

# DOUBLE HELIX MODEL OF SUPPORT



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CHASE PRESENT  
A MODEL OF  
CAREERS  
SUPPORT FOR  
THOSE WITH  
SEND**

**O**n the 10 November 2022 three local services for young people - CXX, SEND PP and The Specialist Employment Service - presented the Double Helix Model of Support for those with SEND at the KMPF Annual Conference. This initiative is an innovative way to support young people with SEND in Kent and Medway with their career decisions, free at the point of access. We share our model here with the aim that it may help practitioners in other parts of the country to develop similar initiatives to support young people in their areas.

## What is the Double Helix Model of Support?

The Double Helix is a model of support which works on the basis of two premises:

1. It is normal for people to change their career paths, throughout life.
2. There is limited careers support within the wider education system to sufficiently support those who do, especially for those with SEND (Special Educational Needs and Disabilities).

The Double Helix Model of Support addresses both issues through putting support in place at the right times. Firstly, for young people with SEND who are looking at higher education options, SEND PP (part of KMPF) commissioned CXX, the young people's careers service in Kent & Medway, to provide additional one-to-one personal careers guidance for any young person interested in Higher Education in Kent & Medway (free

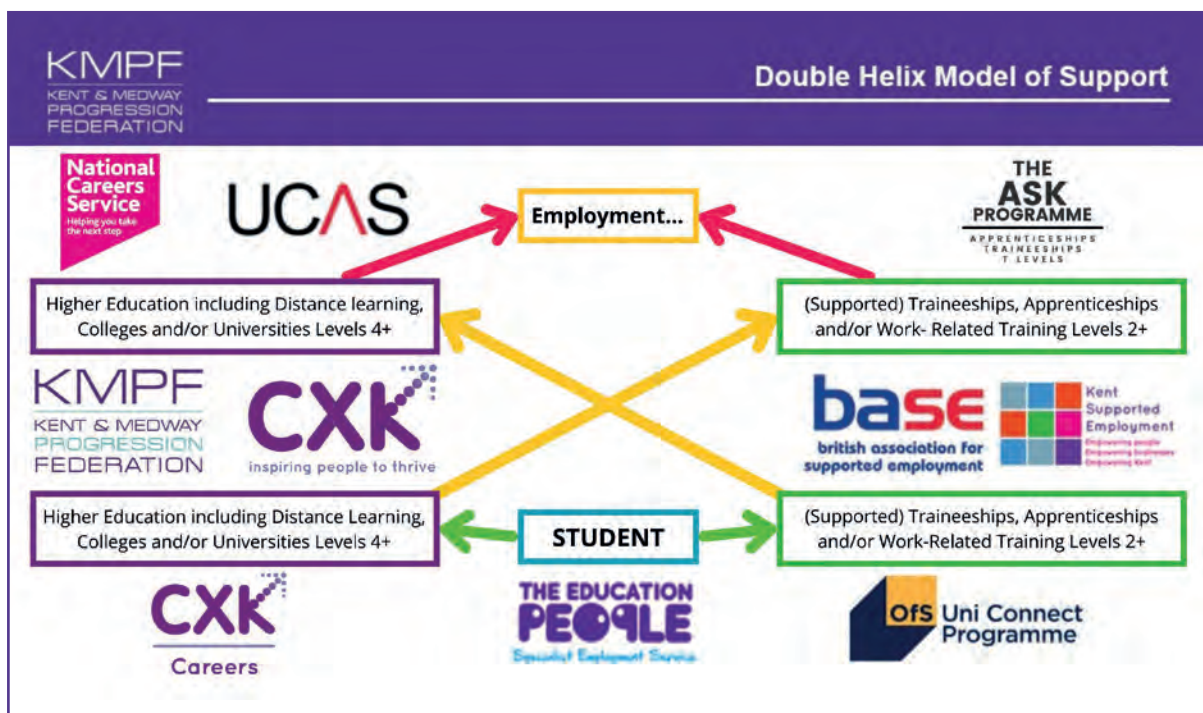
at the point of access and unlimited in the number of sessions per client). This approach recognises that those with SEND and their families may require additional careers support in making their choices and decisions.

Secondly, for those young people interested in work-based routes, we partnered with The Specialist Employment Service to support them in raising their profile with local schools and colleges; they offer support to young people with SEND looking at employment-based paths who require specialist support. Again, this recognises that young people pursuing these paths may require additional careers support to thrive.

Both services are free at point of access and with no age restriction, with no additional requirements to access them.

Collectively, we recognised that young people may start off down one path (higher education or employment) and then change their minds later with regard to what they wish to pursue. For these young people with SEND when they switch paths, having this support available is vital.

For example, the person who was at university and now wishes to pursue an apprenticeship and needs support can access The Specialist Employment Service, even though they have been to university previously. For the young person who had taken the work-based route but then later in life decides to pursue Higher Education, they





can access additional support via CXK's Level 6 qualified RCDP Career Advisers (funded via SEND PP).

Through this partnership of service providers, we created our Double Helix and can offer support for any young person with SEND who is exploring either of the two main pathways and requires additional support.

### What is The Specialist Employment Service?

The Specialist Employment Service (incorporating Kent Supported Employment) have been using the supported employment model to raise aspirations and create 'career pathways' for SEN students and adults into employment for the last 30 years. Over 70% of people referred to the service move into paid employment and sustain that role for over a year. Others move into FE courses, university, or apprenticeships. The service holds the belief that those who want to work can work and does not adhere to the phrase 'work ready' (who is on a Monday morning!).

The model is based around a 5-stage journey and includes professional careers guidance, vocational profiling, job analysis and carving, and job coaching using methods such as Training in Systematic Instruction and independent travel training. This ensures that the 'place, train and maintain' approach is adopted throughout.

Recently the service has launched the Supported Employment in Schools programme, currently training over 100 mainstream secondary schools in Kent to understand the model, raising aspirations for senior school staff, governors, teachers, and parents in understanding the wide spectrum of opportunities in employment SEN students can attain. This has proved popular with schools and helps them meet Gatsby Benchmarks and OFSTED requirements.

Equally important is the service's work with employers, helping them to understand how wonderful this talent pool of potential employees can be, supporting the employers to recruit in alternative ways to find the correct person for their company to meet their needs.

### What is SEND PP?

The Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Progression Partnership (SEND PP) was created as part of the Kent and Medway Progression Federation – KMPF (<https://kmpf.org>) whose remit is to reduce the gap in higher education (HE) participation between the most and least represented groups. One group persistently under-represented in HE is disabled students (including those with long-term health conditions, specific learning difficulties and/or mental health conditions).

Part-funded by the national Uni Connect Programme (<https://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/advice-and-guidance/promoting-equal-opportunities/uni-connect>), the SEND PP was formed in 2019. Its members are from local universities, FE colleges and a range of other local and national organisations, all committed to informing choice and improving access to education and employment. At the heart of the SEND PP is a group of disabled student ambassadors sharing their experiences to drive the network. Together we work towards our main aim of supporting transition into HE for disabled learners by promoting HE, post-16 education and career related opportunities.

Over the past 3 years, SEND PP has achieved an array of successes in line with our annual strategic action plan. Highlights include a multi-partner webinar series, adapting university outreach to be more inclusive/representative and creating a local guide to HE for disabled students. This year we are supporting the British Youth Council on a national student led campaign around accessibility – Access and Assistance for All (<https://www.byc.org.uk/uk/access-and-assistance>) as well as a collaborative university-led programme for disabled students and their parents.

To find out more about each of these services:

- <https://www.cxk.org/news/cxk-partners-with-kmpf-for-send-progression>
- <https://www.theeducationpeople.org/our-expertise/specialist-employment>
- <https://kmpf.org/schools-and-colleges/send-pp-what-we-do>

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