

5 Identifying Real Jobs

5.1 Where do I start?

If your organisation has yet to employ someone with a learning disability consider the following steps:

5.1.1 Identify Teams

Start recruitment with the most interested and committed departments. The employment process may have existing barriers and it is more likely that a committed department will put in the extra time and effort to overcome these barriers. Once your organisation has identified a sustainable path to employment the process can be completed by other departments. Jobs that are commonly suitable for people with a learning disability tend to be in operational departments. The cyclical nature of operational departments makes it more likely to have fixed, repetitive tasks that are easier to learn.

5.1.2 Real Jobs

When considering recruiting someone with a learning disability all jobs should have real and proven demand. People with learning disabilities should only be recruited for jobs that are valued by managers and colleagues alike. Real jobs have wages paid at the going rate, and have the same terms and conditions as similar jobs.

5.1.3 Development

Similar to roles for the rest of the workforce, each job should have the possibility of development and progression. Development in a role can include increasing working hours, gaining more responsibility, or completing more tasks.

5.1.4 Entry Routes

Internships and work experience can play an important role in securing employment for people with learning disabilities in the NHS (explained in detail below). Internships should follow the same principle and act as a step towards full time employment.

5.1.5 What types of jobs can I consider?

There is not a single definition of the type of jobs that you can consider as everyone, including those with a learning disability, is different, with different skills and experiences.

There are some general principles that can be applied to help identify potential roles within the organisation. When considering employment rate (under 2%) for people with learning disabilities, this may their first job. The following are not ‘hard’ rules, and you need to look at individual skills and experiences:

- the candidate may be starting to build their skill base and experience, making lower bands (1 – 4) more accessible as first roles;
- jobs that have a fixed element, as people with learning disabilities can find change difficult to manage;
- roles that do not require constant problem solving.

Some of these roles may come from within existing jobs (see below – Job carving).

A suite of case studies can be found on the [NHS Employers webpage](#).

Real examples of jobs being done by people with learning disabilities in the NHS

Portering	Mattress library
Decontamination assistant	Pharmacy stores
Health care assistant	Endoscopy technician
Administrators	Clinical coding
Sterile assistant	Shop assistant and retail
Catering	Ward clerks
Logistics	Renal support assistant
Maintenance	Laboratory
Pharmacy	Medical records
Laundry	Education
Experts by experience	Learning disability network managers
Collection clerk	Service reviewers
Admin assistant	Pathology lab assistant
Physio therapy department assistant	Patient meal services
Clinical reception	Medical engineering

People with learning disabilities bring their own expertise and experiences to roles. They have a wealth of knowledge from personal experience that only they can bring. As such, roles that can specifically draw on this experience should be considered. Some examples of positions to consider include:

- [Learning Disability Network Managers](#) in the NHS England Learning Disability Engagement Team;
- within the [Improving Lives Team](#) at NHS England, people with learning disabilities are hired for their expertise as service reviewers and for their understanding of the impact of services on people with learning disabilities;

- people with learning disabilities can also be advisors to the commissioning system regarding the co-design of services for people with learning disabilities and their families;
- Care Quality Commission [Experts by Experience](#) are individuals who have experience using care services. They take part in inspections of health and social care services to monitor the use of the Mental Health Act.

For specific information on how the Learning Disability Network Manager position was mapped to an Agenda for Change band six, please review the following documents: [Learning Disability Network Manager Job Description Mapping](#).

5.2 Entry Routes to Employment

Four main entry routes have been identified that will lead to paid employment in the NHS. A suite of [case studies](#) provide practical examples of how these employment models have worked in practice in NHS organisations.

5.2.1 Supported Employment

The [supported employment](#) model is an evidence-based, personalised approach to supporting people with significant disabilities (i.e. learning disability) find and retain a job.

The fundamental principle of the supported employment model is that the organisation places and then trains employees. Evidence suggests that in-work training is more effective than classroom based training.

When employees are trained on the job they acquire the skills they need to perform the job in the environment they will be working in. This means that someone with a learning disability does not have to translate skills learnt from one environment to the next.

The supported employment model requires employers to be flexible and creative in organising tasks to suit their employee's skill base. This model can be carried out with the help of a job coach, co-worker or Jobcentre Plus staff depending on the need of the employee.

5.2.2 Fixed Term Internships

[Fixed term internships](#) are short term placements that are used to establish and develop employment skills. Many internship programmes offer individuals the opportunity to try out a number of posts during the programme.

The aim of these placements is to develop skills and experience that will lead to sustainable paid employment. Successful outcomes include:

- developing skills that are valued by employers;
- demonstrating value in the workplace;
- developing confidence and ability to do the job;
- gaining employment following the placement;
- facilitating cultural change in their NHS organisation;
- building experience for a CV.

Individuals participating in an internship programme should have a progression plan towards employment. Ensuring there is a job, or opportunity to compete for a job, at the end of the internship prevents people with learning disabilities from entering a cycle of internships without gaining a real job.

5.2.3 Co-worker model

The [co-worker model](#) is where a person with a learning disability works together, and job shares, with a colleague who does not have a learning disability.

In this model, both individuals work concurrently and cooperatively on the same assignment or project. The goal of this is for individuals with learning disabilities to be employed and able to co-lead on all projects alongside their colleagues who do not have a learning disability. Most importantly, it means that within a team, the members are able to draw from each other's skills, strengths, and experiences. Co-workers meet regularly during the week/day to split up tasks and check progress, to help each other reach their goals.

Read about Sarah Marsay's [experience of being a co-worker](#).

5.2.4 Job Carving

[Job carving](#) is a technique used to create a role that best matches the skills of the employee. These roles are considered to be real jobs in themselves that are created by demand and valued by managers and team members. Job carving creates specialist roles that free up time for other employees, allowing everyone to work to their skill base. To carve out a job, managers will analyse work duties performed in a given role and identify tasks that can be grouped together and assigned to a new role. This will ensure that the most suitable person carries out the task required, and can open up opportunities for people with a learning disability.

When employees are working to their skill base it ensures that roles are executed with a higher degree of accuracy and efficiency. In some of our [case studies](#), jobs

were executed with a higher level of quality by someone with a learning disability because of the nature of the tasks that were 'carved' and the focus that was then given to them in a specific role.

NHS Banding and Agenda for Change

As for all roles in the NHS, the job will have to match an NHS Band level as outlined by Agenda for Change. This band matching process occurs at the organisation where the job will be carried out. If you are considering carving a job, or altering the tasks in a job then you will have to match the job to a band.

The following extracts from the [NHS Job Evaluation Handbook](#) will help you with the steps needed to match a job to the appropriate banding. This process is meant as a guide. NHS organisations will individually have to complete the banding and evaluation process.

<p>1. Job description</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Up-to-date and agreed job descriptions• Person specifications available for all posts• Information, not contained in a job description, required for job matching
<p>2. Job matching panel</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Matching should be carried out by a joint matching panel, with all members having NHS Job Evaluation Scheme training• 3 to 5 members is the recommended number of panel members• Two people available representing management and staff in the area of work under review
<p>3. Job matching process</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Based on agreed and up-to-date job descriptions• For each job the job panel should: read the job description, identify possible profile matches, compare main purpose of job with profile job statement, go through the matching process on a factor by factor basis, comparing the information in the job description with that on the profile
<p>4. Consistency checking</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• When job descriptions are matched to national profiles, they should be quality assured by nominated persons. The outcomes are checked for consistency against other jobs of the same band, occupational group, and national profiles
<p>5. Review</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• In the event that groups of staff or an individual is dissatisfied with the result of matching, they may request a rematch by a panel with the majority of its members different from the previous panel

