



ABILITY · EQUALITY · INDEPENDENCE

Let's Work Together Employers' Information Pack



The Employer's Toolkit

Employment—the Current Climate

Approximately 1.75 million people in the UK have a learning disability and/ or autism, and over 869,000 of these people are adults of a working age.

The employment rate for working-age adults with learning disabilities is at a shockingly low 6%, compared to 75% in the general population. This suggests that there is not enough employment support and that the support available needs enhancing. So, **Let's Work Together!**

Grace Eyre service users told us that there is not enough support to help individuals with learning disabilities and/or autism access work, and there is also a lack of support from employers in the workplace.

People with learning disabilities can make great employees! In fact, evidence suggests that people with learning disabilities and/ or autism have fewer sick days on average compared to other employees, and stay in positions for longer periods of time — saving employers money on recruitment and training of new staff. Working with a diverse staff team can also boost team morale!

Employment Support

When starting a new job people, with learning disabilities and/or autism tend to need more support with confidence, learning new skills and becoming familiar with new situations.

This is because they can find it harder to learn, understand and communicate. Moreover, for a lot of individuals it may be their first experience in a working role, due to limited work opportunities for people with learning disabilities and/or autism.

Some workplaces will have to adjust their environments so that the individuals with disabilities can have access to what is necessary to do the job role.

Most adjustments are relatively affordable, and you can often seek funding from the local authority. Refusal to implement reasonable adjustments is likely to be considered disability discrimination under the Equality Act (2010).

- For more information on the Equality Act 2010, and how it may affect workplace practices, see: <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2010/15/section/20>
- For more information on the Access to Work Fund, see: <https://www.gov.uk/access-to-work>

Grace Eyre's Response

Grace Eyre have developed a new employment strategy Let's Work Together, to create the changes we want to see in employment. That is a higher proportion of people with learning disabilities and/or autism in paid employment, training, and volunteering.

With job quality in mind, we need to ensure that people with learning disabilities and/or autism can experience the benefits of employment including: social inclusion; better well-being; and financial autonomy.

Grace Eyre want to encourage employers to employ a more diverse staff team; diverse teams encourage greater innovation and creativity, ease the hiring process, and help to retain talent.

Grace Eyre also want to support employers by helping organisations to register to become Disability Confident.

We can help employers find the perfect match by:

- Creating relevant resources, and training covering best practice
- Arranging and securing work placements with employers for people with disabilities
- Organising job fairs to share opportunities with other supported employment agents.

We love showing the world how rich and full the lives of people with learning disabilities and/or autism can be.

Recruitment—how to include people with learning disabilities and/or autism.

Advertising

By using plain English and avoiding jargon wherever possible, we will help people to understand the job role. For example, instead of customer support use helping customers.

Some job sites are designed to specifically advertise roles to disabled people, including:

- Evenbreak:

<https://www.evenbreak.co.uk/en>

- Exceptional Individuals:

<https://exceptionalindividuals.com>

Some people with learning disabilities, however, may not know how to use a computer, so advertising jobs purely on the internet may put them at a disadvantage. Candidates with learning disabilities and/or autism are more likely to hear about a job if it is advertised with Jobcentre Plus, the Supported Employment Team, local education and training providers, and community groups.

Register to become a Disability Confident Employer and use the DC logo on your job adverts to attract more applicants with learning disabilities.

- For more information on the Disability Confident Employer Scheme, see: <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/disability-confident-campaign>

You may also consider organising a recruitment day, where you can welcome people with learning disabilities and/or autism to come and find out more information about your organisation. Please ensure that your staff receive disability awareness training before the event. Places like the Job Centre or your local Supported Employment Team can support you with the planning, and training for this event.



The Application Form

A reasonable adjustment would allow for paper application forms to be submitted, or a CV as an alternative to an online form. Consider also including a section on the form that allows the candidate to declare that they received support filling in the application.

Application forms can be complex and overwhelming, but you can help the individual, by making a few simple alterations to a form.

Easy Read information is designed for people with learning disabilities who like clearly written words with pictures to help them understand. Use a minimum font size of 16 and a clear font such Arial. Easy Read, however, does assume some level of reading, so you may want to add other accessible information formats, for example video CV.

- For Easy Read images and templates please see: <https://www.photosymbols.com/collections/all>

- To look at a video CV in the making please see <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=h-jzQOtLvJtg>

Remember to check whether the job applicant has support needs before meeting them, so that your organisation can make the reasonable adjustments necessary for the individual to access the interview safely and comfortably.

Selection

It is important to keep in mind during the selection of candidates, that people with learning disabilities and/or autism may have a limited work history.

Therefore, you might decide to adjust your selection criteria to give people a fairer opportunity.

When shortlisting for an applicant, consider the following:

- Value work experience and volunteering
- Count hobbies and adult education courses as relevant experience
- Try to avoid counting qualifications, unless necessary for the job role, as people with learning disabilities and/or autism may have fewer qualifications
- Do not reject an application based on bad spelling or poor grammar.

Interviews

Job interviews can be daunting experiences for most people. Some people with learning disabilities and/or autism struggle with communication, and this can make interviews particularly challenging. Interview questions often require people to put themselves into a hypothetical situation, and this can put an individual with learning disabilities and/or autism at a disadvantage.

Moreover, formal interview processes leave little to no room to show off a candidate's practical skills.

It is important to share information in advance of the interview, to allow the candidate to feel less nervous about meeting new people and being in a new environment. For instance, let the candidate know who is conducting the interview, how long the interview will be and what types of questions will be asked.

When designing your questions, be direct; use short sentences written in plain English. Give people time to answer questions and therefore allow more time for the interview.

Repeat and rephrase questions if unclear, and let the applicant use notes or picture aids to help them answer questions.

Utilising face-to-face interviews with one interviewer may make people feel more comfortable—you should try to make the interview as informal as you can. Some individuals might prefer to attend an interview with their support worker, this should be encouraged if they feel they will need one.

Working interviews, or a work trial can be used in addition, or as an alternative to traditional interviews, and allows someone to demonstrate their practical skills in the workplace. This is like a work experience placement, lasting between 1 and 8 weeks, however there is a guaranteed job if the trial is successful. Work trials can also be supported by a job coach.

Positive Action

The Equality Act 2010 allows the employer to, when faced with two or more candidates of equal ability, choose a candidate that is from a particular group who faces a disadvantage, or that is underrepresented in their workforce, over someone who is not from that group.

- For more information on positive action see: <https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/en/advice-and-guidance/employers-what-positive-action-workplace>

Pre-Employment Checks

Consider references from other areas of a person's life, not only paid employment, as individuals may have not had a paid job before—for example, voluntary work, work experience, a college tutor, or a support worker.

Allow/provide help to support the individual with completing forms and paperwork.

Let's Work Together

Grace Eyre offer a supported employment service to people with learning disabilities and/or autism. We provide specialised support to connect candidates with potential employers through tailored work placements and job coaching.

We offer individuals intensive 1:1 training on:

- setting and achieving goals
- teamwork
- communication
- CV and job search skills
- assisted technology
- reasonable adjustments
- interview techniques
- travel training
- benefits advice
- and we support individuals to understand their rights as an employee.

Let's Work Together to make jobs more accessible, to change work environments and achieve better job opportunities for people with learning disabilities and/or autism. Be part of it!

Let's Work Together!



Find out how the

Let's Work Together

project can work with you and your business to make critical steps in employing individuals with learning disabilities and/or autism.

Let's Work Together to challenge the 6%!

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