

NHS Learning Disability Employment: Tools and Guidance

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The National Health Service Commissioning Board was established on 1 October 2012 as an executive non-departmental public body. Since 1 April 2013, the National Health Service Commissioning Board has used the name NHS England for operational purposes.

Forward

NHS Employers and NHS England are committed to employing more people with learning disabilities in NHS organisations. As such, they formed a partnership to create the tools and guidance. **These tools and guidance are in place to support NHS organisations to increase the number of people with learning disabilities employed within NHS organisations.**

They focus on the practical steps to providing employment for people with learning disabilities. These principles can also be applied to people with other disabilities and are a part of the NHS commitments on equality diversity and inclusion in the workplace.

A learning disability affects the way a person understands information and how they communicate. People with a learning disability can have:

- a significantly reduced ability to understand new or complex information, to learn new skills (impaired intelligence);
- a reduced ability to cope independently (impaired social functioning);
- a condition which started before adulthood, with a lasting effect on development.

As with many conditions, learning disabilities affect people in different ways, with varying degrees - mild, moderate or severe - with some people needing more support than others. This continuum means that, depending on skills and experience, various types of jobs will be suitable.

Employment rates for people with learning disabilities are among the lowest compared to all people with a disability. Tackling employment for people with learning disabilities in the NHS is the right thing to do for people with learning disabilities and the right thing to do for the NHS. Changing the culture around learning disabilities will not only help us to deliver better care, but also makes business sense, by helping to fill hard-to-fill vacancies and ensuring our workforce represents the population that we serve. Getting recruitment and employment of people with learning disabilities right is a step towards an accessible and supportive working environment for everyone.

But as with so many aspects of diversity, there isn't a 'quick fix'. Organisations need to create the right culture and workplace for people with learning disabilities to be comfortable and safe. The aim of these tools and guidance is raise awareness, highlight good practice and break down some of the barriers that both employers and potential employees may face. Ultimately this guidance is to help you start creating a culture which welcomes people with learning disabilities.

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2 Building Blocks

The tools and guidance are structured around five building blocks. These building blocks will take an employer or manager through the process of recruiting and employing someone with a learning disability.



3 Getting Started

3.1 Making the Case

Evidence demonstrates that work is generally good for physical and mental health and well-being. The nature and quality of the work is important. Jobs should be safe and take account of individuals' needs by applying reasonable adjustments as appropriate. Employing people with learning disabilities is worth it for a number of reasons:

- meaningful employment can support positive health outcomes;
- people with learning disabilities provide an untapped resource for employers – with a high proportion of people who want to work;
- increasing the employment of people with learning disabilities will not only benefit the individual, but also have benefits to the wider community and economy;
- people with learning disabilities grow in their confidence when they are employed, supporting them to become more independent;
- the act of going to work each day adds security and routine to people's lives and a sense of belonging, both to the organisation and to society;
- having a job can be fundamental to building confidence and providing the opportunity to make friends and build a social life.

For more information on the link between health and work, please see the [NHS Employers webpage](#).

3.2 Employer Benefits

The benefits for employing people with learning disabilities extend beyond employees. This untapped pool of talent provides a larger network of people to recruit from, helping to get the right people for the job.

3.2.1 Increased employee retention

Hiring a more diverse workforce that includes people with learning disabilities is part of a good recruitment and retention strategy. Expenditure on staff turnover can be up to £30,000 per employee when taking into consideration that it takes on average 27 weeks to gain and train a new employee to reach optimum productivity. Disability confident employers save the time and costs of rehiring new staff in areas where they employ people with learning disabilities; [our case studies](#) highlight benefits from reduced turnover.

3.2.2 Creating an accessible organisation

Taking steps to employ people with learning disabilities within your organisation will, in itself, help create a more accessible organisation.

Firstly, it will increase interactions within the organisation with people with learning disabilities. Scope's 'End the Awkward' campaign has arisen from the fact that many

people feel uneasy and awkward in their interactions with disabled people, and inadvertently end up at loss as to how to act appropriately without offending, or patronising. Scope has found that simply interacting with people with disabilities for a significant time can be a powerful way of ending this awkwardness.

Secondly, as organisations go through the process of hiring people with learning disabilities, this will provide a practical opportunity to review organisational policies and processes to make sure they are accessible for all applicants. Organisations that implement equitable hiring practices to create a more diverse workplace see the effects in the whole organisation.

3.3 External Support

There is often a perception that employers will face increased costs and challenges to employ people with a disability when reasonable adjustments will need to be made. The reality is that there is a lot of support available to employers, including funding, much of it at zero, or low, cost to the employer. A key part of success is creating local and regional networks to support collaboration and peer learning. The Department for Work and Pensions (DWP), Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise organisations (VCSEs), Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs), local government, and peer networks are all possible sources of support.

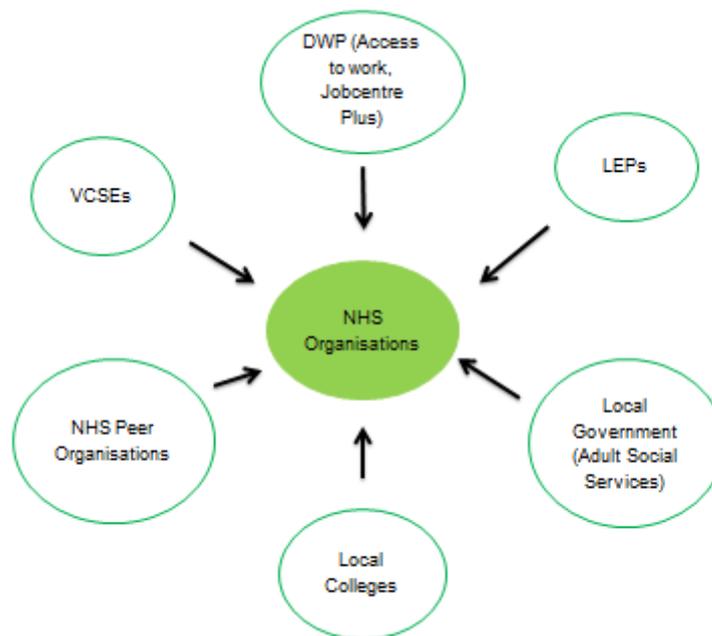


Figure 1 - External partners NHS organisations can look to for support

3.3.1 Department for Work and Pensions (DWP)

DWP provides support through two main programmes:

1. Depending on circumstances and need, the [Access to Work](#) grant can pay for practical support including:

- adaptations to equipment used;
- special equipment;
- fares to work for those who can't use public transport;
- a support worker or job coach to help in the workplace;
- a support service for those who have a mental health condition, are absent from work or finding it difficult to work;
- disability awareness training for colleagues;
- a communicator at a job interview;
- the cost of moving equipment for a change in job location or job.

The local Jobcentre Plus can help NHS organisations tap into a pool of candidates that have learning disabilities and are looking for work. Disability Employment Advisors at [local Jobcentres](#) are able to provide more information about hiring people with learning disabilities.

2. The [Two Ticks Scheme](#) is a recognition given by Jobcentre Plus to employers based in the UK who have agreed to take action to meet five commitments regarding the employment, retention, training and career development of disabled employees. Employers who use the symbol have agreed with Jobcentre Plus that they will take action on these five commitments:

- I. to interview all disabled applicants who meet the minimum criteria for a job vacancy and consider them on their abilities;
- II. to ensure there is a mechanism in place to discuss, at any time, but at least once a year, with disabled employees what can be done to make sure they can develop and use their abilities;
- III. to make every effort when employees become disabled to make sure they stay in employment;
- IV. to take action to ensure that all employees develop the appropriate level of disability awareness needed to make these commitments work;
- V. each year to review the five commitments and what has been achieved, plan ways to improve on them and let employees and Jobcentre Plus know about progress and future plans.

3.3.2 Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs)

LEPs are voluntary partnerships between local authorities and businesses to help encourage economic growth in localities. There are [39 LEPs across England](#).

LEPs come together on areas of shared importance to: engage with government; share knowledge and good practice; and, make proposals for funding. LEPs are also involved in many aspects of the management of European Structural and Investment Funds (ESIF), including the European Social Fund (ESF), the main programme for supporting employment. ESF can also support work with local employers, Jobcentre Plus and learning providers to help local workless people into jobs.

Locally, NHS organisations should consider building links with their local LEP to identify mutual opportunities and access support and resources for employing people, including those with a learning disability.

3.3.3 Local Authorities

Local Authorities have a wide range of responsibilities, including adult social services. The Adult Social Care Outcomes Framework (ASCOF) shows a low level of employment of adults with a learning disability.

There is a mutually beneficial opportunity for NHS organisations and local authorities to collaborate on this agenda, including:

- for NHS organisations to reach their target population by working with local authorities and sharing data on people with learning disabilities who are known to adult social services;
- for local authorities to increase meaningful employment of people with learning disabilities;
- for NHS and local authorities to work together and develop new services models for people with learning disabilities.

Your local authority contact can be found on the [directory](#).

3.3.4 Voluntary and Community Social Enterprises (VCSEs)

VCSEs are a diverse group of organisations, with a wide range of objectives and activities. One area of work that VCSEs get involved in is providing a wide range of services to individual users and communities. The geographical reach of VCSEs varies from international, national and locally focused groups.

VCSEs are a great source of expertise that you may want to draw on in your organisation. Some projects are funded through national and European funding;

other support may be available at low cost. Some areas of particular interest may include:

- providing services to people with learning disabilities, their families, and carers (and therefore know the local population with learning disabilities);
- many will also be linked with local authorities and LEPs;
- a resource to help people with learning disabilities become employment ready:
 - [providing support](#) with job searching, the application process, interview preparation, and developing skills;
 - [training programmes](#) work on various job-ready skills such as: communication, time management, social skills, self-management and health and safety.
 - [identifying suitable matches](#) within their client group to fill vacancies in your organisation, and providing training;
- Local support employment VCSEs can help identify what reasonable adjustments may be needed to ensure successful employment and settling into your organisation;
- provide support to employers such as training staff (i.e. conducting equality and diversity training sessions).

Some ways to find local VCSEs to partner with include:

- The [Voluntary Sector Health and Care Hub](#) who represent collaborative working between voluntary and community sector organisations in England and the national systems;
- a data base of local support and development organisations is available from the National Association for Voluntary and Community Action (NAVCA) [directory](#);
- your nearest supported employment office can be found on the British Association of Supported Employment ([BASE](#)) [webpage](#).

To facilitate networking, sharing best practice and lessons learnt at the local, regional and national level, we have created a LinkedIn group.

Join our [LinkedIn group](#) to help facilitate the creation of partnerships in your area [search on LinkedIn: NHS Learning Disability Employment].

4 Being an Accessible Employer

4.1 Equality Act 2010

The Equality Act 2010 (the Act) covers nine protected characteristics – age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership race, pregnancy and maternity religion or belief, sex, and sexual orientation. Learning disability is a type of disability within the disability protected characteristic. Some key points of the Act relevant to learning disabilities include:

- A duty on employers to make reasonable adjustments for disabled staff to help them overcome disadvantage resulting from their impairment;
- Allowing positive action if you think that employees or job applicants who share a particular protected characteristic are disadvantaged, or if their participation in an activity is disproportionately low (the above statistics show that people with learning disabilities have disproportionately low participation in the workforce).

If you would like more information on the Act and how to apply it please refer to the [Equality and Human Rights Commission](#) or NHS Employers' [briefing](#) on the implications for the NHS.

4.1.1 What is a reasonable adjustment?

The Act requires employers to make [reasonable adjustments](#) to make sure all disabled workers, including people with learning disabilities, are not disadvantaged when doing their jobs. These adjustments apply to all contract workers, trainees, apprentices, and full and part time employees. Adjustments apply throughout the recruitment process and the duration of employment at an organisation.

Everyone is different, which means that not everyone will need the same adjustments; employees need to be engaged in conversations about adjustments needed to support them in the workplace.

Adjustments should be reviewed frequently to ensure that the adjustment is effective. Several adjustments may be required to reduce an array of disadvantages that may not be obvious to an employer.

There are several considerations that should be made when thinking about reasonable adjustments:

- how effective the change will be in avoiding the disadvantage the worker would otherwise experience;
- is it practical;
- the cost;
- your organisation's resources and size;
- the availability of financial resources.

[Access to Work](#) can help pay for reasonable adjustments. This will minimise the financial burden on organisations.

The duty contains three requirements that apply in situations where a disabled person would be substantially disadvantaged compared to people who are not disabled.

1. Changing the way things are done – where a disabled worker is put at a disadvantage by a provision, criterion or practice of their employer.

For example, NHS organisations have mandatory training that has to be completed each year, including health and safety and information governance. Often, the training is conducted online through e-learning. Examples of adjustments to this within the NHS include a face-to-face mandatory training option, and undertaken with the aid of a support worker.

2. Changes to overcome barriers created by the physical workplace

Thinking creatively about the physical environment and considering adding prompts may help people with learning disabilities complete their jobs more efficiently.

Some adjustments that NHS organisations have taken include restructuring working hours, such as shifting the start and end times of the working day, or working shorter days.

3. Providing extra equipment

Additional or different equipment may make it easier for people with learning disabilities to communicate or access information within the team and wider organisation. This can take the form of providing specialist software, easy read documents, or by working with a support worker when necessary.

The [Equality and Human Rights Commission](#) provide examples of how the three requirements work in practice. Please refer to their webpage for an in-depth explanation of [reasonable adjustments in practice](#).

4.1.2 Positive Action

The Act allows you to take a protected characteristic into consideration when deciding who to recruit or promote.

As employers, you can take positive action pre-application to encourage applications from under-represented groups, such as targeted advertising, offering pre-application training, offering work shadowing or open days for specific groups.

At the point of making job offers, employers can also take positive action to select candidates from a protected characteristic. However, candidates have to be as qualified as each other; this does not mean the same qualifications, but it does mean that the selection assessment on a range of criteria can rate applicants as equally capable of doing the same job.

4.2 Communicating

Communicating is really important because that's the way of expressing yourself. If we don't communicate clearly, then there is no point in communicating at all. - Mencap

Organisations should consider how to support staff to communicate in ways which are more accessible and inclusive to support the recruitment and retention of colleagues with learning disabilities.

Some general tips when communicating either verbally or through written means include:

- use plain English;
- avoid jargon, acronyms and figures of speech;
- use clear, short sentences.

4.2.1 Face-to-face

Some 'top tips' for effective face-to-face communication with people with learning disabilities are as follows:

- clearly identify or introduce yourself - if appropriate, explain who you are and what you do;
- find a suitable place to talk, ideally away from noise and distractions;
- speak clearly and perhaps a little slower than you would do usually, but do not shout;
- use gestures and facial expressions to support what you are saying;
- if necessary, repeat phrases, re-phrase the sentence or use simpler words or phrases;
- check if the person has understood what you are saying; look for visual clues as well as asking if they have understood;
- encourage people to ask questions or request further information; ask if they would like anything in writing as a reminder or reference;

- try different ways of getting your point across, for example writing things down, drawing or using symbols or objects to support your point.

4.2.2 Written and Printed

Equally, it is important to ensure that written or printed communication is accessible. Some 'top tips' for accessible printed communication are as follows:

- use a minimum font size of 12 point, preferably 14;
- use a clear, uncluttered and sans serif font such as Arial;
- align text to the left margin and avoid 'justifying' text;
- ensure plenty of 'white space' on documents, especially between sections and avoid 'squashing' text onto a page; if possible, include a double-space between paragraphs;
- print on matt, not gloss, paper;
- use page numbers;
- if printing double-sided ensure that the paper is of sufficient thickness to avoid text showing through from the other side;
- consider making all 'standard' printed letters / documents 'easier to read' – using plain English, highlighting important information, and supporting text with diagrams, images or photographs.

Many people with a learning disability will need written information in 'easy read' format. 'Easy read' refers to information which is written using simpler words and phrases, supported by images, symbols or photographs. It is good practice to ensure that people with learning disabilities are involved in the development of easy read documents.

Organisations should take steps to ensure that their internet and intranet sites are accessible, including to people with a learning disability and to users of assistive technology.

For more information on how to make your webpage recognised as accessible refer to the [Web Content Accessibility Guidelines](#).

The BBC has commissioned research on web accessibility for people with learning disabilities – it will be published to the [My Web My Way](#) page when complete.

Consideration should also be given to colleagues with other information or communication needs, and to the fact that some people with a learning disability may also have additional communication needs, for example because of sensory loss. More information about correctly formatting documents to ensure that they are accessible to users of assistive technology is included in the [NHS Guide in Creating Accessible Documents](#).

4.3 The Accessibility Information Standard

The new 'Accessible Information Standard' (officially known as SCCI1605 Accessible Information) was released following formal approval. All organisations that provide NHS or adult social care have a [legal duty](#) (produced under section 250 of the Health and Social Care Act 2012 and supported by the Equality Act 2010 obligations) to follow the Standard. The aim of the Accessible Information Standard is to ensure that people who have a disability or sensory loss get information that they can access and understand, and any communication support that they need. This includes providing accessible information and communication support for people with a learning disability.

The Standard applies to patients and service users (and their parents and carers), rather than to employees or staff. However, the principles and processes will support the recruitment and on-going support for staff with learning disabilities too. The Standard should be considered by NHS organisations when applying and implementing EDS2.

Please refer to the [NHS Guide in Creating Accessible Documents](#) and [Implementation Guidance for the Accessible Information Standard](#). More information available on the NHS England website at <http://www.england.nhs.uk/ourwork/patients/accessibleinfo-2/> or email england.nhs.participation@nhs.net

4.4 Training

4.4.1 Equality and Diversity Training

Equality and diversity training in NHS organisations already exists, nonetheless additional training with specific learning disability components could help promote culture change. Additional training at all levels should be considered, particularly for managers, leaders and team members of someone with a learning disability. Key messages to include in additional equality and diversity training include:

- myth busting;
- tailor work to make the most of employee's skills and experience, as well as thinking about development;
- everyone is different;
- reasonable adjustments;
- communicating in an accessible way.

Face-to-face training is a good way to increase understanding of the day-to-day issues facing people with learning disabilities. This enables training to be more interactive, giving more hands-on practice on specific areas of support and

increasing confidence in communicating and interacting with colleagues with a learning disability.

Think about involving people with a learning disability as part of your training. This will provide a user-led perspective, which will give groups a better understanding of the issues and how best to adjust practice.

4.4.2 Additional Training Resources

[Disability Matters](#) provides a range of free training resources:

1. Downloadable toolkits to help managers facilitate training on equality and diversity for their staff. This method of training will provide additional resources for managers to easily lead training sessions without having to hire an external facilitator.
2. E-learning training modules are also available, which cover an array of material including: communication tips, understanding learning disabilities, complex conditions, and different meanings of emotions and behaviours.

Furthermore, there are learning disability theatre performance groups that raise awareness and give a valuable insight as to what it is like living with a learning disability.

Contact your local VCSEs and Jobcentre Plus to discover what other training resources are available locally.

4.5 Creating a Supportive Environment

4.5.1 A Shared Responsibility

Below are three ways that NHS organisation can promote equality and diversity in their organisation and help create a supportive environment for people to work in.

4.5.2 Staff Engagement Group

Staff engagement groups are one way of supporting staff and providing a forum to listen. They can facilitate the creation of a safe space for sharing experiences. Examples of how staff engagement groups can be used include: sharing their day-to-day experiences of work; thinking through what is working well, and not so well, learning from their experiences; and developing practical solutions could help spread good practice or fix other issues.

Listening to staff will help managers identify the type of additional support needed to increase their confidence in working together and ultimately show that the NHS is serious about employing people with learning disabilities. Staff groups can also be a

useful mechanism to reach others from learning disability groups for future recruitment.

The formality of the staff engagement group can depend on what the need and purpose is in your organisation. Some practical considerations are set out below.

- will there be a senior leader or sponsor? How will insights report back to the senior management team;
- appoint a chair;
- administrative support for the group (including meetings, room booking etc);access to meeting rooms;
- allow reasonable time to attend meetings, with agreement and support from line managers.

4.5.3 Learning Disability Champion

Learning disability champions in your organisation can promote and help maintain momentum around diversity culture change

Learning disability champions are volunteers who become expert points of contact in their organisation, and promote best practice. This includes disseminating information to colleagues, encouraging myth-busting and becoming experts on Access to Work, learning disability programmes and networking with other partners.

Areas of responsibility could include:

- promoting the safety and wellbeing of employees with learning disabilities;
- sharing lessons learnt and best practice across the organisation;
- ensuring communications are in an accessible format;
- being an advocate for employing people with learning disabilities in the organisation and sharing successful case studies;
- supporting the training, recruitment and retention of employees with learning disabilities;
- liaising directly with employees with a learning disability, managers and staff groups;
- supporting colleagues who are new to working with someone with a learning disability.

4.5.4 Individual Support

Someone with a learning disability may need additional individual support for various aspects of their role. This could be during training and induction or when completing certain tasks. There isn't a one-size-fits-all model that can be applied to all employees as everyone is different. Individual centred support will go beyond

establishing what support is needed to give insight to their employee's skills and experience. Consequently, jobs can be tailored to their skills to facilitate a successful role, and will need individual specific goals and training.

Individual support for colleagues and managers is equally important, especially where adjustments are being made to team working practices or changes to responsibilities. The onus remains with the manager to find solutions to potential problems that arise and ensure all colleagues can work effectively in their surroundings.

National Institute for Health and Care Excellence ([NICE Guidelines](#)) can help develop proactive intervention strategies that are based around each person's need. Consult a learning disability advisor through your local network and take into account the severity of the learning disability when developing individual support.

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 be 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.

1. Job description

- Up-to-date and agreed job descriptions
- Person specifications available for all posts
- Information, not contained in a job description, required for job matching

2. Job matching panel

- 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

3. Job matching process

- 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

4. Consistency checking

- 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

5. Review

- 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

6 Advertising and Recruitment

To prepare your organisation and recruiters for hiring people with a learning disability it is helpful to start thinking about the advertising and recruitment process early. Tapping into the local networks will help reach your target audience more easily.

Often people with a learning disability are hesitant in applying for roles. Pre-employment support will encourage applicants to apply for roles by increasing their confidence that the NHS is committed to employing people with learning disabilities. As a part of pre-employment support individuals and families should be given clear and accurate information about job conditions and requirements.

6.1 Advertising

Advertising solely on NHS Jobs may not be enough to reach everyone who might be able to do the job. Building local networks will help you reach the largest possible pool of candidates. Some examples of alternative locations for advertising could include: participating in jobs fairs; sharing the advert with local partners who work with people with learning disabilities (such as the disability and employment advisor at your local Jobcentre Plus, VCSEs, and Adult Social Services departments).

6.2 Accessible Applications

Applications need to be available in an accessible form. Key considerations are:

- easy read job descriptions and application forms – use clear simple language;
- have clear descriptions of the job and tasks that need to be done;
- do not ask for qualifications that are not directly related to the tasks of the job;
- flexibility in how candidates apply – offer alternative application formats .

6.3 Selection Process

The design of the selection process will also need to be considered to ensure that you are giving applicants the best chance to show their skills for the job. This may mean moving away from a traditional interview-only format. Some examples of adjustments to the selection process are:

- conduct the selection process through an assessment centre where candidates can trial aspects of the job;
- have an informal atmosphere with a small panel;
- allow for longer interviews;
- consider giving the questions ahead of time;
- keep questions to access their ability to do the job at hand;
- group exercises;
- consider having someone with a learning disability on the interview panel;

- allow people to do an extended work trial whereby they actually do the job for a few weeks and even if they do not want the job or are not suitable for the job, they will gain experience to put on their CVs.

Getting to the Interview

Provide clear instructions for how to get to the interview location in an easy read format, and who to contact on arrival.

Feedback to Unsuccessful Candidates

It is good practice to give detailed feedback to unsuccessful candidates so they can improve. For many people with learning disabilities this may be their first job interview. To prevent them from being discouraged, positive and specific feedback on areas to improve is good practice. Additionally, managers can provide job trials or internships to help unsuccessful candidates build up their skill base.

6.4 Pre-employment checks

6.4.1 Identity Checks

All the same pre-employment checks will apply for people with learning disabilities, such as identity checks (see the NHS Employers [identity check standard](#) for a comprehensive overview) and rights to work in the UK (see the Home Office '[Full guide for employer on preventing illegal working in the UK](#)').

6.4.2 References

References are also an important part, and may be more challenging for people with learning disabilities who may have limited employment experiences to draw on. References should be sought to try and build up a picture about a person's suitability for certain role, and can come from non-employment sources where they are not available, such as volunteering activities, and/or training. Where the person cannot provide a suitable referee from any of these sources; character or personal references may be sought as described by the [employment history and reference check standard](#).

7 Employment

7.1 One year in the NHS

Following their appointment, an employee with a learning disability will have to sign an employment contract. Although the employment contract itself cannot be changed to easy read, a summary sheet in easy read can be provided with the full contract. This summary sheet will explain some of the most important/ relevant information, including pay, hours worked, annual leave, sick days, and notice period.

7.2 Induction Process

Like all other employees, people with learning disabilities will need an induction to the organisation and their new role. In one organisation, an employee with a learning disability attended two half day accessible training sessions, rather than one full day.

Managers should keep in mind that it may take longer for people with learning disabilities to become comfortable in their new role and learn the skills required. If there is no co-worker, employment support organisations may provide individual assistance for the training and induction process.

Once someone with a learning disability has successfully been hired, consider creating an action plan for the year. This action plan should cover support required to complete mandatory training, and the accessing online tools and resources on the intranet. This may be a good structure for thinking about any adjustments that may be needed to support the individual.

7.3 Monitoring

As changes are made in the organisation, monitoring should be put in place to review success, and any areas for improvement. This can be done formally, through the personal development reviews, Electronic Staff Record, as a part of Equality Delivery System (EDS2), or informally.

The [Equality Diversity System](#) (EDS2) is designed to help all staff and the organisations understand how equality can drive improvements, strengthen the accountability of services to those using them, and bring about workplaces that are free from discrimination. To ensure that employing people with learning disabilities is a sustainable commitment from your organisation, consider how this goal fits in within EDS2 and your organisation's objectives. Any initiatives developed by your organisation in relation to learning disabilities should be linked to your broader equality, diversity and inclusion agenda and integrated into mainstream business planning.

Getting it right for people with learning disabilities can have a spill over effect for other disabilities. EDS2 [resources](#) are also available in Easy Read format.

7.3.1 Potential Staff Survey Adjustments

Staff surveys or barometers are used both nationally and locally to create action plans to develop the workforce. The more developed the staff surveys are the more information can be collected. Consider adjusting the staff survey in your organisation to collect more information on how people with learning disabilities have progressed in the organisation. This may be an expansion of tasks completed, the amount of support needed or a change in hours worked.

8 Resources

Getting Started	
Making the Case and Employer Benefits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Health Education England. 'Mental Health and Learning Disability'. http://hee.nhs.uk/work-programmes/mental-health-and-learning-disability/ The benefits of employing someone with a learning disability in your workplace: http://www.realroles.org/rrdocs/employment-pack-en1.pdf University of Bath (2012). Engaging for Success: the evidence: http://www.engageforsuccess.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/09/The-Evidence.pdf National Development Team for Inclusion www.ndti.org.uk/major-projects/current/employment-support-for-disabled-people Alberta. (2013). 'Human services, Persons with Developmental Disabilities' http://humanservices.alberta.ca/disability-services/pdd.html Department of Health. 'A White Paper: A new strategy for learning disabilities for the 21st century'.
External Support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Department for Work and Pensions. (2013). Employer's Guide to Access to Work. Department of Health. (2014). 'The Adult and Social Care Outcomes Framework 2015/16'. LEP Network. http://www.lepnetwork.net/ Social Enterprise UK. http://www.socialenterprise.org.uk/about/about-social-enterprise/FAQs#what are ses Department for Business, Innovation & Skills. (2012). 'Local Enterprise Partnerships: local authority mapping'. https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/local-enterprise-partnerships-local-authority-mapping Local Government Association. 'The LGA quick guide to local government' http://www.local.gov.uk/c/document_library/get_file?uuid=a5b2c920-8f40-4eae-9852-8b983724f5bc&groupId=10180
Being an Accessible Employer	
Equality Act	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Advisory, Consideration and Arbitration Service (ACAS). 'The Equality Act 2010, guidance for employers'. http://www.acas.org.uk/equalityact
Communicating	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Scope (2015). 'End the Awkward'. http://www.scope.org.uk/awkward BILD http://www.bild.org.uk/easy-read/ Web Content Accessibility Guidelines http://www.w3.org/TR/WCAG10/ Mencap. '6 tips about web accessibility.' https://www.mencap.org.uk/blog/6-tips-about-web-accessibility Black, P. (2014). 'What councils need to know about people with learning disabilities. <i>Need to know, Local government knowledge</i>

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	<p><i>navigator</i></p> <p>http://www.local.gov.uk/documents/10180/11553/LGKN+Need+to+Know+1+-+Learning+Disabilities.pdf/ab8e2101-3d78-4637-b276-c760cb9cccf6</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NHS England (2015). Creating Accessible Documents • Mencap. 'Communicating with people with a learning disability'. https://www.mencap.org.uk/sites/default/files/documents/Communicating%20with%20people_updated.pdf
<p>Training and Creating a Supportive Environment</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Disability Matters https://www.disabilitymatters.org.uk/ • East Sussex and Brighton & Hove Learning Disability Partnership Board (2007). 'How to involve someone with a Learning Disability in Choosing and Developing the Staff who Support them'. http://www.eastsussex.gov.uk/nr/rdonlyres/fe267528-be49-429d-8c9d-d7fa298e7b06/0/howtoinvolvepeoplewithlearningdisabilitiesinchoosingwhosupportsthemopt2.pdf • Leicestershire Partnership NHS Trust (2013). Guidance on Staff Support Groups. http://www.leicspart.nhs.uk/Library/MasterGuidanceStaffSupportGroupsver11.pdf • Positive Deviance Initiative http://www.positivedeviance.org/ • NICE (2015). 'Challenging Behaviour and learning disabilities' http://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/ng11/chapter/recommendations#.VZVZrnUSNPA.email • Hemming's, S. and Morris, J. (2004). Employing people with learning disabilities. <i>Joseph Rowntree Foundation</i>. http://www.jrf.org.uk/sites/files/jrf/1859352413.pdf • Foundation for People with Learning Disabilities http://www.learningdisabilities.org.uk/content/assets/pdf/publications/cjs-easy-read.pdf?view=Standard • NHS England, ADASS, LGA (2015). 'Supporting people with a learning disability and/or autism who have mental health condition or display behaviour that challenges'.
<p>Entry Routes to Employment</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • BASE. 'What is Supported Employment?' http://base-uk.org/information-commissioners/what-supported-employment • Mencap. 'You can work it out! Best practice in employment for people with learning disabilities'. https://www.mencap.org.uk/sites/default/files/documents/2008-03/campaigns_you_can_work_it_out.pdf • Department for Education. (2014). Supported Internships https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/389411/Supported_Internship_Guidance_Dec_14.pdf • European Union of Supported Employment. (2007). 'Supported

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	<p>Employment for Key Policy Makers. http://www.euse.org/content/position_papers/Supported-Employment-Key-Policy-Makers.pdf</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NHS Employers (2015). ‘What Makes a good apprenticeship’.
NHS Banding and Agenda for Change	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NHS Employers (2013). NHS Job Evaluation Handbook
Employment	
Monitoring	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NHS England (2013). ‘A refreshed Equality Delivery System for the NHS: EDS2’. http://www.england.nhs.uk/ourwork/gov/equality-hub/eds/ • Kirklees Learning Disability Partnership Board (2008). ‘An employment strategy for people with a learning disability’. http://www.kirklees.gov.uk/community/careInKirklees/pdf/employmentStrategyLDPB.pdf • Leicestershire County Council (2013). ‘Supporting people with Learning Disabilities into Employment in Leicestershire’. http://www.leics.gov.uk/ld_employment_strategy.pdf