



Tap into the talent

**Employing People
with Learning Disabilities**

**A TOOLKIT FOR EMPLOYERS
IN NORTH WALES**

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People with Learning Disabilities are very motivated to work. We want to support employers in North Wales to Tap Into the Talent!

Employers with experience of employing people with learning disabilities have told us that in the right job, and with the right support they make valued and valuable employees. There are many important business benefits to employing someone with a learning disability.

We hope that this toolkit will raise awareness of those benefits and give employers in North Wales some practical tools to help them open up their recruitment practices and their workplace to people with learning disabilities.

We are committed to supporting employers to do just this. Read on to find out more about the **North Wales Employer Offer** and how we can practically help you employ the right person for your business.

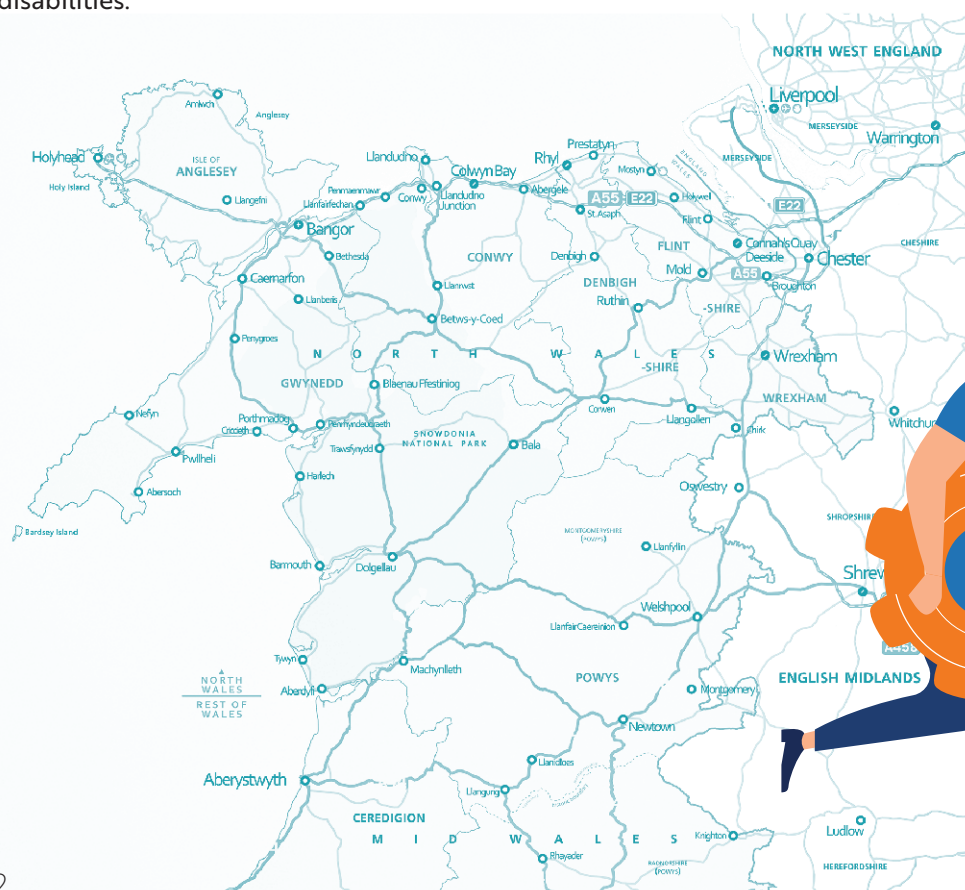
WHO ARE WE?

We are members of the North Wales Together Employer Engagement Working Group.

The members of the group are: North Wales Together Learning Disability Transformation Team, Welsh Government Disability Employment Champions, HFT Flintshire, Agoriad Cyf, James Lewis, Conwy County Borough Council, Denbighshire County Council and Department for Work and Pensions.

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North East Wales
Community Equipment Service

« People with learning disabilities have the same right as anyone else in the local community to apply for jobs, be successful and be proud of what they can do and give back to the community.»


Steve Featherstone,
Service Manager,
North East Wales Community
Equipment Service,
Flintshire County Council



« I feel proud of working (at Flintshire County Council), same goes with my family. I have my own money and I pay rent... and I get the same amount as everyone else, EQUALLY ! »

Owen Clarke
Equipment Technician,
Flintshire County Council



A woman with dark hair and bangs, wearing a grey cardigan over a blue and yellow plaid top, is seated in a room with grey acoustic foam panels on the walls. She is holding a black book or folder with glasses resting on it.

« We are a health provider, but as a business employing people with learning disabilities reflects the society that we serve.»

Mandy Hughes,
Workforce modernization Manager,
Betsi Cadwaladr University
Health Board

A woman with reddish-brown hair tied back, wearing a teal pharmacy uniform with a black cardigan, is seated at a yellow counter. Behind her are shelves with cardboard boxes and a wall with various notices and charts.

«My mum use to tell me it's capability before disability. You should never judge anyone... »

Sarah-Jane Mawdsley
Pharmacy assistant
Betsi Cadwaladr University
Health Board

1. BUSTING THE MYTHS



An inclusive workplace is not just a legal and moral obligation – it is also good for business. People with learning disabilities are motivated to work and could help you address recruitment and turnover issues.

**SHOCKING FACT:
ONLY 5.1% OF ADULTS
WITH LEARNING DISABILITIES
IN THE UK ARE EMPLOYED.**

**HOWEVER, IT HAS BEEN
ESTIMATED THAT ABOUT
60 TO 70% OF PEOPLE WITH
A LEARNING DISABILITY
WANT TO WORK.**

Some employers are nervous or worried about employing someone with a learning disability.

This toolkit will bust some of the myths around people with learning disabilities and/ or autism and employment and will give employers some tools and strategies to create an inclusive workplace.

1.

MYTH BUSTING

MYTH NUMBER 1

There are only a few jobs that people with learning disabilities are capable of doing.

Fact: People with learning disabilities can learn a broad range of jobs – media cameraman, tyre fitter, local councillor, care worker, actor, healthcare assistant, model – with the right training and support and if they have a keen interest in the job they can apply themselves to work in any number of different roles.

MYTH NUMBER 2

It will cost me too much money. Employers may feel that the costs of making reasonable adjustments will be expensive and time consuming.

Fact: The average cost of making reasonable adjustments to the workplace for a person with a learning disability is £30 but for many the changes cost nothing at all and are of benefit to other employees and customers.

MYTH NUMBER 3

They will have a negative impact on business productivity and performance

Fact: Research carried out with companies who have employed people with learning disabilities found that there were no significant differences in performance levels. When supported by a specialist job coach and/or a workplace mentor these differences were even less!

« Seventy two percent of employers who had hired persons with learning disabilities rated their job performance as average, above average, or excellent. »



MYTH NUMBER 4

It would be too big a risk for health and safety and they'd have too many days off sick.

Fact: Research with employers found that absence levels for people with learning disabilities were **62% lower than that for employees considered not to have a disability.** It also found that **75% of employers did not see an increase in H&S incidents involving a staff member with learning disabilities.** Indeed when comparing statistics for people with disabilities and those without, the average number of accidents was found to be much lower for people with a learning disability than for non-disabled co-workers.



« Tesco is really inclusive! With regards to learning, everybody is different. So we adapt to the colleague and that's anybody... We find out what works for them. We get fab feedback from our employees! »

Carol Brown, Front End Manager Tesco, Holywell Store

MYTH NUMBER 5

We don't have the time, experience or knowledge to train and support a person with a learning disability.


Fact: You are more able than you may realise! There is help available to you from supported employment agencies that can provide the expertise, training and support you may need.

See section 4, page 16 for the support we can offer employers in North Wales.



« I do love working (at Tesco). I like to see my friends and the money... »

Dyfed Henshall, Tesco employee Holywell



"A representation that is visible to the public, breaks down those barriers that people with learning disabilities live with everyday, those barriers are that people think they can't because they have a learning disability, where actually, they can."

Mandy Hughes,
Workforce modernization Manager,
Betsi Cadwaladr University
Health Board

THE BENEFITS THAT YOU MAY NOT HAVE REALISED!

Companies employing people with learning disabilities rate them positively in a number of key areas that are good for business.

1

Willingness to learn and being hardworking, friendly and honest

4

Increased customer loyalty - people with learning disabilities and their families are part of your customer base

2

Low turnover rate thus reducing the cost of recruitment and training

5

Greater dedication to work compared to non-disabled employees

3

Lower absenteeism which again can be a significant benefit to business

6

Making a positive contribution to the social climate of the workplace.

The public are positive about efforts to include people with a learning disability. This also fits well with modern goals of corporate social responsibility, brand image and giving back to the community.

DID YOU KNOW THAT?

x 3.5

Employers highlighted regular attendance and staying in the job longer as major benefits of employing people with an intellectual disability. On average people with learning disabilities stay in their job 3.5 times longer than other employees!

32%

In a study with Pizza Hut, turnover for workers with learning disabilities was only 32%, compared with 190% for non-disabled.

92%

92% of the customers interviewed felt more favourable towards companies that hired people with disabilities...

AND

87%

87% specifically agreed that they would prefer to give their business to companies that hire people with disabilities.

ALMOST 100%

Almost all the respondents believed that companies hiring workers with disabilities cared about their workers.



COMMUNITY BENEFITS

The Welsh public sector is the largest user of goods and services from both the private and voluntary sectors in Wales. 'Community Benefits' or 'social requirements' are a key component of public sector procurement.

Community Benefits can include things like supporting people with learning disabilities into work by offering:

- **Help with job finding skills, like offering mock interviews**
- **Work experience**
- **Paid employment**

It will also show people that you are socially responsible and that you are an inclusive employer.

Have a look at page 16 - North Wales Employer Offer. There are many things listed there that you could do that would be considered community benefits when seeking public sector contracts.

When making decisions on which organisations to buy their goods or services from, many public sector departments (Councils and Health Boards) will want to know about the additional social and economic benefits a contractor can provide. So, supporting people with learning disabilities into work might help you to secure public sector contracts.



PROCUREMENT POLICY IN WALES

The vision is for Welsh public sector procurement to be a powerful lever with ability to affect sustained change to achieve social, economic, environmental and cultural outcomes for the well-being of Wales.

Tap into the talent THE FILM

A short film for employers in North Wales showcasing the experiences of other local companies that have already tapped into the talent!

Join Jessica Butler, Owen Clarke, Sarah-Jane Mawdsley, Dyfed Henshall and their employers, Carol Brown, Don Timmons, Steve Featherstone, Mandy Hughes as they share their journey to employment.

This short film features 4 local employers who have had experience of employing people with a learning disability. It has been made to support the messages in this toolkit. In the film we hear about their personal experience, the benefits they and their employees realized and the support they received to make this a success!

Click on the link below to view the film or paste into the browser or scan the QR Code with your phone.

→ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pkrx-zQp9Zg>



2. RECRUITMENT



Advertising: Go Broader

People with learning disabilities may not see job advertisements in the usual places – advertise your role with the Disability Employment Adviser (DEA) or Work Coaches at the Job Centre, with supported employment agencies, or specialist recruitment agencies (see page 16: North Wales Employment Offer).

- Make sure your advertisements are inclusive. For example, does the role really require all those qualifications? Or previous experience? Stick to essentials.
- Make the adverts simple and easy to read.

Application: Be Flexible

Application forms can be daunting for a person with a learning disability and exclude them from the start – would a recorded video application or phone conversation be acceptable?

- Could you provide a job description, person specification and application form in Easy Read or plain English format?

https://www.lincolnshirecommunityhealthservices.nhs.uk/application/files/4115/8254/1858/Easy_Read_Advert_-_Admin_App_-_Lincs_20Feb20.pdf

<https://www.hct.nhs.uk/work-with-us/easy-read-job-application/>

Formal Interviews: Be accessible

Studies show that employers make a judgement in seconds, on the basis of someone they feel they can 'gel' with or, who will fit in with other employees. In terms of equal opportunities, this is not always a fair means of selection. It usually excludes people with learning and other disabilities or autism.

Formal interviews can be challenging for a person with a learning disability or autism. Before the interview, it is good practice to ask about any accessibility issues that they might have and what reasonable adjustments that you can make. These can be simple and practical things such as allowing the individual to bring someone to the interview with them like their job coach. Other examples include adjusting the environment where the interview will take place by dimming lights or making sure it is quiet.

Another good tip is to consider inviting the applicant to briefly look around the work area and to have an informal interview. Could you consider offering work taster sessions?

Interview tip!

You could offer a work trial as an alternative to an interview. That way you are giving the person a real opportunity to demonstrate that they can do the job and fit in well with the rest of the workforce. This also gives you the chance to see what they can do before entering into a contract of employment.



2. RECRUITMENT

The Job: Be Creative

JOB CARVING

If the applicant with a learning disability has had a satisfactory work trial and shown skills in some areas of more than one role, but not all of the skills required for any of them, could you 'carve' a role that takes a part of each of them to create a more bespoke role that works to all the applicant skills and abilities?

JOB SHARING

If a couple of applicants with learning disabilities have demonstrated skills and competence in their work trials but have lacked stamina to work a full day or week, could you create a job share to offer them both work?

FLEXIBLE WORKING

Could you arrange a person's working hours to meet their needs? For example, allowing them to arrive 10 minutes late and leave 10 minutes early, if they cannot cope with crowds of people entering or leaving the building at once.

In The Lead Up To The First Day: Be Prepared!

→ **Prior to a new starter's first day**, it would be useful to have an open discussion about the way the individual would like to work. This could include anything from reasonable adjustments within the workplace (see this factsheet for more information*).

→ **Make sure that any equipment the individual needs to carry out their role**, such as accessible software or a hearing loop, is in place. The DWP Access to Work Scheme can cover the cost of this, as well as provide funding for transport and a job coach (see section on help for employers).

→ **Ask the new employee and/or their job coach to provide a one - page profile** before they start work, so that you can learn the person's support

needs, interests and aspirations in advance. Ask them if they are happy for these to be shared with other employees in their team and with management.

→ **Does the new employee suit group or lone working best?**

Are they best placed to be in an open plan area or in a quiet area on their own, if the role is suited to that and it can be accommodated?

→ **Preparing co-workers before the new employee starts can also be helpful** including answering and addressing any queries or concerns that they might have in advance of the first day.

→ **If you are working with a Supported Employment Provider they can provide you and your staff with disability awareness training.**

* <https://www.mencap.org.uk/sites/default/files/2016-11/Factsheet%205%20-%20Workplace%20adjustments%20for%20people%20with%20a%20learning%20disability.pdf>

WHAT IS ACCESS TO WORK?

Access to Work is a publicly funded employment support grant scheme that aims to support disabled people start or remain in work by providing grants to for equipment and support needed.

If you are a small business Access to Work can pay up to 100% of these costs!

See page 20 for more information. Examples of support that can be funded are:

- **Aid and equipment in the workplace**
- **Adapting equipment to make it easier for them to use**
- **Paying for a job coach or mentor**
- **Money for extra travel costs**



In the Workplace: Be Inclusive

→ **Creating a culture where diversity is welcomed can be beneficial to all your employees and also your customers!** Some areas to think about when employing someone with a learning disability and/or autism is checking on whether they are being included in activities in and out of the workplace. Are they feeling fully involved and part of your team?

- This is where providing a mentor or 'go to person' can help while your new employees is settling in and getting to know the rest of your team.

First days: Be Communicative

→ **Let the individual know how the organisation supports its disabled staff**, who to go to for help etc.

→ **Use visual aids** for example pictures of staff and their names, pictures of mugs and who they belong to.

→ **Providing a mentor to give a guided tour**, support and inform them with the important details such as X always sits there at lunchtime, don't touch Y's mug etc. can make all the difference to

harmony in the workplace but is often difficult for someone with learning disabilities and/ or autism to pick up on.

→ **Don't give too much information at once.** Provide it in 'bite-sized' chunks as memory and concentration may be limited to 10 minutes.

→ **Provide policies and training in plain English.** Or if you want to you can provide them in audio or video format and stick to the key points. Provide easy read- quick reference guides around the building at the point it's needed e.g., fire exits, manual handling and lifting guides etc.

→ **People with learning disabilities and their families often worry that they might face bullying or harassment in the workplace due to their differences?** It can be important to check whether they feel anyone is belittling or making fun of them? Would they know how to complain if they were? Would they feel confident enough?

→ **Top Tip! Bullying and harassment is bad for business regardless and may be observed by your customers.** A tip would be to re-visit your policies against bullying and harassment with staff and also make sure it is accessible to your new employee with a learning disability. Your supported employment provider can help train your new employee on your policies and procedures.

If you are working with a specialist supported employment agency they can help you with putting documents into easy read which can benefit other employees and your customers as well!

3. IN THE JOB



Managing Change: Be Prepared

- **People with learning disabilities and/or autism can find change particularly challenging.** It can cause great distress and affect their performance and behaviour accordingly.
- **Think ahead, wherever possible.** Take time to explain to them, clearly and simply, what the change will be and why it is necessary.
- **Involve the person's job coach for extra support.**

Monitoring, Supervision and Discipline: Be Friendly but Fair

- **People with learning disabilities are passionate about their work.**

It gives them a sense of purpose and value and can mean everything to them, so feeling that they are 'in trouble', or that they are being judged can be very frightening for them.

- **At the same time, they need to be disciplined and appraised for their performance like any other employee.**

Be sensitive in your approach but clear where performance or behaviour needs to be improved

Be clear about what targets and goals for improvement are required and by when and how you will measure this improvement, it could be a case of a little more support or training is needed.

- **Be timely in response.**

Job Security and Progression: Be Equitable

- This is a tricky one but if you find yourself in the unfortunate position of having to make roles redundant, or if there is a promotion opportunity, ensure that you are being fair and equitable in your selection processes.
- **Selection should be made on performance and competences alone,** not on the basis of their disability or popularity.

ASK FOR SUPPORT!

Job coaches are there to help people sustain their employment, not just to get a job.

As soon as a potential problem is identified, call the supported employment agency and ask for the job coach for advice and support.



4. NORTH WALES EMPLOYER OFFER



Employers are much more willing to consider employing people with learning disabilities when they have support in the workplace from a job coach or a disability professional.

In North Wales HFT and Agoriad Cyf have an Employer Offer for any business willing to consider someone with a learning disability for employment.

WE WILL:

- Support you with Job Matching – finding the right candidate for your job vacancy.
- Help you make recruitment processes more accessible and supporting the candidate at interview.
- Support you and the employee with induction, health and safety, policies and procedures and any other practical support in the early stages of work.
- Provide a qualified and experienced job coach who will work alongside you and the individual to enable them to learn the job and become a valuable member of your team.

→ Support the person to be fully immersed in the workplace including building relationships and taking part in social activities

- Provide ongoing support to you and the employee for example, with changes to workplace procedures; the working environment, and/or ongoing mandatory training
- Support you with making reasonable adjustments and with applying to Access to Work to cover costs
- Support you to make communication more accessible and help employees to learn your policies and procedures.

→ Provide Disability Awareness Training, as part of your staff training programme.

→ Supporting you to apply for the DWP Disability Confident Charter Mark in recognition of your commitment to diversity.

IN RETURN WE ASK THAT YOU:

- Contact us if you have job vacancies – we can help you with recruitment!
- Agree for us to contact you about potential candidates that might be right for your business
- Be open to adapting your recruitment practices such as offering work tasters, work trials or working interviews
- Employ someone!
- Communicate with us honestly and openly – tell us what support you need to employ and keep individuals employed.
- Work with us to help the individual progress in their job.

OTHER THINGS YOU CAN DO!

Even if you are not in a position to recruit someone with a learning disability there are other things you can do to help such as:

- Mentor a person we support
- Help our jobseekers with interview skills or CV preparation
- Champion and act as a role model to other employers
- Come and speak to our jobseekers about your business and what you are looking for in an employee

To find out more or, have an informal chat, please get in touch! Our contact details are below. We work in partnership so there is no wrong door for any employer in North Wales!

**TOGETHER
WE COVER
ALL OF
NORTH
WALES**



Julia Hawkins
Supported
Employment
Team Manager

I'm Julia Hawkins the Supported Employment Team Manager at HFT Flintshire, Learning Disability Support Services. We are a specialist supported employment provider covering the Flintshire area. We are currently supporting 110 adults with learning disabilities and Autism to gain work experience and secure paid employment.

We work in partnership with 130 businesses, charities and social enterprises.

Some of the local business we have supported to employ someone with a learning disability include. Tesco, Sainsbury's, TOFS, Clwyd Alyn, Flintshire County Council, Thomas Plant Hire, McDonald's, and the St. David's Park Hotel Village group.

We have a dedicated team of employability coaches who can support you with every aspect of recruiting, training and retaining people with learning disabilities.

Hwb Cyfle,
Chester Road West
Queensferry Deeside
Flintshire, CH5 1SA
07795304758
julia@hft.org.uk



Robyn Williams
Operations
Manager

My name is Robyn Williams and I'm the Operations Manager for Agoriad Cyf. Agoriad is a specialist employment and training provider helping disabled and disadvantaged people in north & mid Wales. Our mission is to help individuals make the transition towards work by offering individually tailored packages of support. Our role is to understand and build on a person's

strengths and abilities, identify areas of interest then working with them to find the right work opportunity.

We then support both the employer and employee in their employment needs. By finding the right job, working with the right employer, and introducing the appropriate support and training, we maximise the potential for a positive result.

Agoriad Cyf
2 Victoria Place, Bethesda,
Bangor, Gwynedd
LL57 3AG
01248361392
robyn@agoriad.org.uk
www.agoriad.org.uk



« I had help from Cheryl, she's one of the job coaches at HFT, she helped me get this job.»

Jessica Butler,
Housekeeper,
Village Hotel Chester,
St. David's

OTHER HELP FOR BUSINESSES IN NORTH WALES

DISABLED PEOPLE'S EMPLOYMENT CHAMPIONS

The Welsh Government has employed a network of **Disabled People's Employment Champions** to create a culture shift in the way employers in Wales think about disabled people's employment. They have helped with creating this toolkit!

The Champions' aim is to increase awareness of the availability of talent and skills provided by disabled people and the benefits this can bring.

They are able to work with employers to help them take action to create the conditions where disabled people can gain access to, and thrive in, the workplace.

The Champions can provide advice and help on issues such as:

- inclusive recruitment;
- accessing financial support;
- staff retention; and
- Accreditation.

The Champions can work with employers in a way which suits them i.e. on a 1:1 basis or are able to attend meetings/ events etc.

The Champions will be working in partnership with **dedicated Disabled Peoples' Employment Advisors within the Business Wales service** who can provide employers with a tailored approach to further their journey to inclusivity.

ALL OF THIS IS FREE AND UNIQUE TO EMPLOYERS IN WALES

Any business in Wales interested in increasing the diversity of their workforce and finding out more about the many benefits of and support available for employing disabled people can [contact the Champions at DPEC@gov.wales](mailto:DPEC@gov.wales)



For more information see <https://businesswales.gov.wales/skillsgateway/sites/skillsgateway/files/documents/Employers-guide-recruiting-disabled-people-EN.pdf>



To find out more about the Disability Confident Employer scheme please go to www.gov.uk/government/collections/disability-confident-campaign

Employing Disabled People TOP TEN TIPS DO'S & DON'TS

BY DISABLED PEOPLE'S EMPLOYMENT CHAMPIONS

1 Do employ disabled people – this may include paid work trials, apprenticeships, work experience or internships, or a guaranteed interview scheme.

2 Do make the sound business decision of employing disabled people. Disabled people are more loyal in staying with the same employer longer and take less sick leave compared to non-disabled people.

3 Do become a member of Disability Confident and prominently display the logo on job adverts and website to show you welcome applications from disabled people.

4 Don't make assumptions. Many disabled people cannot get a job because employers wrongly assume that they are unable to do the job effectively.

5 Do have open and respectful conversations – consult a disabled person about any reasonable adjustments they might require to apply, at interview and to enable them to do the job.

6 Don't assume that making reasonable adjustments will cost lots of money – most cost nothing and the average is £30. Many adjustments are about doing things a little differently and Access to Work means employees may be able to access funding to assist.

7 Do make sure that the 'essential' functions in a job description are truly essential e.g. 'all applicants must have driving license' will exclude some disabled applicants as opposed to 'all applicants must be able to travel'.

8 Do remember that if you employ a disabled person, you are more likely to attract new customers and be able to respond to the needs of your disabled customers.

9 Don't be fearful, ask for advice – you are not expected to know everything.

10 Do employ disabled people. It is the right thing to do!

The Disabled People's Employment Champions and Business Wales are here to help.
DPEC@gov.wales

« What has been really beneficial is the dedication and support of the HFT mentors... They have taken their time with us and they have taken their time with Jess and it has been such a success because of their hard work.»

Donn Timmins,
General Manager,
Village Hotel Chester,
St. David's.





OTHER HELP FOR BUSINESSES IN NORTH WALES



ACCESS TO WORK

As noted earlier in the toolkit, ACCESS TO WORK is a UK wide government grant. Access to Work can help you hire and retain disabled people with the skills you need.

The individual must be in a paid job but this can include a paid, work trial or work experience. Examples of the kind of support that ACCESS to Work can fund includes:

- Aid and equipment in the workplace
- Adapted equipment, such as chairs and desks
- Taxi journeys to and from work if the person cannot use public transport
- Other practical help at work, such as a job coach or a sign language interpreter
- Pay for disability awareness training for your other employees

Depending on the size of your business it can cover 100% of the costs of aids and adaptations for a new employee with a learning disability.

To find out more, contact your local supported employment agency! You can also contact your local disability employment adviser (DEA) through your nearest Jobcentre Plus office.

Both can help put you in touch with an Access to Work adviser who will be able to tell you more and advise on your particular circumstances.

www.gov.uk/access-to-work
See Access to Work factsheet for employers ⁽¹⁾ and Access to Work factsheet for employees ⁽²⁾.

BUSINESS WALES

Interested in growing your current business or starting up a new one?

Business Wales is a free service that provides impartial, independent support and advice to people starting, running and growing a business in Wales.

With regional centres across Wales, we offer a mixture of online and face-to-face support, as well as training workshops and individual advice.

**For further support
or business advice call -
03000603000
or go to
[businesswales.gov.wales/
business-wales](http://businesswales.gov.wales/business-wales)**



(1) <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/access-to-work-guide-for-employers/access-to-work-factsheet-for-employers>

(2) https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/977302/easy-read-access-to-work.pdf

EASY READ LEAFLETS

Easy read is an accessible format of providing information designed for people with a learning disability.

The easy read format is easy to understand because it uses simple, jargon free language, shorter sentences and supporting images.

TOP TIP!
If you working with a supported employment agency, they can help you put your policies into easy read format. These can be helpful for other employees for example, those with reading difficulties or where English isn't their first language.

Job Application Form Hertfordshire Community NHS

The Job Title:
Job Reference:

YOUR DETAILS

Name?

Home address?

Home number?

Mobile number?

<https://www.hct.nhs.uk/work-with-us/easy-read-job-application/>

Reference 2

Name	
Job Title	
Address	
Phone number	
Email address	
How do they know you?	



<https://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/books/laweasyread.htm>



<https://www.derbyshire.gov.uk/site-elements/documents/pdf/council/equalities/equality-and-diversity-policy-easy-read.pdf>



APPENDIX

THE SOCIAL MODEL OF DISABILITY

As opposed to the medical model of disability that focusses on what is wrong, the social model says that people are disabled by barriers in society, not by their impairment or difference.

Barriers can be physical, like buildings not having accessible toilets. Or they can be caused by people's attitudes to difference, like assuming disabled people



can't do certain things, excluding them from social activities, or exercising an unconscious bias when selecting for redundancies or promotion opportunities. It is less about impairment and limitation and more about access and inclusion. For example, a wheelchair user is not limited by their mobility challenges but by the narrow doorways, steps, public transport limitations and cobbled streets that stop them being able to get into work.

The social model helps us recognise and reduce the barriers that make life harder for disabled people. Removing these barriers creates equality and offers disabled people more independence, choice and control and makes them feel valued, helping them to realise their goals and aspirations, just like anyone else. It also focusses on what a person can do, on their abilities, rather than the limits of their impairments.

NEURO DIVERSITY EMPLOYING PEOPLE WITH AUTISM AND OTHER NEURODIVERSE CONDITIONS

SO, WHAT EXACTLY IS NEURODIVERSITY?

Neurodiversity is the idea that cognitive conditions, such as autism, ADHD, dyslexia and dyspraxia, are natural variations in the way people think and process information. The term recognises both the difficulties that people who have these conditions may encounter in

the workplace and also the unique strengths that can derive from thinking differently.

NEURODIVERGENCE

Workers may be described as neurodivergent if they have a cognitive profile that is different to that of the average or typical person. For example, a dyslexic person may be said to be

neurodivergent. Neurodivergent people bring value to the workplace in the skills and characteristics they can offer, such as focus, concentration and dedication to task, excellent memory and creative approaches to problem solving.

AT LEAST 1 IN 10 WORKING-AGE ADULTS ARE NEURO-DIVERGENT IN SOME WAY.

APPENDIX

SOME POINTS TO CONSIDER IN OVERCOMING CHALLENGES PEOPLE WITH AUTISM FACE IN THE WORKPLACE

Every individual is unique and so are the demands of each employer but there are, however, common issues we can consider. Assessing and acting on these issues will help employers to comply with their duty to prevent discrimination in their workplace.

AWARENESS – Employers are liable for the actions of all their employees, unless they have taken ‘all reasonable steps’ to prevent discrimination (this is known as ‘vicarious liability’). These steps should include equality training that covers neurodiversity.

NOISE AND LIGHTING LEVELS
Many neurodivergent workers have elevated (or reduced) levels of sensory sensitivity, relative to the average for all workers. This means that brightly light or noisy production lines, or open plan offices, can be a source of distraction and anxiety if adjustments are not made.

EQUIPMENT AND COMMUNICATION

As weaknesses in short-term auditory memory can be a common feature of neurodivergent conditions, workers may benefit from clear and unambiguous written instructions. Employers should also make available assistive technology, such as speech-to-text software or time management applications.

LANGUAGE

Negative or belittling terms should not be used in relation to neurodiversity in the workplace (and such conduct is likely to constitute harassment). It is inadvisable to say that someone ‘suffers from’ a neurodivergent condition.

QUIET ROOM

A place where people can go to deescalate if they are suffering from sensory overload or distress would be of substantial benefit.



Employing People with Learning Disabilities

A TOOLKIT FOR EMPLOYERS IN NORTH WALES

We would like to acknowledge the work that has been done by other organisations
to produce similar toolkits in other areas of the UK
and the extensive research by Dr. Stephen Beyer
on what helps employers to employ people with learning disabilities.

**These have helped us to create a toolkit
for employers in North Wales.**



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www.northwalestogether.org

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