



Employment Specialist (Young People)

- 📍 Recovery Connections, Sunderland
- 🕒 35 hours per week
- 💰 £30,067.44 per annum

About the Role

This is more than a job – it’s an opportunity to walk alongside young people as they rebuild confidence, rediscover their strengths, and take meaningful steps into employment.

As an Employment Specialist, you’ll support young people aged 16–25 who are in recovery from drug and alcohol use to access paid work, training, or education. Using a supportive, strengths-based approach, you’ll help people identify what matters to them and take practical steps towards achieving it.

You’ll hold a caseload of around 25 young people, supporting them for up to 9 months, with additional in-work support once they’ve secured employment.

At the heart of this role is belief – belief in people’s potential, in recovery, and in the power of meaningful work.

What You’ll Be Doing

Supporting People into Work

- Build strong, trusting relationships with young people
- Carry out personalised vocational profiling to understand each person’s goals, strengths and interests
- Support with job searching, applications, CVs and interview preparation
- Help people overcome barriers such as confidence, wellbeing, travel, or benefits

Working as Part of a Team

- Work closely with key workers, clinicians and wider teams to support each person holistically
- Take part in case discussions and contribute to joined-up care planning
- Advocate for employment as a key part of recovery

Engaging Employers

- Build relationships with local employers, colleges and training providers
- Identify opportunities in both the open and “hidden” labour market
- Support employers to create inclusive, supportive workplaces

- Provide advice on reasonable adjustments and ongoing support

Supporting People to Sustain Work

- Stay alongside people once they start work, offering reassurance and support where needed
- Respond early if someone is struggling, helping them stay in employment
- Work flexibly around the needs of both individuals and employers

Our Approach

You'll work within the **Individual Placement and Support (IPS)** model – an evidence-based approach that focuses on:

- Rapid job search based on individual preference
- Integration with treatment teams
- Ongoing, personalised support

We also work in a way that is trauma-informed, strengths-based, and rooted in lived experience.

About You

You don't need to have a perfect background – what matters most is your belief in people and your ability to connect, motivate and support.

We're looking for someone who:

- Is passionate about helping people overcome barriers and achieve their goals
- Can build meaningful relationships with a wide range of people
- Is proactive, organised and motivated
- Sees potential where others might see challenges
- Is comfortable working flexibly and creatively

Essential Experience & Knowledge

- Experience supporting people facing barriers to employment
- Understanding of the challenges faced by young people (16–25)
- Knowledge of supported employment approaches or willingness to learn
- Awareness of the impact of substance use and mental health on employment
- Strong communication and interpersonal skills

Desirable

- Experience working within substance misuse or mental health services
- Knowledge of welfare benefits and employment support systems
- Understanding of the IPS model

What You'll Bring

- A strengths-based, compassionate outlook
- Confidence in building relationships with employers and partners
- Ability to stay motivated and persistent, even when things are challenging
- Strong problem-solving skills and a “can-do” attitude
- Commitment to equality, inclusion and recovery

What We Offer

- A values-driven, supportive organisation
- Opportunities for training and development in IPS and beyond
- A chance to make a genuine difference in people's lives every day
- A team who truly believe in recovery and lived experience

Safeguarding

Recovery Connections is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children, young people and adults at risk. All roles are subject to appropriate checks, including DBS, references and right to work.

Equality, Diversity & Inclusion

We are proud to be an inclusive organisation where diversity is valued and everyone is treated with fairness, dignity and respect.

A Final Note

This role is about walking alongside people as they take brave steps forward. If you believe in potential, possibility, and the power of employment to change lives – we'd love to hear from you.