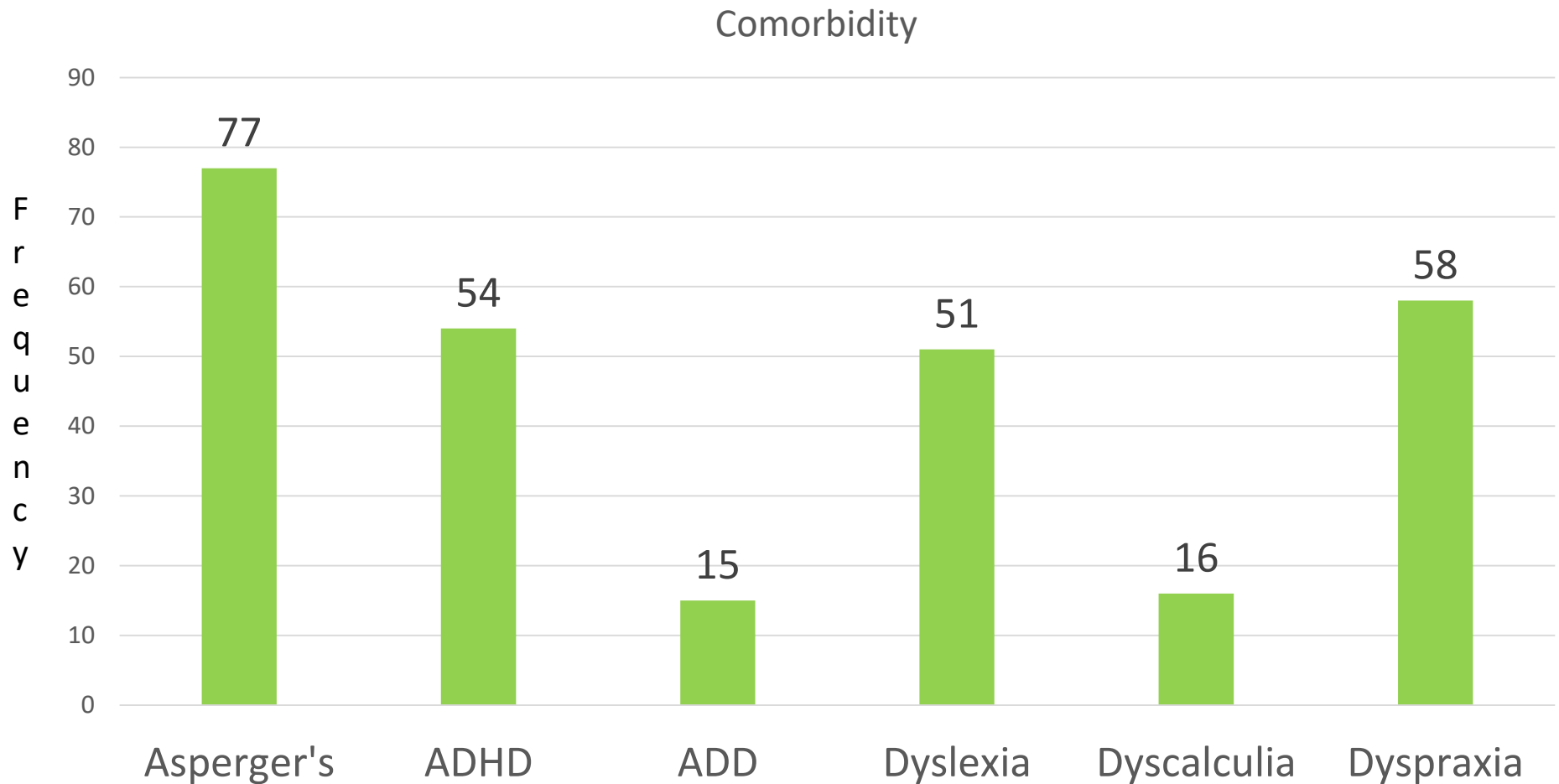
After 3 years 614 young people have been referred to the project.  
76% Male and 24% Female

|                                        |     |
|----------------------------------------|-----|
| Intellectual Disability                | 28% |
| ASD                                    | 22% |
| ASD and Intellectual Disability        | 15% |
| ASD and Specific Learning Disabilities | 18% |
| Specific Learning Disabilities         | 17% |





# Comorbidity





# Self-reported functioning levels

|                                          | Frequency | Percentage |
|------------------------------------------|-----------|------------|
| Memory difficulties                      | 137       | 22%        |
| Organisational difficulties              | 106       | 17%        |
| Time management difficulties             | 82        | 13%        |
| Reading difficulties                     | 74        | 12%        |
| Writing difficulties                     | 93        | 15%        |
| Calculation difficulties                 | 105       | 17%        |
| Sensory distraction                      | 109       | 18%        |
| Difficulties coping in busy environments | 117       | 19%        |







# How many people are working at the end of Year 3

- 432 unpaid short-term work trials
- 257 paid work placements of up to 6 months
- 153 people have a job
- 128 sustained to 3-mon





# Placements/Jobs

Administrative Assistant  
Café / Kitchen Assistant  
Customer assistant / Retails  
Caretaker assistant/maintenance  
Recycling Operative  
Domestic Assistant / Cleaning  
Farm Assistant  
IT technician  
Coaching/Classroom  
assistant/learning assistant



# Paid Job and Diagnosis

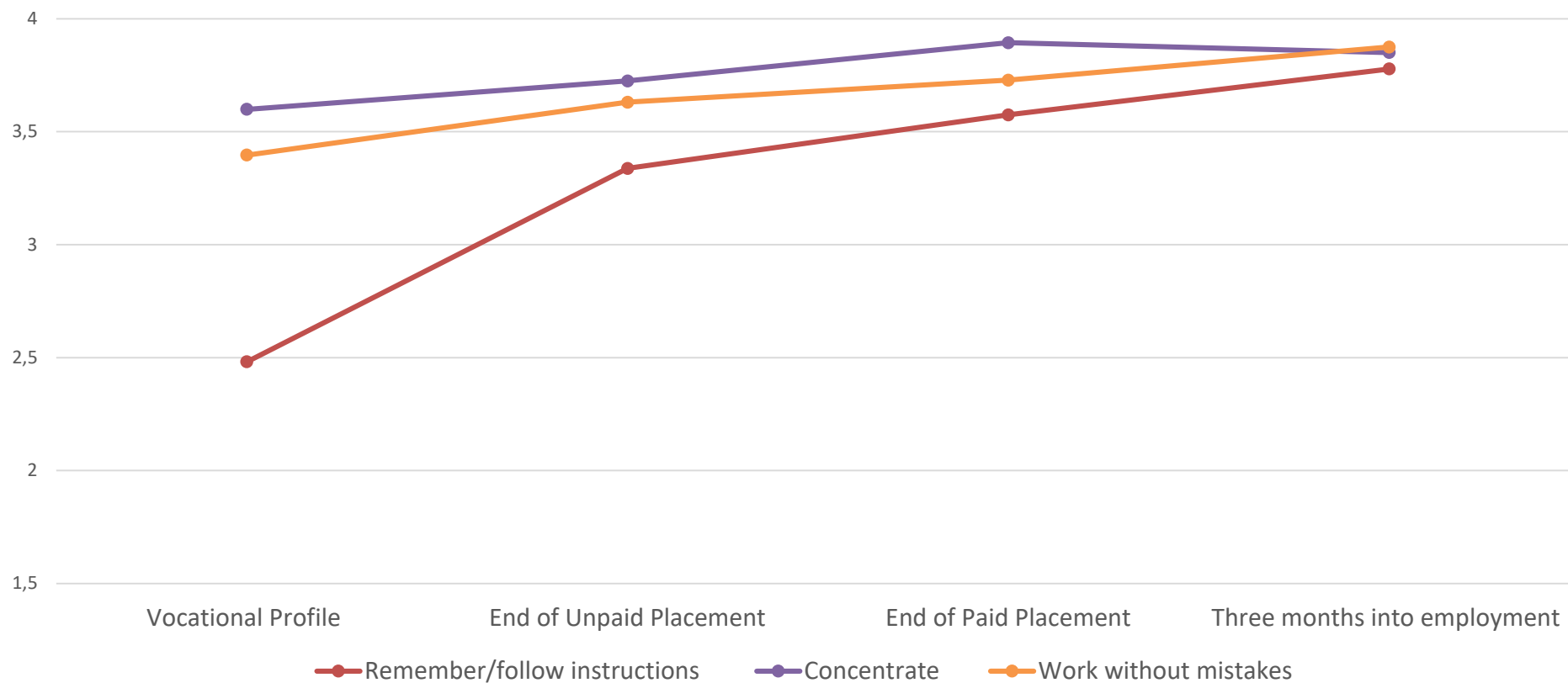
| Young people in job                  | Freq. | %   |
|--------------------------------------|-------|-----|
| Intellectual disability              | 31    | 30% |
| ASD                                  | 27    | 26% |
| ASD + Intellectual disability        | 12    | 11% |
| ASD + Specific Learning Disabilities | 15    | 14% |
| Specific Learning Disabilities       | 20    | 19% |





# Working skills development

Working skills development 1



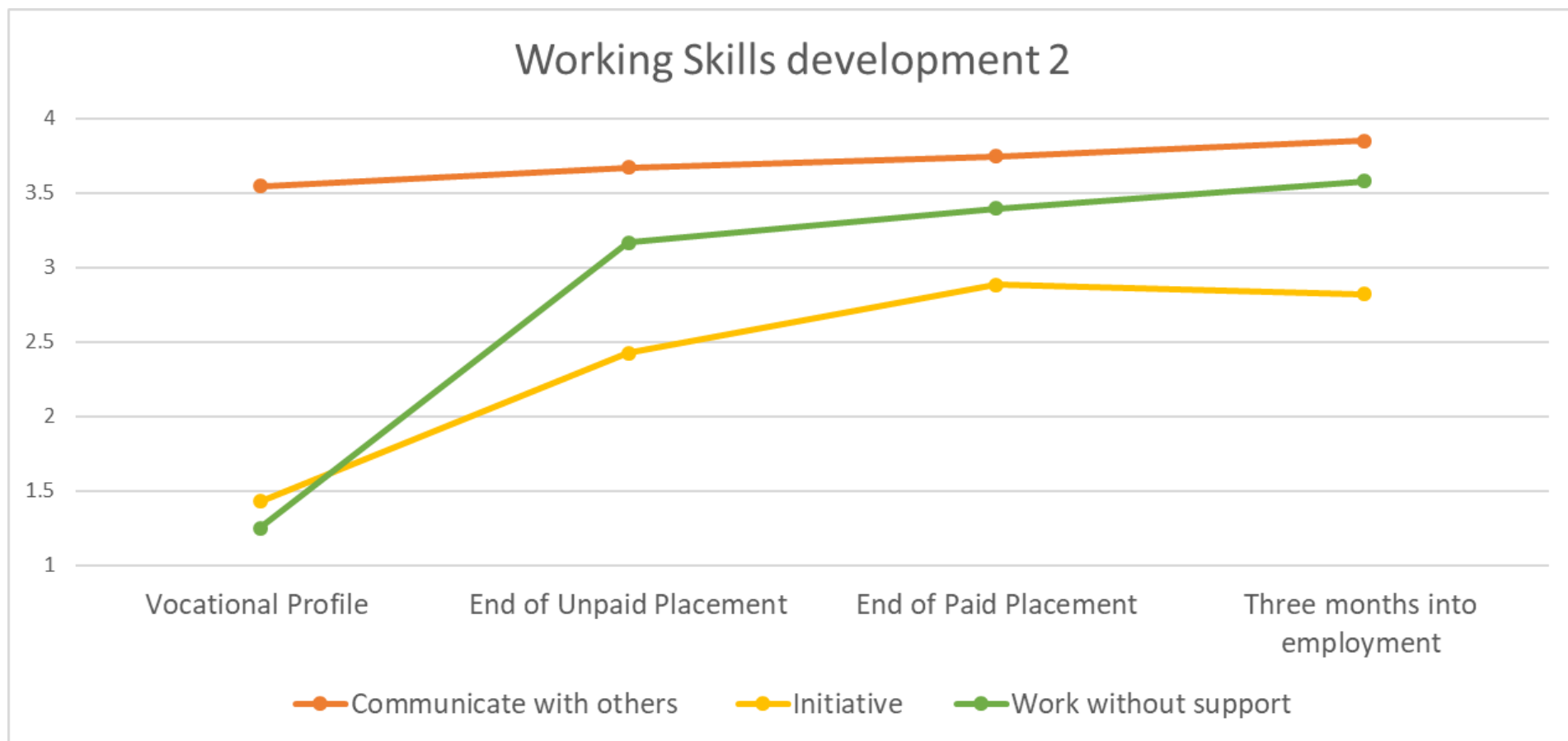
# Quotes about skills

**Young Person A:** *They (E2C staff) showed me what to do, they introduce me to the team. They explained what to do in case of fire. I was helped with travel, the first two times they were travelling with me, so that I could do independently.*



**Young person B:** *They helped me with the interview, arranged a mock interview, it was useful.*

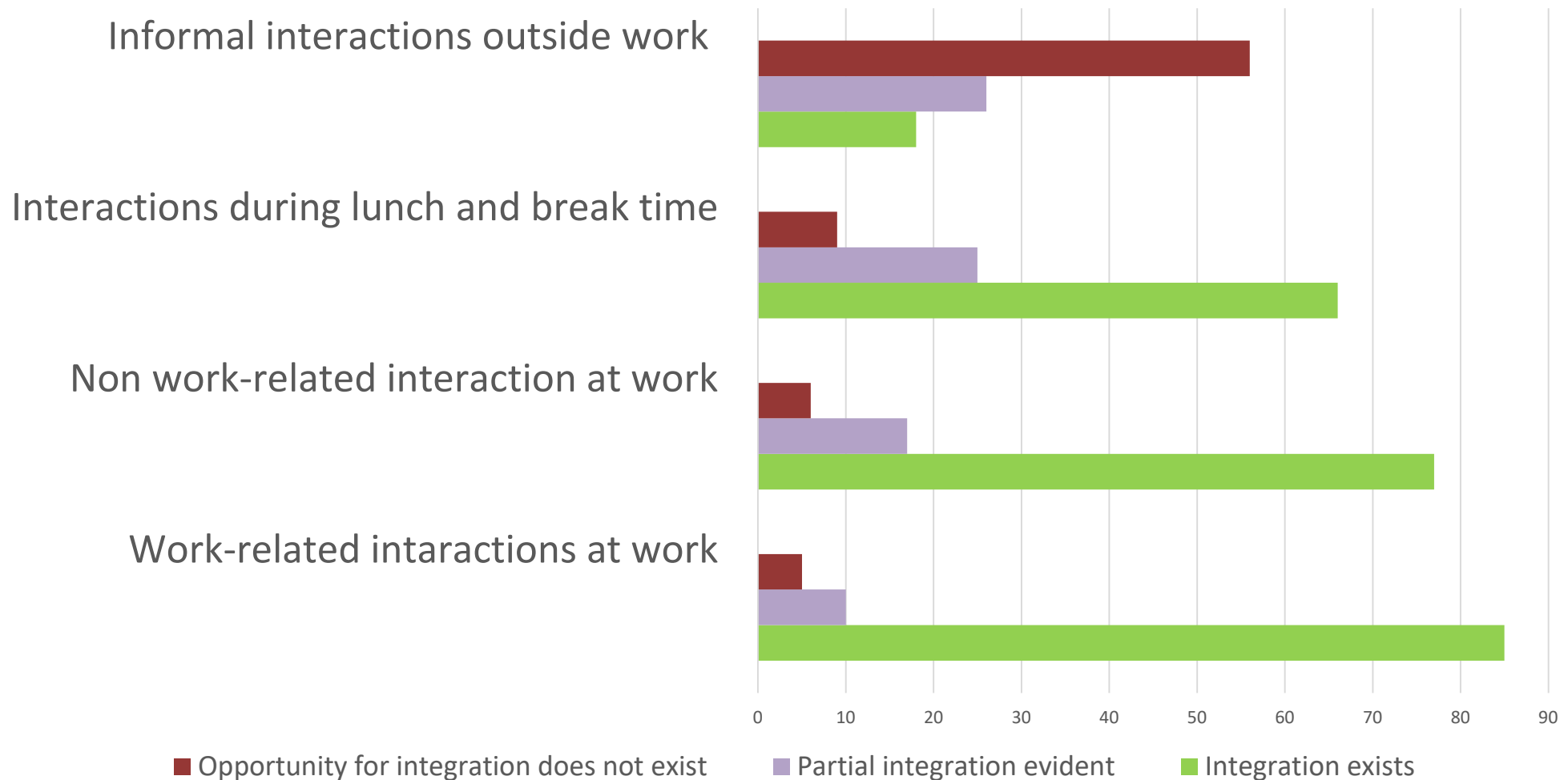
# Working skills development





# Social integration

## Social integration with co-workers



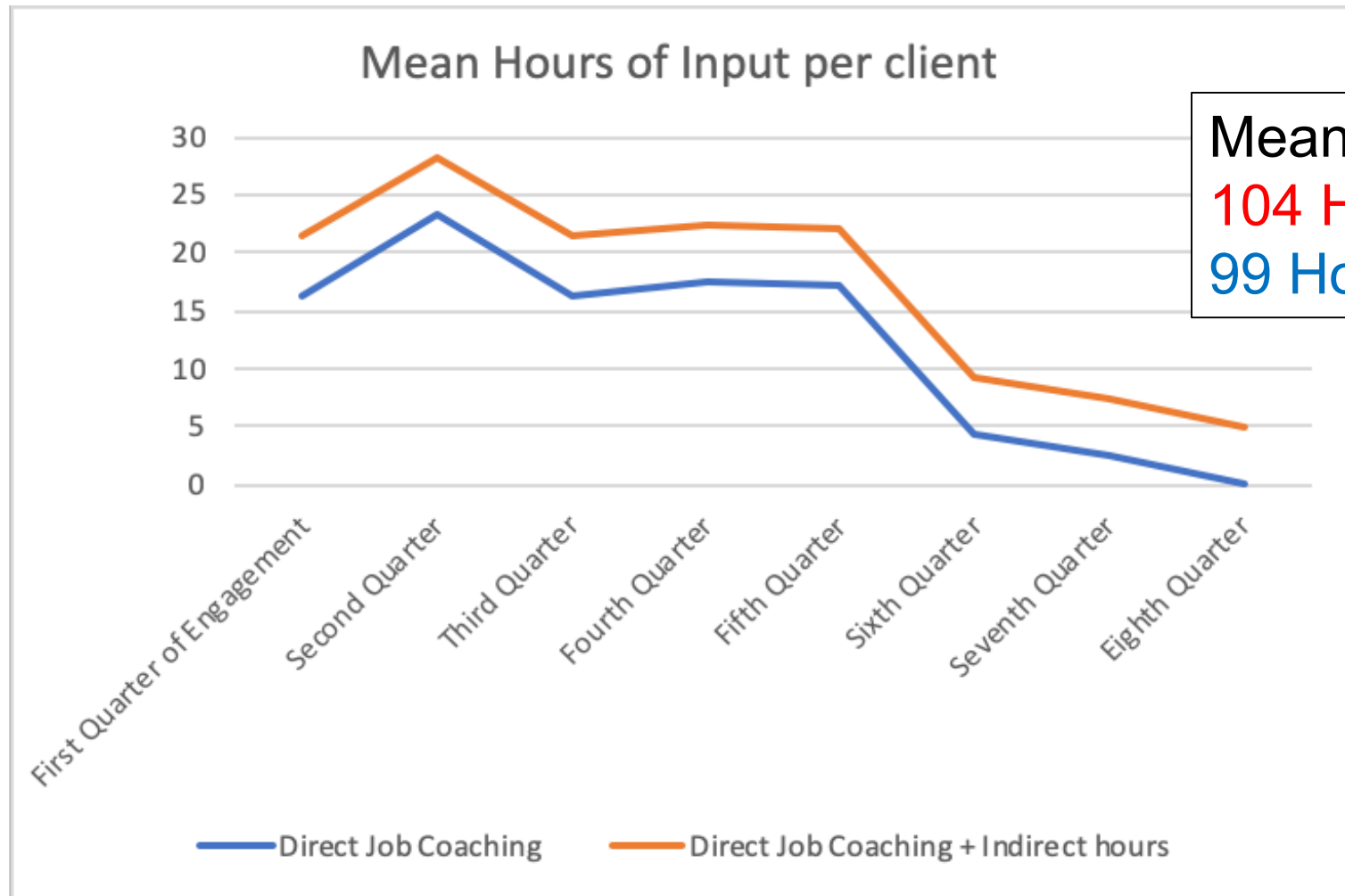


# Pathways delivered (2.5 years)

37% sample

| Status                                        | Number of young people | Percentage of total people referred | Total Mean Hours JC input |
|-----------------------------------------------|------------------------|-------------------------------------|---------------------------|
| Referral only                                 | 89                     | 36.8%                               | 38:22                     |
| Unpaid placement only                         | 30                     | 12.4%                               | 89:44                     |
| Paid placement only                           | 25                     | 10.3%                               | 87:24                     |
| <b>Employment</b> only                        | 19                     | 7.8%                                | 73:26                     |
| Unpaid to Paid placement only                 | 41                     | 16.9%                               | 73:02                     |
| Unpaid placement to <b>Employment</b> only    | 7                      | 2.9%                                | 133:44                    |
| Paid placement to <b>Employment</b> only      | 9                      | 3.7%                                | 119:26                    |
| Unpaid to Paid placement to <b>Employment</b> | 22                     | 9.1%                                | 99:09                     |
| <b>Total</b>                                  | 242                    | -                                   |                           |

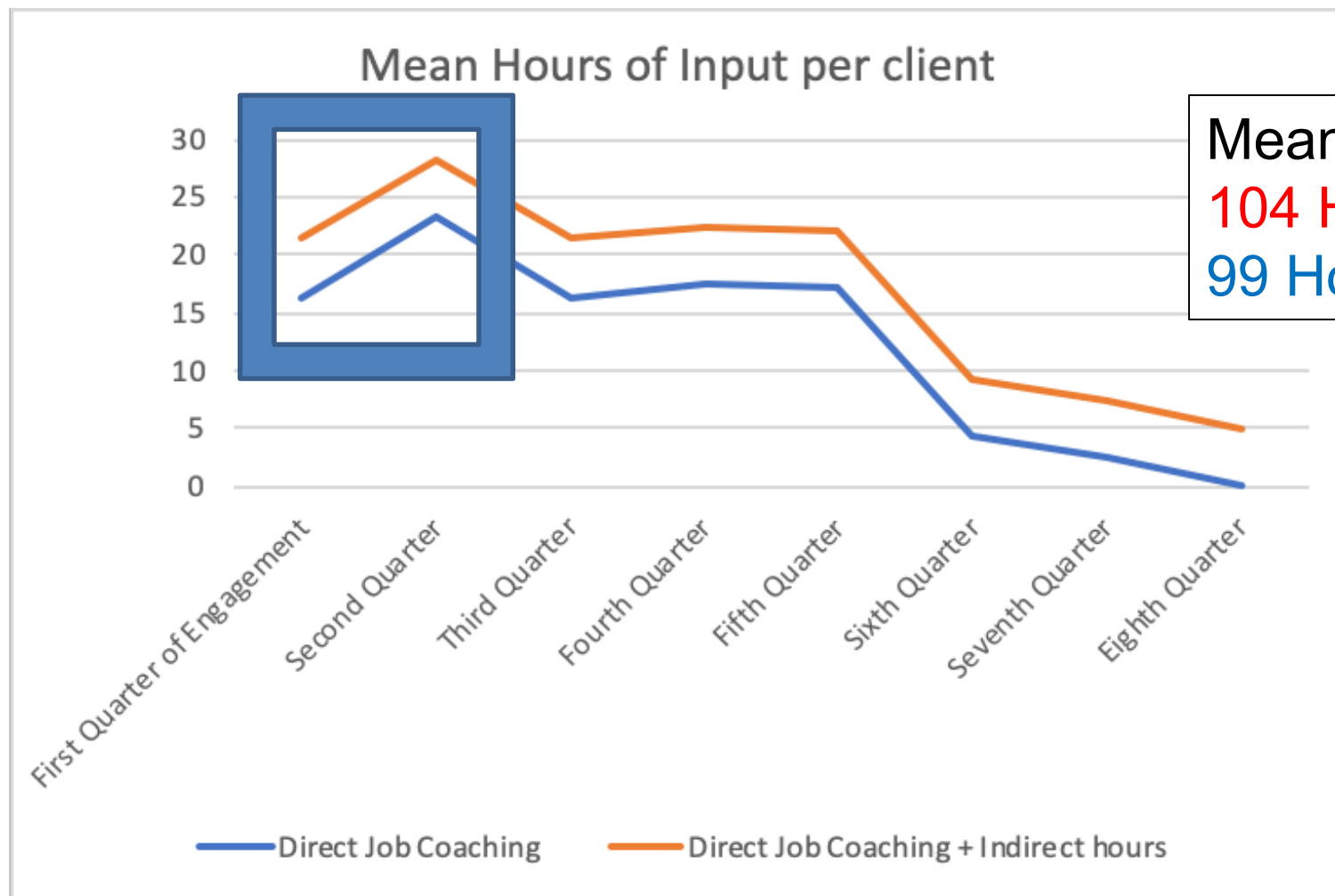
# Job coach input



**REDUCING COST OVER TIME?**

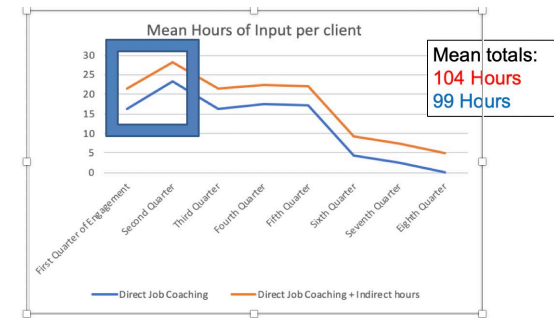


# Job coach input



**REDUCING COST OVER TIME?**

# Issues for us?



Length of time to engage young person in job search

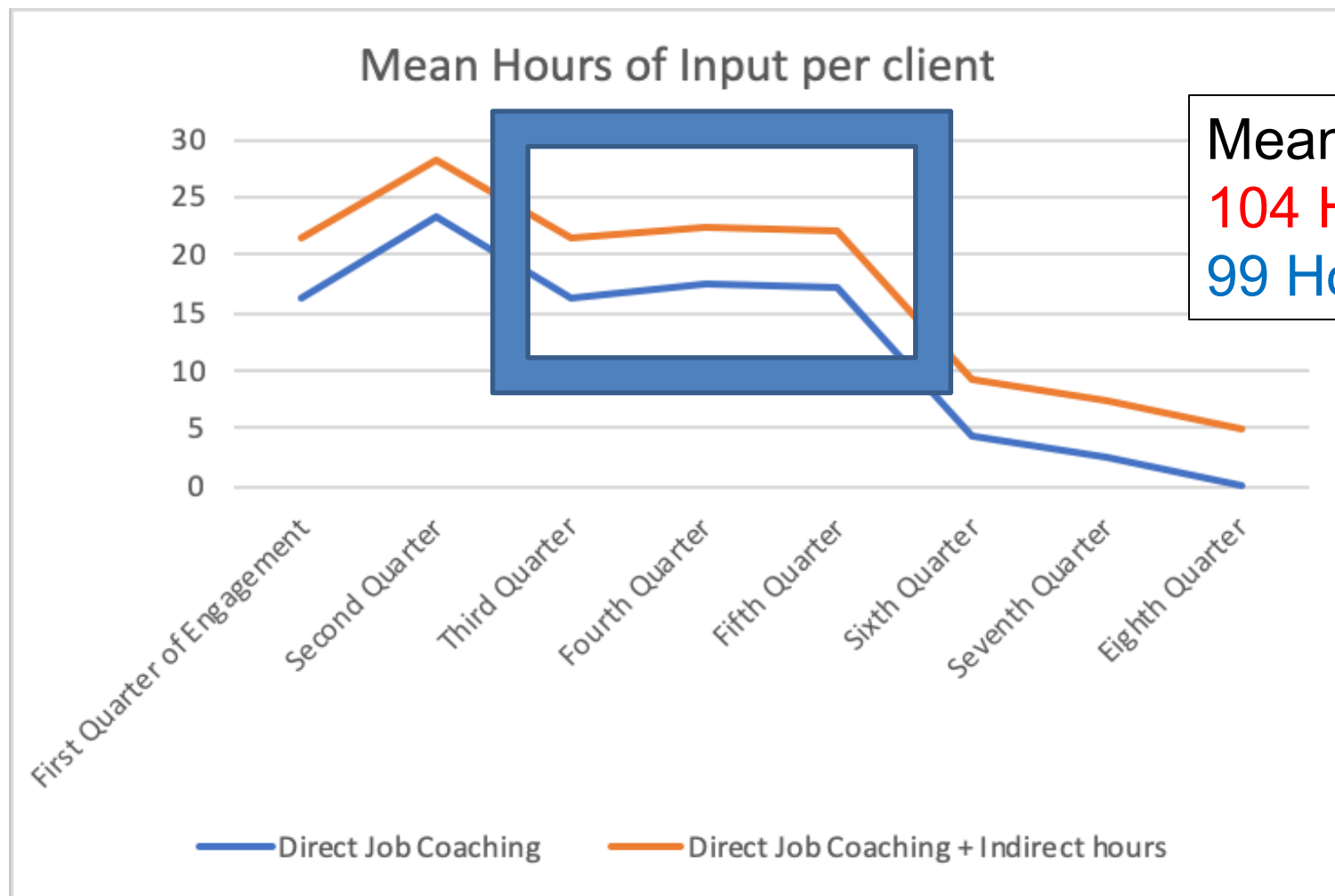
- Impact on family and people's motivation
- Intensity of input and reinforcement of early messages

Job coach recruitment, retention, and case loads

- Increasing employment in previously high unemployment areas
- Impact on wage levels

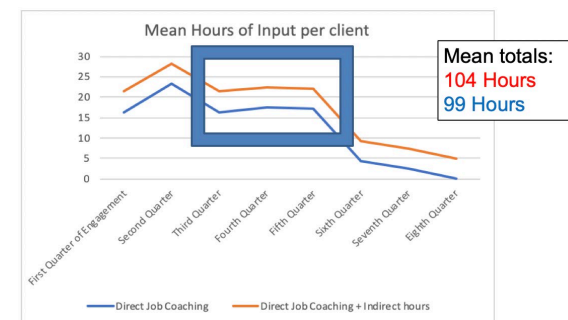


# Job coach input



**REDUCING COST OVER TIME?**

# Issues for us?



Length of time to engage young person in job search

- Impact on family and people's motivation
- Intensity of input and reinforcement of early messages

Job coach recruitment, retention, and case loads

- Increasing employment in previously high unemployment areas
- Impact on wage levels

Length of time involved in paid placement

- Effective use of tapered wage subsidies?
- Over reliance on 6 month set time periods?
- Danger of not driving forward decision to employ, leading to reduced job offer, and reduced take-up

when offered?





# Average hours of input by client group

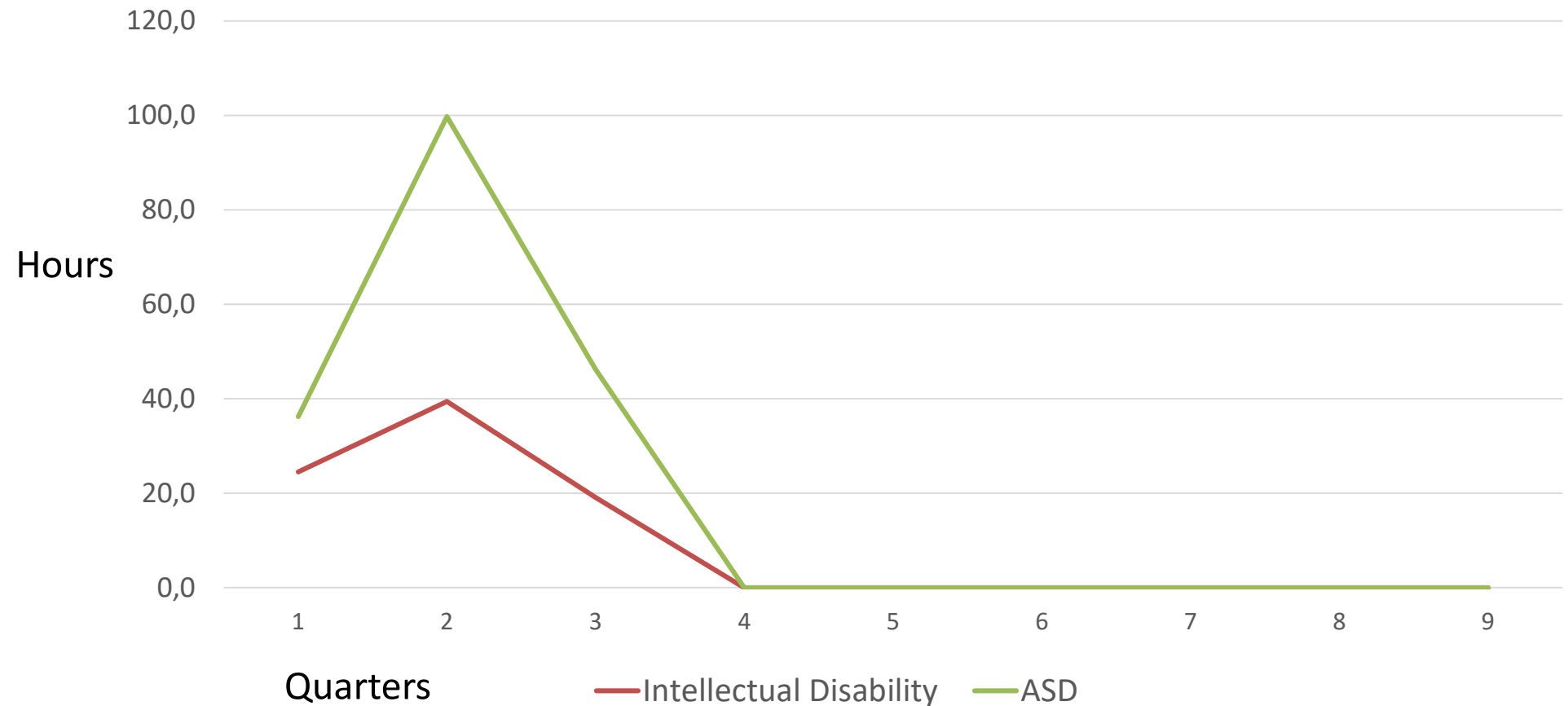
To get to employment...

- Autism Employed- 121hrs
- Specific Learning Disability- 103hrs
- ID Employed- 53hrs



# Phasing of Job Coach Inputs (Cases)

Phasing of Job Coach Input



# Issues for us?

Important to know what Job Coaches are delivering

- How long they are taking on key processes?
- Creativity in Vocational Profiling is crucial- how do we support it?
- Moving quickly to job finding and placement
- What are the factors leading to more input hours for people with ASD?
  - Dual diagnosis with intellectual disability?
  - Anxiety?
  - Workplace social acclimatisation?
- Good fading of support crucial- training implications?

How do funding models shape Job Coaching?

The role of Job Coach travel...

- Rural- 26hrs (SD: 27:05hrs) per paid job
- Urban- 9hrs (SD:10:09hrs) per paid job



# E2C DFN: Project SEARCH - background

Project SEARCH started at the Cincinnati Children's Hospital Medical Center, USA

Develop placements for people with intellectual disabilities in the hospital which could be turned into employment opportunities.

Developed in co-operation with a local school and vocational training provider

Between 2014 and 2017 the average percentage of paid jobs found is 64%

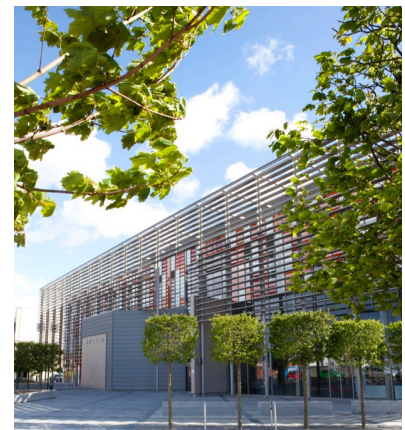
# E2C DFN: Project SEARCH: Supported internships

Focuses on young people aged 16 to 25 with Intellectual Disabilities and/or Autistic Spectrum Conditions.

**Host Business:** on-site base and internship placements

**Local College:** instructor, employment skills curriculum, interns

**Supported Employment Agency:** job coaching, vocational profiling





# E2C DFN: Project SEARCH: Supported internships

Typical Internships involve:

8-12 interns per cohort

One academic year (3 terms)

3 internship placements per young person

Internship rotations for career exploration and job skills

9am -10am Classroom base

10.00am -3.00pm Internship placement in host business

3pm-4pm Classroom base





# E2C DFN: Project SEARCH in Wales

## Project SEARCH site **ONE** (Year 1/2/3):

- Supported Employment Agency: **ELITE**
- College: **Cardiff and The Vale College**
- Host business: **Cardiff University**



## Project SEARCH site **TWO** (Year 2/3):

Supported Employment Agency: **Agoriad Cyf**

College: **Coleg Menai**

Host business: **BCUHB (hospital base)**



## Project SEARCH site **THREE** (Year 3):

- Supported Employment Agency: **ELITE**
- School: **Bridgend College**
- Host business: **ABMUHB (hospital base)**



# E2C DFN: Project SEARCH in Wales

- 61 interns in total
- 15 Female
- 46 Male



| Primary Diagnosis            | Number of interns |
|------------------------------|-------------------|
| Intellectual Disability      | 13                |
| Specific Learning Difficulty | 17                |
| Autistic Spectrum Condition  | 26                |
| Unspecified                  | 5                 |



- Average age: 19.5 years
- Age range: 17-24 years



# E2C DFN: Project SEARCH in Wales Data Collection (2016-2019)

We spoke to a sample of the interns for feedback (n= 31)

We spoke to some of the families and carers (n= 21)

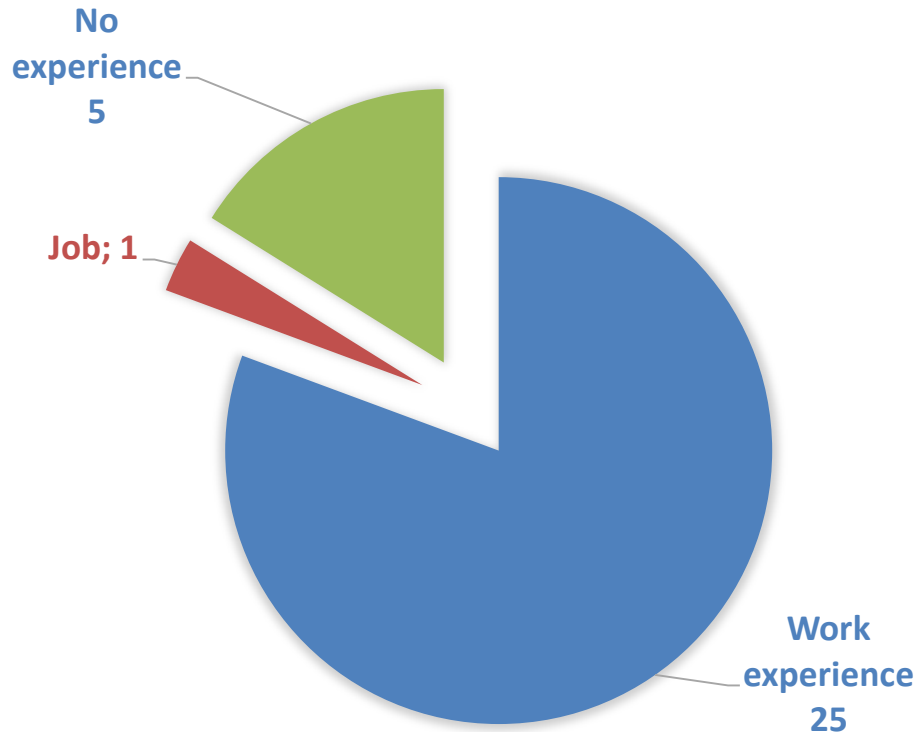
We collected feedback from employers/ mentors who had helped the interns in the workplace (online/postal survey)

We collected continuous data through the year



# Intern feedback: Previous experience

PREVIOUS WORK EXPERIENCE OR JOB



## Reasons for applying:

12 interns wanted a paid job.

10 interns applied because they wanted more experience

6 interns applied because it was a new course to try/ good opportunity

1 intern applied because other friends were applying for it.

*"I did not want to be on the dole, receiving money from the government. I wanted to see if I could get some work in my life. I did not want to be slouching at home all the time and break the monotony, get out of the house, try to learn something..."*

# Intern Feedback

- **Skills Learned:** Interpersonal skills/ Office etiquette / Prioritising /Deadlines / Using initiative/ Team work/ Numeracy/ Literacy/ Communication/ **CONFIDENCE**
- **What helped you the most?**
  - Real placements
  - Job Coach
  - Having a mentor
  - College Tutor



*I:A “Helped me know what it takes to get a job, boosted my skills and my confidence.”*

*I:C “I think as a whole it has built my confidence, (en)abled me to be more independent. It's shown me office work is the way to go for me.”*



# Intern feedback: Placements

Admin Assistant  
Assistant auditor  
Porter  
Assistant Lab Technician  
Coffee Shop Assistant  
Assistant Technician  
Library Assistant  
Receptionist  
Research Assistant  
Retail Assistant  
Domestic Assistant  
Personal assistant  
Maintenance assistant  
Catering assistant  
Pharmacy Assistant  
Sterile Services Assistant  
Medical Lab Assistant  
Radiology Assistant

- *"I had to do email enquiries from students about courses, open days etc. I had to answer emails or direct to the right person. I had to meet student, greetings and welcoming them. I had to ring staff up and say students are waiting. I was not confident at the beginning, but now yes."*
- *"I do the fake drugs for the students to practice their exams, in one of the glass bottles you have to put sugar in it and water injections and stuff. I prepare them ready for their exams and I tidy up the cupboards and fill up the drugs and stuff. I like that one better than the library, it's more fun."*





# Parent/ Carer Feedback

Reported increases in:

Happiness

Managing change

Social skills

Purpose in life

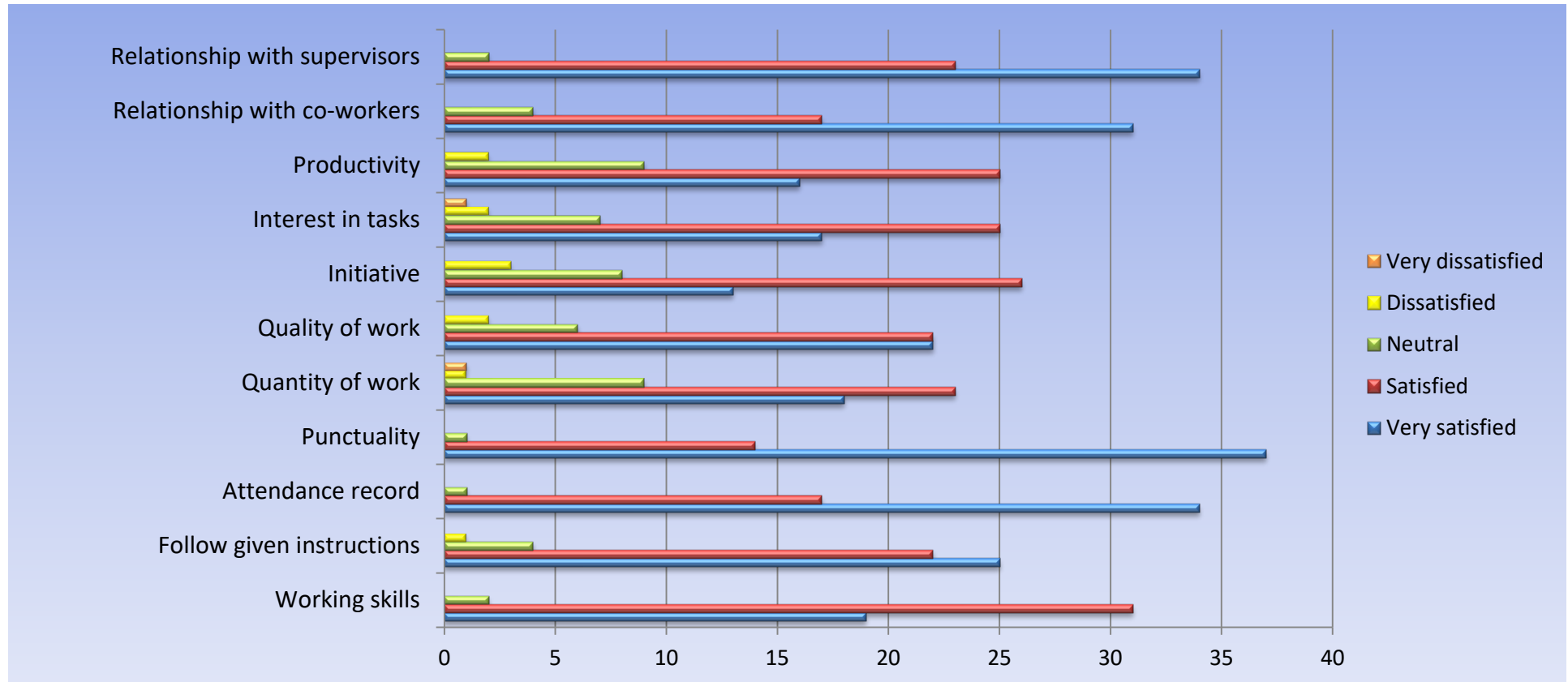
- Independence
- Work skills
- **CONFIDENCE**

*“He is confident and happy, he likes to go to work, it's given him a boost to be in the work environment with people who understand him”.*

*“It is giving him a purpose, he knows PS is giving him the skills for him to get a job.... It is showing him, and it is showing us, that he is capable of work.”*

*“I think that for us as her parents it's allowed us to see that she is more capable than we thought, that there are more options than we thought. I think we had quite basic expectations and our expectations have been risen”.*

# Employer/ Mentor Feedback



**Employer 4:** *“This department actively tries to be supportive of patients with learning disabilities; having someone with a learning disability join our work team was the next logical thing to do. It has been a positive experience for all involved”*

# E2C DFN: Project SEARCH in Wales – Paid Employment

|        | Year 1<br>2016-17 | Year 2<br>2017-18 | Year 3<br>2018-19 |
|--------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|
| Site 1 | 73%               | 64%               | 18% *             |
| Site 2 | -                 | 60%               | 25% *             |
| Site 3 | -                 | -                 | 62.5% *           |

\* Several interviews are pending/ awaiting results

- Average number of hours: **24**
- Range: **10-37.5** hours per week
- Paid UK minimum wage or higher
- Range of jobs internal and external to host business



# E2C DFN: Project SEARCH in WALES

## Moving forward

Promote the role of the job coach/ college tutor

More departments/ diverse job roles/ placements

Encourage and support workplace mentors

Work with employers and local governments to promote supported internships across Wales/ UK

Continuing to present and future interns to maintain their employment goals





# Conclusions

Job coaching is key:

Real employment

Develop skills and  
increase confidence

Social inclusion within  
the workplace





# Conclusions



## Paid employment

- Phased payments to ensure employers' commitment
- Ensure that there is an expectation of a paid job at the end of placement
- Business case for employing young people with Intellectual Disabilities and/or Autism
- Work with employers to remove barriers to a future job.



Dr. Stephen Beyer, Dr. Elisa Vigna, Andrea Meek, Grace Woolway,  
Jacob Meighan

**National Centre for Mental Health**

Cardiff University  
Hadyn Ellis Building  
Maindy Road  
Cathays  
Cardiff  
CF24 4HQ

Tel: +44(0)29 22510774

Email: [e2c@cardiff.ac.uk](mailto:e2c@cardiff.ac.uk)

Engage to Change project website:  
<http://www.engagetochange.org.uk/>



DFN Project | SEARCH



CARDIFF  
UNIVERSITY

PRIFYSGOL  
CAERDYDD

NCMH  
National Centre for Mental Health

ANY  
QUESTIONS

