



# untapped talent: *the employer benefits*



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produced  
by  
Northern Devon  
Employment & Skills Board



# Business Benefits

The many benefits of employing someone with a learning disability (LD) and or Autism are varied. *Here are some examples.*





# Employing someone with LD / Autism is **GOOD** for your **BUSINESS** because it:

- ❁ Creates an opportunity to improve the efficiency of processes
- ❁ Has a positive impact on the rest of the workforce, often with higher morale and greater job satisfaction
- ❁ Offers mentoring development opportunities for existing staff
- ❁ Gives you access to a support network and expert advice
- ❁ Helps create a diverse workforce
- ❁ Meets your corporate social responsibility
- ❁ Allows you to re-evaluate training methods
- ❁ Produces positive PR



"Employing individuals who have a learning disability or autism has helped our company broaden its recruitment choices by providing a talent pool of committed, enthusiastic, loyal and motivated people.

We notice that colleagues with learning disabilities or autism tend to stay with us longer, which significantly reduces recruitment costs, gives stability and supports our diversity programme.

We would thoroughly recommend others to take advantage of some inspirational individuals who are capable of delivering real value in the workplace".

**Martin Mogford, Operations Director**  
**SWM & Waste recycling Ltd**

# GRANTS AND FUNDING

## WORK CHOICE

**£1,137.50 - £2,275 per person**

If you can employ a young disabled person aged **18-24** for more than **26 weeks** this programme could be for you.

You can claim a **wage incentive of £2,275** by offering more than 30 hours employment per week, or **£1,137.50** for between 16-29 hours per week.

There are three different levels of help for individuals, lasting from **6 months** to **two years** or more. This is the governments' national programme and eligibility criteria apply.

Pluss deliver Work Choice in the local area.

**0800 334 5525**

**[www.gov.uk/work-choice](http://www.gov.uk/work-choice)**

## ACCESS TO WORK

**Up to £40,800 per year**

An access to work grant can help with practical support to enable those with a disability to start work or stay in work.

The individual must be over sixteen, about to start a job or work trial, or be in paid employment.

The amount of grant depends on the needs and, subject to eligibility, can include things like taxi fares to work, adaptation or purchase of equipment, workplace job coach, or disability awareness training for colleagues.

From 1<sup>st</sup> October 2015 grants are capped to £40,800 per year.

**0345 268 8489**

**[www.gov.uk/access-to-work](http://www.gov.uk/access-to-work)**







# LEARNING DISABILITY?

People with a learning disability (**LD**) and or autism may find it harder to communicate, understand and learn. They may have additional needs compared to other members of the workforce, but they also bring additional benefits to business.

Many people with learning disabilities / autism do not consider themselves disabled, some have mild disability issues and the majority have untapped talents or skills that are desirable for employers. Despite many being keen to find work, more than 85% of people with learning disabilities or autism are unemployed.

Dyslexia and Dyspraxia are not considered learning disabilities, and are often referred as learning difficulties.

*Businesses that employ someone with LD can benefit from a good work ethic and low absenteeism:*



Less than **7%** of people with learning disabilities have a job.

**65% WANT ONE**

FACTSHEET

**1.5 million people in the UK have a learning disability.**

**About 200 babies born every week with an identifiable learning disability.**

**More than 1 in every 100 people in the UK population has autism.**

**Autism is a hidden disability; you can't always tell if someone has it.**

**Only 20 per cent of adults with learning disabilities are actively supported by disability services.**



## **Bicton College**

Delivers Pathway to Employment, a 12 month programme that supports individuals with learning disabilities gain and sustain employment. They work with the employer to match the intern's abilities to the employer's requirement.

[www.bicton.ac.uk](http://www.bicton.ac.uk)

## **South Devon College**

Has a dedicated team able to advise employers who are supporting people with a learning disability or have autism. In these cases the college is able to advise and guide prior to and during the placement or apprenticeship and is able to support job coaching at the learner's place of work. The college also works in partnership with the Torbay and South Devon NHS Trust and Pluss in running the Project Search programme using the local hospital in Torbay and community hospitals throughout South Devon for work placements.

[www.southdevon.ac.uk](http://www.southdevon.ac.uk)

## **Downs Syndrome Association**

Offers the Workfit employment initiative that bridges the gap between employers and employees with Down's Syndrome. Employers get free access to bespoke on-site assessment and training.

## **Jobcentre Plus**

Offers impartial recruitment support to help match you with a potential candidate. A Jobcentre Plus Work Coach can offer employers guidance on accessible applications and recruitment as well as governments' Access to Work fund.

[www.gov.uk](http://www.gov.uk)

## **National Autistic Society**

NAS offer free online resources and paid-for specialist training for businesses including a lunch and learn introduction, managing employees with autism, fight through to a corporate solutions package. NAS also offers workplace assessments.

[www.autism.org.uk](http://www.autism.org.uk)

## **Westward Pathfinder**

Is a charity with centres in Exeter, Torquay, Barnstaple and Bideford offering a variety of support to people who are looking to get back into work. This can include a range of employability knowledge, maths and English and job specific skills such as Food Hygiene, First Aid, etc. through Skills Academies run in conjunction with Jobcentre Plus and local employers.

[www.westwardpathfinder.org.uk](http://www.westwardpathfinder.org.uk)

## **Pluss**

Pluss is a social enterprise that supports more than 5000 individuals with disabilities into employment each year. Pluss offer businesses hassle free recruitment with a pre-screening and matching service and "try before you hire" work trials. They provide ongoing guidance and support for your employee.

[www.pluss.org.uk](http://www.pluss.org.uk)

## **St Loyes**

Provide support and employment training for people with disabilities enabling them to find and sustain employment. A specialist Workpace Support service helps employers and employees find practical solutions to resolve health and disability related difficulties.

[www.stloyes.ac.uk](http://www.stloyes.ac.uk)

*For further details of what each of these Supported Employment Providers offer, please see the accompanying matrix.*



<b>Employment support available to business</b>	Bicton College Carol Brown 0139 556 2383	South Devon College Libby Richards Zoe Griffiths	Downs Syndrome Association (Workfit) 0333 121 2300	Jobcentre Plus Oliva Shillabeer 01626 236 311 Sarah Swain 01392 474 886 Caron Sharman 01392 474 935	National Autistic Society Catherine Leggett 0207 704 7450	Westward Pathfinder Tim Barber 0744 604 1528	Pluss Claire Mills Simon Booth 0800 334 5525	St Loyes Jonathan Nicholls 0783 451 7217
Adaptions of equipment		✓			£		✓	
Apprenticeship		£	✓				✓	
Autism specialist		✓			✓			
Employer Advisor Team	✓	✓	✓	✓	£	✓		
Downs Syndrome specialist			✓					
Employer Mentor	✓	✓	✓			✓		✓
Employment Law signposting				✓				
Free resources for employers		✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓
Free services for employers	✓	✓	✓				✓	✓
Help with funding/grants	✓	✓		✓	£	✓	✓	
Job Coach	✓	✓	✓		£		✓	✓
Jobcentre Plus Work Coach				✓				
Recruitment - job matching	✓		✓	✓		✓	✓	✓
Recruitment - pre-screening candidates	✓		✓	✓	£	✓	✓	
Recruitment - support	✓		✓	✓	£		✓	✓
Supported internship	✓	✓	✓		£			
Talent Pool of potential recruits	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓
Traineeship			✓			✓	✓	
Training - corporate packages					£			
Training - Disability awareness	✓	✓	✓		£		✓	£
Training in systematic instruction					£		✓	✓
Work experience / work placement	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓
Working interviews/work trials	✓		✓	✓	£	✓	✓	✓
Workplace assessment	✓	✓	✓		£		✓	✓

**Key** ✓ service offered free to employers    £ paid service



# 3

## STEPS

### to hiring someone with a **LEARNING DISABILITY**



Identify the tasks in your organisation that might be suitable for someone with learning disability or autism. For example; filing, checking timesheets, data entry, repetitive tasks, (manufacturing processes can be ideal).



You can either carve a new job role that includes these activities, or when a vacancy becomes available in your organisation, assess whether it may be suitable.



Choose a supported employment provider using the matrix on page 5 to help you. They will guide you through the process and if you are eligible, help you access funding.



the employer benefits

## EXAMPLE PROCESS



A vocational profile of the student's skills is undertaken by the Supported Employment Provider to identify a good match.



An Internship Co-ordinator or Supported Employment Provider meets with the employer to discuss the process and the options, e.g. work placement, internship or paid job, and explain the benefits, both for the business and the student.



The Provider job-matches the individual seeking work to an appropriate opportunity. Interviews take place.



A Job Coach will visit the workplace and analyse the tasks within the work role so they can teach the individual the process and skills that are required. A work trial may be arranged.



An agreement is entered into between all concerned to ensure that everyone is aware of what is expected of them.



The individual commences their job, internship or work placement with the support of the Job Coach. When the individual, Employer and Job Coach are confident, the role of the Job Coach will fade. Support can be reinstated at any time.



# frequently asked QUESTIONS



## **MIGHT IT EFFECT PRODUCTIVITY?**

The job coach will work with the person to ensure they pick up the tasks required of them to make sure productivity is not affected.



## **WILL IT TAKE UP A LOT OF TIME FOR EMPLOYER AND STAFF?**

There is some input needed, but the Supported Employment Provider or Internship Co-ordinator will set this out very clearly from the start and it's regularly reviewed. The job coach will do much of the training after an initial induction. They also provide support so staff shouldn't find themselves over-burdened.



## **ARE THERE HEALTH AND SAFETY ISSUES?**

Individuals are covered by the employer's insurance as for any employed staff. For the vast majority there will be no need for any considerations beyond those that exist for all staff. If there are particular issues, these will be discussed openly with the employer and strategies agreed between the provider, employer and individual. If this is the case, support will be provided to implement any additional control measures. The provider will do an initial risk assessment at the job matching stage, which should prevent individuals being placed in unsuitable environments.



## **DO WE KNOW HOW TO COMMUNICATE EFFECTIVELY?**

The job coach can support both staff and employer to communicate effectively with the individual. The job coach will be available to the employer, on site or at the end of a phone, if issues should arise.



## **CAN SOMEONE WITH A LEARNING DISABILITY AND OR AUTISM REALLY DO ANY OF THE JOBS I COULD OFFER?**

Employers are often surprised at just how much a person with a learning disability / autism is able to do, once the right support is in place. It may also be useful to think how a specific role might be 'carved' for an individual if tasks were allocated differently across a team. Some employers have found productivity is increased when they take this approach, (e.g. freeing up existing staff from repetitive work, so they can do more complex tasks).



## **WHAT WILL MY STAFF OR MY CUSTOMERS MAKE OF IT?**

The job coach can support the staff to understand the abilities and needs of the individual. It is rarely a problem for existing staff and often brings out the natural support from colleagues within the team. Customers and clients are often pleased to see a diverse workforce, especially if it helps the workforce to better reflect the client group. If issues do arise, the job coach can help negotiate solutions and corporate training options are available for staff teams.



## **WILL A JOB COACH JUST GET IN THE WAY AND BE AN EXTRA BURDEN?**

Job coaches are very skilled in making their presence as unobtrusive as possible. They are likely to be around quite a lot to start with - but this is very helpful to the employer in getting the individual trained up to do the job, and ironing out any teething issues. As the individual grows more confident the job coach will begin to withdraw, continuing light-touch monitoring. They will always be available to the individual or employer if additional support is needed, (e.g. if the employer introduces new or more challenging tasks).



## **WILL I FACE SOME KIND OF EQUALITY / DISCRIMINATION CHALLENGE IF I DON'T RECRUIT THE PERSON AT THE END?**

Employers are not obliged to recruit at the end of the work trial or placement, although this is the preferred outcome. Employers are only expected to recruit the individual if there is a vacancy and they are the best candidate for the job. Providers will expect them to apply their normal recruitment procedures - with reasonable adjustments - as for any disabled job applicant.





## Apprenticeships

Typically offer a one-year, paid employment opportunity that includes some training, usually one day a week through a learning provider, although this can be carried out in the workplace. Apprentices are employed for a minimum of 30 hours per week, including the training element. Incentives are available for eligible employers.

## Supported Internships

Are a partnership between an education and/or supported employment provider, a local employer and a disabled young person aged 16 - 25. Internships are flexible, lasting up to a year. They help disabled people gain skills, confidence and, where applicable, vocational qualifications. Afterwards, the employer invites participants to apply for vacancies that arise.

## Traineeships

Usually 3-6 months, short-term, employment with a view to developing skills and qualifications to enhance a CV, develop confidence and help secure a job in the longer term. A national programme that can be paid or unpaid.

## Work Experience or Work Placements

Can be unpaid or, ideally, paid, with an interview or job offer at the end. They are flexible and usually last no longer than six months.

## Working Interviews or Work Trials

Are unpaid and offered for an agreed short-term period. They allow both parties to "try before they hire" to get a strong match for long-term success.

See our Glossary of Terms on page 11 for further information.

# EMPLOYERS: GET INVOLVED BY OFFERING ONE OF THESE...

Your Supported Employment Provider will be able to help you decide which one is most appropriate for your needs.

Find your TALENT Pool through your Supported Employment Provider or:

### Jobcentre Plus

Offers an impartial, free service. Work coaches will help with your recruitment needs for Successful job matching. They can advise you on Access to Work grants.  
Sarah Swain: 01392 474 886—[Sarah.swain@dpw.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:Sarah.swain@dpw.gsi.gov.uk)  
Caron Sharman: 01392 474 935—[Caron.sharman@dpw.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:Caron.sharman@dpw.gsi.gov.uk)  
Olivia Shillabeer: 01626 236 311—[Olivia.shillabeer@dpw.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:Olivia.shillabeer@dpw.gsi.gov.uk)

### Project Search

Project Search is a twelve month supported internship Programme that is hosted by Torbay Hospital. Businesses can benefit by employing Project Search recruits at the end of their training.  
Marise Mackie MIEP: 01271 375 402  
[Marise.Mackie@pluss.org.uk](mailto:Marise.Mackie@pluss.org.uk)

### Workfit

Workfit connects employers and employees with Downs Syndrome. They offer workplace assessments And bespoke employment training and the first sessions are free.  
0333 1212 300—[www.dsworkfit.org.uk](http://www.dsworkfit.org.uk)

### Notes

The object with all these options is to make it As easy as possible for employers to experience the Benefits of hiring individuals with learning Disabilities or Autism, so that they offer paid Employment at the end of the process.

All partners commit to the programme, although an employer can withdraw at Any time if they are unable to go forward with a placement or job.

Businesses often employ individuals who have trained "on the job" in this way, as they have demonstrated their loyalty, conscientiousness and desire to work during their internship or placement.





## **BASE: British Association for Supported Employment**

This is the national trade association representing the agencies that secure employment for people with disabilities. Whilst BASE does not endorse any of its members, it does want to hear from employers who feel that a service has not met your expectations.

01204 880 733 • [www.base-uk.org](http://www.base-uk.org)

## **British Institute of Learning Disabilities**

BILD helps develop the organisations who provide services and the people who give support to those with LD. Established for forty years, their business offer includes consultancy, induction programmes to support new staff, positive behaviour support and workforce development.

[www.bild.org.uk](http://www.bild.org.uk)

## **Business Disability Forum**

Builds disability-smart organisations to improve business performance by increasing confidence, accessibility, productivity and profitability.

0207 403 3020 • [www.businessdisabilityforum.org.uk](http://www.businessdisabilityforum.org.uk)

## **Clear Kit**

A paid-for online resource to help organisations in their journey to becoming diversity confident.

0845 293 0963 • [www.theclearcompany.co.uk](http://www.theclearcompany.co.uk)

## **Disability Law Service**

Free employment law factsheets from this charity, including; employment rights, equality and discrimination. Some phone advice available.

[www.dls.org.uk](http://www.dls.org.uk)

## **Foundation for People with Learning Disabilities**

The work of the FPLD influences government and local authorities so that their services better meet the needs of those with LD. The Foundation has been offering tailored learning disability training to businesses for more than ten years. It also offers regular LD awareness training sessions in London and has a useful A-Z of LD on its website.

[www.learningdisabilities.org.uk](http://www.learningdisabilities.org.uk)

## **Inclusive Apprenticeships**

NIACE has developed an Employer Toolkit in conjunction with employers and experts in the field. Designed for employers that want to develop accessible and inclusive apprenticeships, it provides practical information, sources of support and business case studies.

[www.employer-toolkit.org.uk](http://www.employer-toolkit.org.uk)

## **Recruitment & Disabled People**

The government website offers factual guidance including how to make Reasonable Adjustments and Disability Rights.

[www.gov.uk/recruitment-disabled-people](http://www.gov.uk/recruitment-disabled-people)

# GLOSSARY OF TERMS

## A Guide to the Jargon

**Access to Work**

A national grant programme of up to £40,800 per year for practical support, training, or adaptations in the workplace.

**Apprenticeship**

Government initiative with twelve months on the job practical learning, skills training and a study element.

**Disability Confident**

Government campaign and information portal with free workplace posters.

**Employer Mentor**

A business support role to help employers during the recruitment and employment process.

**Job Coach**

A specialist who will work on site to support an individual learn and successfully maintain their job role.

**Jobcentre Plus Work Coach**

An impartial service offering employers signposting and guidance, particularly around recruitment.

**Pathway to Employment**

A supported Internship 12 month programme delivered by Bicton College.

**Project Search**

12 month initiative that develops employability skills for a cohort of interns in a large host business so they can find employment at the end.

**Reasonable Adjustments**

Legal term introduced under the Disability Discrimination Act. Most reasonable adjustments are simple and inexpensive for employers to do.

**Supported Internship**

Up to 12 months in duration, internships are developed flexibly, based on employer needs with support provided throughout.

**Systematic Adjustments**

A Systematic Instruction trainer takes responsibility to ensure the learner can undertake a specific task step-by-step.

**Traineeship**

Usually a 3-6 month short term employment option (paid or unpaid) to help people become more work ready. National programme.

**Work Choice**

Government initiative to support people with disabilities to secure and sustain employment.

**Work Experience**

Usually unpaid short-term employment experience lasting a week or so to help familiarise someone with a work environment.

**Work Placement**

Can be unpaid, or ideally paid, with an interview or job offer at the end. These are flexible and last no longer than 6 months.

**Work Trial**

Provides an opportunity for candidates to be assessed on their ability to do the job. A short-term, unpaid, flexible arrangement.

**WorkFit**

Specialist initiative offering free support to employers who would like to recruit someone with Down's Syndrome.

**Working Interview**

Provides an opportunity for candidates to be assessed on their ability to do the job rather than talk about it. Unpaid.

**Working Assessment**

A specialist carries out a workplace visit and identifies suitable tasks for candidates and undertakes a risk assessment.

*Descriptions may vary between providers. Please check with your Supported Employment Provider.*







# disability confident

## great minds

## think differently

People with unique talents give you a competitive edge, helping you stand out from the crowd.

Celebrate diversity. Employ people with a different outlook and approach. Dare to think differently, and let your business grow.



For more information visit:

[www.gov.uk/dwp/disabilityconfident](http://www.gov.uk/dwp/disabilityconfident)