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First Four: Pioneering pupils selected for new internship scheme in Wokingham

Guests including MP John Redwood help officially launch the 'EmployAbility – Lets Work Together' Internship scheme at Wokingham

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- National Grid launches its innovative EmployAbility Programme for the first time in the South of England
- First four interns joined by local MP John Redwood for cake cutting ceremony to mark the occasion
- Programme gives students with learning disabilities one year's work placement with National Grid

National Grid has officially launched its 'EmployAbility – Lets Work Together Internship Programme' at Wokingham.

Chelsea Tallett, Stuart Waters, Daniel Silk and Dominic Spicer from nearby Addington School in Woodley have been selected to be the first to take part in the one year programme which will give them the chance to gain a wealth of work experience and boost future employment prospects.

The young interns were joined by Wokingham MP John Redwood for a special cake cutting ceremony to mark the launch.

The programme offers internships to young people aged between 17 and 22 who have additional learning needs. It's already been successfully run at National Grid offices in Warwick and Hinckley but this is the first time it has been run in the South of England.

Employability works on a simple but effective model. National Grid identifies roles the interns can fill while participating schools provide coaches. The coaches come into National Grid to learn about the jobs the interns will do, before training them up and settling them in.

As the intern's confidence grows, the coach backs away. Each intern spends about three months in the role and will do three placements over the course of their internship.

Other guests at the event were EmployAbility co-founder Mark Pickles, Wokingham Mayor Councillor Parvinder Singh Bath and National Grid's Director of UK Market Operations Cordi O'Hara.

Cordi O'Hara said: "I'm delighted to welcome our first four participants as we officially launch the EmployAbility Programme in Wokingham.

"This scheme will help boost the confidence of the participants, improve their future job prospects and we hope result in them finding paid employment.

She added "We've had some real success stories at Warwick and Hinckley with a number of former interns coming back to work for us or our contractors full time.

"We're looking forward to achieving more successes with the scheme here at Wokingham."

Mark Pickles said "The recruitment processes of some companies unintentionally screen out young people with learning disabilities creating barriers into employment.

"Employability breaks down these barriers, enabling participants to quickly fit into roles which give them practical experience in a business environment which boosts their self-belief, aspirations and career prospects."

Employability's launch at Wokingham builds on the success of National Grid's 'Work Inspiration Week' held earlier there this year. This enabled a dozen youngsters from the school to have a week's work experience at Wokingham.

For more information on EmployAbility go to:

<http://employabilityletsworktogether.com/>

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Notes for editors

Notes to Editors:

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- We own and operate the electricity transmission network in England and Wales, with day-to-day responsibility for balancing supply and demand. We also operate, but do not own, the Scottish networks. Our networks comprise approximately 7,200 kilometres (4,474 miles) of overhead line, 1,500 kilometres (932 miles) of underground cable and 342 substations.
- We own and operate the gas National Transmission System in Great Britain, with day-to-day responsibility for balancing supply and demand. Our network comprises approximately 7,660 kilometres (4,760 miles) of high-pressure pipe and 618 above-ground installations.
- As Great Britain's System Operator (SO) we make sure gas and electricity is transported safely and efficiently from where it is produced to where it is consumed. From April 2019, Electricity System Operator (ESO) is a new standalone business within National Grid, legally separate from all other parts of the National Grid Group. This will provide the right environment to deliver a balanced and impartial ESO that can realise real benefits for consumers as we transition to a more decentralised, decarbonised electricity system.
- Other UK activities mainly relate to businesses operating in competitive markets outside of our core regulated businesses; including interconnectors, gas metering activities and a liquefied natural gas (LNG) importation terminal – all of which are now part of National Grid Ventures. National Grid Property is responsible for the management, clean-up and disposal of surplus sites in the UK. Most of these are former gas works.

Find out more about the energy challenge and how National Grid is helping find solutions to some of the challenges we face at <https://www.nationalgrid.com/group/news>

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