

# Moving into Work

*Supporting people with learning difficulties to make the transition from vocational education and training into employment*



An information sheet for people with learning difficulties

Many people with learning difficulties want to work and have a job. This is what some people said about work:

*'I am getting paid here.'*



*'I liked going on the computer and typing up tasks.'*



*'I enjoy the work. I wouldn't mind having a full time job.'*



*'I like working outside. I used to work in a fencing yard, we made posts and fences.'*



*'I haven't got a paid job yet, that's what I really want.'*



There are lots of training-for-work courses for people with learning difficulties in colleges, adult education and work training organisations.



The trouble is that most people on those courses don't actually get a job when their course has finished. This is a big problem.



The Learning and Skills Council which pays for the courses and training wants this to change. It has told colleges and work training organisations they must get much better at helping people with learning difficulties move into work.



The Learning and Skills Council wants colleges to work with supported employment organisations. This will help many more people with learning difficulties get jobs. The Learning and Skills Council calls this way of working the 'supported employment model'.

## What is supported employment?

Supported employment is a way of helping disabled people, including people with learning difficulties, to find and keep jobs. There are supported employment organisations like Mencap Pathways who help people find jobs. They help people:

- prepare for work
- find a job
- get support while working
- sort out their benefits



Supported employment is person-centred. This means that staff work with each person to find out what is right for them by looking at:

- What kind of work they really want to do  
*This might be a job in an office, a shop, working with children, or maybe a job that is outside, like gardening.*



- The training they need to do this work  
*When Sean started working in a garage, he needed training on how to fit tyres, exhausts and steam clean cars.*



- Support they need when they are on work experience placements and once they are in a job

*Sami works in a supermarket café. When he works on the till he needs a bit of help to do this, but there are lots of other things he can do on his own.*



- Support that the employer might need

*Ben works in a DIY superstore. He was finding it difficult to read and understand numbers. Ben's boss asked the Work Placement Officer at the college to help. She found a class to help Ben get better with reading and understanding numbers.*



## Working in ordinary workplaces

Supported employment is usually about finding jobs in ordinary workplaces:

- Amanda is on work experience in a nursery:

*'I am helping the children learn. I read a book to them and help some with drawing pictures. I like working with them. I enjoy helping them. I am getting on with the staff.'*



- Richard had work experience in a library:

*'I put books on shelves in alphabetical order and stack books on trolley. I put books in number order. Mills & Boon, Fiction, Sagas, Westerns, Crime, I know where they all go more or less. If in doubt I refer to the sign. There is a handcuffs sign that refers to the crime books.'*



## Job coaches

A job coach will support a person to find a job, in their job, and help them get better at doing the job. Peter's job coach is Brenda. He explained:

*'I got lots of support to find a job. I had a job coach, Brenda. She helped me with anything I got stuck with.'*



## Working with a job coach

John explained what he does in his job:

*'I clean out equipment, all from the hospital. When you have to clean, you have to wear an apron and gloves.'*

When he first started his job, his job coach helped him a lot. They worked together until John learnt how to do each bit of his job. Now John has been doing his job for a while his job coach only needs to come in once a week just to check everything is all right.



## Jobcentre Plus

Disability Employment Advisors who work in Jobcentre Plus can tell you about what help there is to get a job.



One way of getting help is through Access to Work. This pays for things you might need to help you do your job such as:

- Transport to get you to work



- A job coach



- A support worker



- Equipment you need



## How to choose a good training-for-work course



Here are some things you need to look out for when you choose a training-for-work course.



- Is the information about the course clear and easy to understand?



- Does it say it will support you into work when you are on the course or when you finish it? Lots of courses will give you a certificate saying you have done the course but don't support you into work.
- Try to find out how many people on this course in the past got a job afterwards.
- Will the course help people who want full-time work as well as those who want part-time work? Full-time work is over 16 hours a week.
- Is the course person-centred? Do staff work with each learner to find out what is important to them about work and the kind of jobs they want to do?
- Do staff talk to employers in the area and know what jobs there are near to where people live?



- Are there lots of opportunities for you to do work experience? This is where you try a real job for a while to see what it is like.



- It is good when organisations work together. It means people can get different kinds of help to find and keep a job. Do the staff on the course work together with other organisations such as: supported employment agencies, employers; self-advocacy organisations; Disability Employment Advisers; parents and carers; Benefits office; Employment Service; Jobcentre Plus; Social Services and Connexions?

- Is there someone to talk to who can give good, clear and correct information about how your benefits might change if you get a job?



- When you get a job will there be support for as long as you need it? Will there be support for your boss so she or he understands the best ways of working with you?

- If your parents or carers help you a lot, do staff let them know what is happening and what they can do to help and support you when you get a job?



People with learning difficulties can work and do a good job. Most people want to work. College courses will have to change so they are much better at supporting people into work. The information in this sheet could help you choose a course that will help you get a job.

## Thank you

NIACE would like to thank: the Learning and Skills Council; the European Social Fund; The Vine Centre, Leeds; Bolton Community College; Westcombe Employment Services; The Rose Project at Havering College; Colchester Institute; and Paul Craven for their help with this information sheet. Funding was provided by the Learning and Skills Council and the European Social Fund, a European Union initiative that supports activities to extend employment opportunities and develop a skilled workforce.

## Useful Books

### Adults with learning difficulties and employment

#### ***You can work it out!***

#### **Supporting you into work**

#### ***I want to work***

#### **A guide to benefits and work for people with a learning disability**

With a foreword by Anne McGuire, Minister for Disabled People, Department for Work and Pensions.

#### ***I can get a job***

#### **A step-by-step guide to getting a job. This guide is for you and the people who support you**

With a foreword by Anne McGuire, Minister for Disabled People, Department for Work and Pensions.

*These books are published by Care Services Improvement Partnership (CSIP) Valuing People Support Team.*

*They are written for people with learning difficulties.*

*To order email [valuing.people.info@dh.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:valuing.people.info@dh.gsi.gov.uk) or visit [www.valuingpeople.gov.uk/employment.htm](http://www.valuingpeople.gov.uk/employment.htm)*

***Making the Jump – We Can Do a Good Job: A Pack for Adults with Learning Difficulties Who Want to Work***

Yola Jacobsen

*Available from NIACE. Order online at [www.niace.org.uk/publications](http://www.niace.org.uk/publications) or telephone 0116 204 7068 /2804*

## Useful websites

[www.niace.org.uk](http://www.niace.org.uk) – NIACE – The national adult learning organisation

[www.lsc.gov.uk](http://www.lsc.gov.uk) – The Learning and Skills Council

[www.base-uk.org](http://www.base-uk.org) – British Association for Supported Employment

[www.lsneducation.org.uk](http://www.lsneducation.org.uk) – Learning and Skills Network

[www.mencap.org.uk](http://www.mencap.org.uk) – Mencap Pathway and Work Right

[www.skill.org.uk](http://www.skill.org.uk) – Skill – The National Bureau for Students with Disabilities

[www.remploy.co.uk](http://www.remploy.co.uk) – Remploy – Finding jobs for Disabled People

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

[www.valuingpeople.gov.uk](http://www.valuingpeople.gov.uk) – Information about Valuing People and Valuing People Now

[www.shaw-trust.org.uk](http://www.shaw-trust.org.uk) – Shaw Trust – Provides employment services for disabled people



Registered office  
NIACE, 21 De Montfort Street, Leicester LE1 7GE

Telephone: +44 (0) 116 204 4200 Fax: +44 (0) 116 285 4514  
Email: [enquiries@niace.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@niace.org.uk) Website: [www.niace.org.uk](http://www.niace.org.uk)

Registered charity number: 1002775 Company registered number: 2603322



INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

Written by Yola Jacobsen  
Revised edition © 2008 NIACE  
Images © CHANGE Picture Bank and Luke Richards Photography

Typeset and designed by Patrick Armstrong, Book Production Services, London.  
Printed and bound by Aspect Binders & Print