

Build for the Future – Response to the Government’s Learning Disability Employment Strategy

Not many people with a learning disability have a paid job. Why do you think this is?

- Not enough money.
- Travel is difficult.
- Not understanding learning difficulties.
- Lack of confidence to start work.
- Employers are scared.
- My friend has 36 certificates, but still doesn't have a job.
- People with learning disabilities always get the last piece of the cake.
- Recession – no excuse.
- Some employers don't think we can do the job.
- Communication – between service users and employers.
- Not enough education.
- Benefits – some people think/will be worse off if found a job.
- Some service users earn more on benefits than they would when they get a job.
- Employees at job centres are not that educated in learning disability.
- Schemes that are set up by the local authorities have been ineffective in helping people with learning disabilities find jobs. Staff are not trained to do this. Need more support.

- Families don't want to encourage finding a job as they would lose out on benefits.
- Teaching people to take responsibility.
- Rate of pay! On average it's not very good.
- Access.
- Interview process – Adapt to the individual's needs, i.e. giving people more time to answer questions.
- Taster day before the interview will allow individuals to see whether the job is suitable for them.
- Employers willing to adapt job roles.
- Lack of (expectations) preparation by parents/carers to enable individuals to get in to employment.
- Fear of the unknown – employees and employers – more information.

Can you tell us about any projects or other things that have helped people get real paid jobs?

- Access to work/transport to work.
- Beacon Employment
- County Enterprises
- Social Services, day centres/Connect
- Shaw Trust, Prospects, Job Centre
- Connexions
- Mencap Employment Service
- Connect – support people by giving people confidence.
- Liaising with employers
- BILD – work experience
- Local colleges
- *Job coach*
- Training opportunities? Limited progression

Positive practice

- Interview process involves individuals with learning disabilities.
- *Enthusiastic approach to employing people with learning disabilities.
- Self employment – individuals pay for their own staff through access to work funding.
- Good employment agencies.

- Ongoing support.
- Helpful people in employment agencies.
- Support from people that understand learning disabilities.
- Look at a person's skills and NOT their label.
- Training and support to take part in interviews.
- ALL the agencies need to talk together.
- Garden work- paid and work experience.
- Training to work as carers.
- Day service/supporting people help find jobs for service users.
- Advocacy – we gain confidence – people listen to us – we are understood.
- BILD – proper pay for jobs.
- Thera (Grantham) – helped 5 people get proper paid jobs.
- Somerset Advocacy – employing a part-time member of staff.
- Need good support whilst working.

What changes need to be made that would help more people get and keep jobs?

- Change in benefits – for example when a person with a learning disability finds a job they come off benefits and it is difficult to get back on benefit if the job does not work out. **The law should be changed.**
- Employers need to be educated on learning disabilities. To treat them equally to other candidates that do not have a learning disability. **The law should be changed.**
- Government departments/public sectors need to employ people with learning disabilities.
- Day services need to focus more on training service users to find employment and teach skills needed for employment i.e. interview skills.
- Schools and colleges need to contact local employers and let them know about the workforce they may be forgetting.
- The job centres say ‘you can’t work, you have to go on the dole’.
- Work placements need to lead to ‘real jobs’.
- I’m still at college at 43!!
- Trade Unions being aware of learning disabilities.
- Why do people have to work 16+ hours – this should be more flexible.
- Parents need to have more information i.e. benefits – support – safe travel.
- Educating other employees to prevent bullying – name calling (Hate Crime).
- Government led enterprises that employ people with learning disabilities.

- Taster days.
- Government legislation to ensure employers have 'paid' workers who have learning disabilities.
- Benefit system to change – not lose benefits/keep percentage of it.
- Companies to go into schools/special schools to give information and encouragement to young people with learning disabilities.

How can we help more people believe that getting a job is a good idea?

- Training and courses don't lead to employment.
- People tend to know there will be support.
- People with complex needs are told they CAN'T work!
- Need people to talk to that understand learning disabilities.
- Taster day with employers.
- Volunteering is good but we want to be paid.
- More information for parents.
- Work on building confidence and self esteem.
- Work experience, voluntary work.
- Changing attitudes, people with learning disabilities can play an important role within the work place.
- Invite professionals to see the productive work that is being done by people who have a learning disability.

- Funding for Job Coaches, which will encourage employers to employ individuals who have a learning disability.
- Encourage employers to commit funds for paid employment.
- Speak to teachers at schools and colleges- their attitudes are negative.
- By helping people not to believe that they can't get a job.
- We are led to believe we can't get a job.
- Parents sometimes try to overprotect and hang on to the child part of the person.
- Good role models to talk to people about what it is like to have a proper paid job (real job).
- Financial stability.
- Educated while on transition – 16-18 model.
- Self-esteem build confidence – be independent.

Is there anything else you would like to tell us about getting more people jobs?

Yes, it should not always go to the people who have not got the difficulties because that is probably why us lot dip out for the most part.

It's teaching people with learning disabilities about commitment like learning to arrive at work on time.

**Additional Comments from learning disabled Service users and paid workers in
Coventry**

(Grapevine Coventry and Warwickshire Ltd).

Not many people with a learning disability have paid jobs. Why do you think this is?

Lack of work real experience in special schools. As well as supporting people to be travel trained to get there.

Because they may need to have someone to give them support to do the job and who will pay for this?

Because some people find it hard to reads through all the information and may not be able to complete application forms although they could do the job.

What changes need to be made that would help more people get job and keep jobs?

School and colleges need to introduce a wider range of vocational subjects at a level where people could progress onto mainstream courses. In practical subjects like textiles or dress making, carpentry and mechanics not just cooking and IT.

How can we help more people believe that getting a job is a good idea.

Provide grants for small businesses to help local companies support us through training on the job.

People need to see that they can do things like go on holiday and have savings, as well as making friends and getting out of the house.

Offering a benefit support service so that people manage their wages and their benefits as this can be really confusing and cause people to not apply for the correct tax credits etc.

Really clear leaflets about benefits you can claim while working and number of hours that effect benefits so people aren't so reluctant to come off benefits.

Train people with learning disabilities to talk to others about the paid work they do.