

*For immediate release*

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## **West Lea School pioneering workplace solutions**



**Nando's Enfield Retail Park Manager Oz Hassan, mentoring intern Lucy with the help of Assistant Manager Kingsley Fernandes**

**London, UK – 22 March 2018:** Enfield's West Lea School turns the traditional education model on its head – focusing instead on shifting education out of the classroom and into the real world. One of its core elements the school is currently developing is the Supported Internships programme.

This innovative approach enhances the employability of their aspiring young adults in the competitive job market while effecting a significant contribution to the success of the local economy.

West Lea is a specialist sports college for disabled children and young people with special educational needs. They champion independence and opportunity for their students at every stage of their development with its motto 'Learning for Life' at the forefront of its ethos. Developing strategic partnerships with local businesses, like Nando's and Fortuna Healthcare; is key to strengthening both communities and companies.

**Supported Internships:** A national scheme for young people aged 16 – 24 who have additional needs and are able and ready to move into employment, but require some extra support and guidance to do so. Interns spend most of their time with an employer learning the necessary skills required for the job. These unpaid work-placements last six months to a year. Wherever possible, this pathway to employment supports the young person to move into a paid job, upon successful completion of the programme.

West Lea's Head of Independence Renee Flourentzou: "the programme is mutually beneficial. Our Interns have a strong work ethic and are given a chance to make a positive contribution to the workforce while employers have access to a pool of hidden talent."

Carline Ikoroha, Supported Internships Job Coach: "we believe in our student's skills and their potential to thrive in a professional working environment." Manager Oz Hassan, "at Nando's, we try to do our bit for the good of the community, and I believe that young people should be given an opportunity to work." He maintains a close dialogue with the job coaches daily and is impressed with this commitment. "Carline is a positive role model as well as coordinating strategies to ensure success," he adds.



**The growing practice of giving students practical experience alongside teaching and learning is managed by a team of dedicated professionals at West Lea.**

Each assigned Supported Internships Job Coach will match the right candidate with a suitable skillset for the job to which they are assigned, and they work expertly to provide on the job support for both employer and intern. The support bundle for business includes the boring stuff like health and safety checks and those all-important risk assessments.

Moreover - information, advice and guidance to support the employer are on hand to assist your planning. Remarkably, this consultancy is offered entirely free of charge to the employer!

The [Disability-smart Awards](#); from the Business Disability Forum celebrate companies and brands that demonstrate an outstanding commitment to employing, working with and doing business with people that have disabilities; have introduced an inclusive Service Provider of the Year award. Further proof that diversifying the workforce is also proven to boost morale, motivation and productivity!

As well as this positive correlation, there are definite benefits to inclusive hiring. Companies like Nando's are certainly reaping the rewards that CSR delivers. This Enfield Retail Park restaurant has just announced they have offered both of our interns; Lucy (pictured) and her colleague Jaden, 16-hour employment contracts.

These young adults can increase their hours as they settle into the world of paid work with their heads held high.

## ENDS

Contact Information: For further details and press contact,

Brad Francis [brad@bradfrancismedia.com](mailto:brad@bradfrancismedia.com) Tel: 0771 542 1569

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### Notes for Editors:

**1. About West Lea School:** a specialist Sports College based in 3 locations in Edmonton, North London providing 'Learning for Life' for pupils aged 4 – 19 with special educational needs. Sue Tripp, Executive Headteacher: "Life for pupils at West Lea is a journey towards independence." Sue continues, "believing that to truly flourish children must feel valued, focus on what each child can achieve and celebrate their successes – as well as continually evolving the vital role they play within the local community." Ofsted accreditation 2018: Outstanding. For more information, please visit [www.westleaschool.co.uk](http://www.westleaschool.co.uk)

**2. About Business Disability Forum:** a world-leading membership body bringing together business and the public sector to build disability-smart organisations.



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