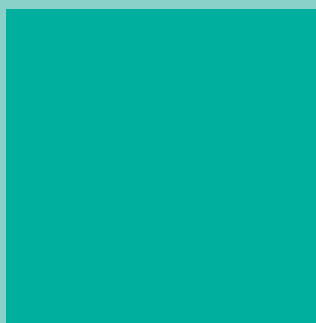
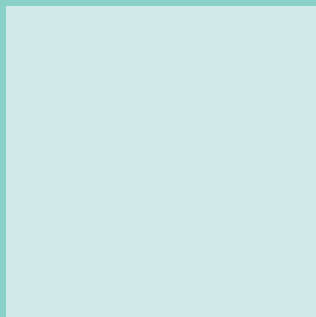
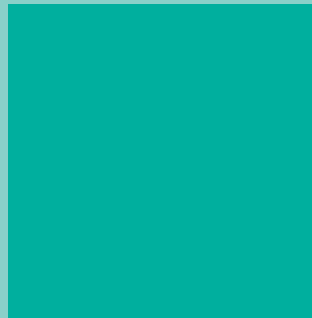
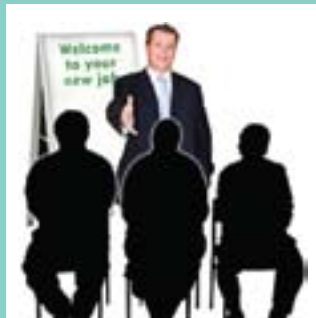
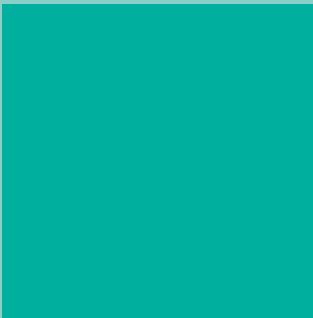


Valuing Employment Now: real jobs for people with learning disabilities



Valuing Employment Now: real jobs for people with learning disabilities

Easy read version

Message from Scott Watkin: Co-National Director for Learning Disabilities



I really welcome this new Employment Strategy and delivery plan.

I know how hard it is for people with learning disabilities to get jobs. I have found it hard to get a job and my only paid employment up to now was in a supermarket.

I think one of the main issues is training. Employers need to have better understanding about employing people with learning disabilities. And people with learning disabilities looking for jobs need to improve their skills, too.

Another barrier is the way people think. We need to show society what people with learning disabilities can do, and remind people that we are all capable of playing an important part in society and in the workplace.

My job is to be part of the team that makes Valuing People Now happen, and to make sure that the lives of people with learning disabilities change for the better.

This includes making sure that people with learning disabilities get the chance to work and earn real money.

I look forward to the employment strategy making a real difference in getting people with learning disabilities into real, paid jobs.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Swathwaite".

Message from Michael Ratcliffe, Co-Chair of the National Forum for People with Learning Disabilities

I really welcome this new Employment Strategy.

In the past it has been very difficult for people with learning disabilities to have proper paid employment. We need employers and society to understand that we want to work. Given the right support and training, we can be employed in jobs like other people.

I think that this strategy will help and encourage young people in transition to think differently about their future. They will work towards getting a job when they leave school, instead of settling for a life in day services.

Message from the National Valuing Families Forum

The National Valuing Families Forum welcomes this ambitious strategy. We look forward to all people with learning disabilities having the opportunity to work and the support they need to get into and stay in employment.

Message from the National Advisory Group on Learning Disability and Ethnicity (NAGLDE)

This employment strategy is an important part of making sure that people with learning disabilities have the same rights and opportunities as all other citizens.

This is also true for people from black and minority ethnic communities, who often face extra barriers when wanting to work.

The National Advisory Group is keen to support this strategy. We will work with the Government to make sure that people with learning disabilities from black and minority ethnic communities, and their families, are informed and supported so they can benefit fully from this strategy.



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The Vision



Why things have to change

This is what people with learning disabilities say¹

- “I worked on a mobile gardening team for 13 years. I didn’t get paid. It was called work experience.”
- “My support worker says I can’t do a job and they haven’t got time to support me.”
- “When I went for a job at Jobcentre Plus, I was given loads of written information and an application form which I couldn’t read and just left to get on with it.”
- “No-one has ever said I could do a paid job.”
- “My mum won’t let me work.”
- “I’m still at college at 43!”
- “Volunteering is good but we want to be paid”

1 All these quotes are from focus groups with people with learning disabilities, March 09.

What do we want to be different by 2025?

As a baby and young child New parents of children with learning disabilities will get positive messages about learning disability.



Parents will see people with learning disabilities in paid jobs.

Children with learning disabilities will be asked what job they want to do when they grow up.



At school

All young people with learning disabilities will get proper work experience.

More young people will have Saturday jobs.

Transition reviews will include what jobs people want and the support they need to get them.

People will get travel training and feel safe on public transport.





Leaving school or college (age 16-25)



A job will be the usual choice when people leave school or college.

People will not do courses at college that don't give them skills for work.

Supported employment with job coaching will be part of college courses.

There will be a clear pathway to work for all people with learning disabilities and families will be involved.

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As an adult



Most people's jobs will be full time.

More people will be self employed.

Some people with complex needs will be in jobs.

People who were in care homes or day centres will have found jobs with support from job coaches.

People and their families will know they have more money in work than they did on benefits.

People will be full members of society.

Mencap Snap! 2009

Introduction



What is this employment strategy about?

A **strategy** is a big plan. It says what people are going to do to make something happen.



This strategy is about making sure that people with learning disabilities get the support they need to get and keep a paid job.

It has been written because we know that people with learning disabilities want to work, but very often do not get the support they need.



The Government wants to see more people with learning disabilities in employment.



We really want to support those with the most severe learning disabilities to have more chance of working.

This means there will have to be some big changes. These people will have to make changes:



- health care



- social care



- schools



- colleges



- councils



- employment agencies



- Jobcentre Plus



- employers



- families



- people with learning disabilities

To make this happen we need to change the way that other people think about people with learning disabilities.



Our big message is that people with learning disabilities **can work**. This message should be given when people with learning disabilities are born.

Some other Important Messages



- Only 10% of people receiving adult social services² have any type of paid work. This is not right.



- This strategy is about people with moderate and severe learning disabilities because if we get things right for them, it will work better for everyone.



- By 'work', we mean real jobs with proper wages or self-employment. We do not mean volunteering or work experience, unless this is part of a plan to get real paid work.

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- Our plan is that most people with learning disabilities work at least **16** hours a week, because for most people this means they will have a lot more money than before
- People with profound and complex disabilities should be able to get a paid job. They will need lots of extra support.
- This strategy is not about more government money. We need to use the money we already have much better.
- To make this strategy work, everyone will need to believe that it is possible for people with learning disabilities to get jobs. They will need to believe that this would be a good thing.



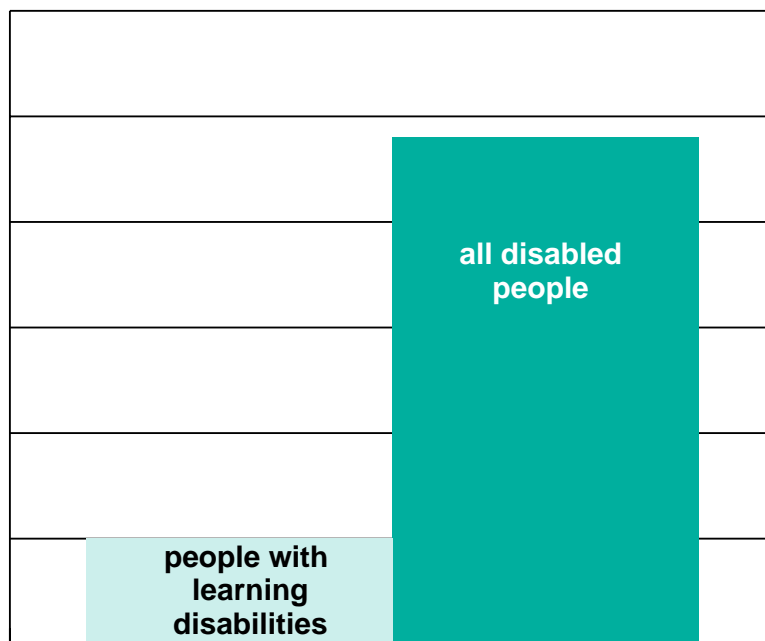
- All services will need to change what they do. They need to prepare people for work instead of a life of day services and benefits.



- Employment is a very important part of life. When people with learning disabilities have the same chances to get jobs as everyone else, we really will be valuing people.

The Big Goal

By 2025 we want more people with learning disabilities to have a job. We want these jobs to be 16 hours a week. At the moment only a very small number of people with learning disabilities have a job. But nearly half of all people with disabilities have a job.



Employment in 2009

We want the number of people with learning disabilities who work to be much closer to the number of all disabled people with jobs.

How we will make this happen?

To make this goal happen we need to change a lot of things:

1. Changing attitudes



Many people do not think that people with learning disabilities can work. This is because they have been told that people with learning disabilities cannot achieve much in life. This is wrong.



We need to change the way people think so they understand that all people with learning disabilities can work and have the right to work. This needs to start with the messages that are given when someone with a learning disability is born.

What needs to happen?



- The Government will run campaigns with parents.



- The Government will run workforce training.



- The Government will run projects to find out if some new ideas will work.



- The Government will tell people about places that are already doing things well.

2. Working together to support people into real jobs



Services must work together if they are going to support people with learning disabilities into paid jobs.

What needs to happen?



- People need to have a person-centred plan when they are 14 which talks about the job they want when they are older.



- This plan must say exactly how the person will move into employment.



- It should say who is going to help them get a job.



- It should say what money will be used to make it happen.

3. Getting ready for work in school and college



Young people need to start thinking about getting a job when they are still at school and college.



People with learning disabilities generally learn much better when they are doing a job than in a classroom. Work preparation courses don't usually help them to get a job.

What needs to happen?



- People should get good advice about jobs when they are at school.



- People should get proper work experience at school with the support they need.



- When people have left school or college they should be supported to move into paid work or supported employment.



- Adult learning and career advice should be accessible for people with learning disabilities.

4. Using personal budgets for employment support



Some people have personal budgets giving them more choice and control over how they live their lives. In future many more people will get personal budgets.



Councils are also improving day services for people with learning disabilities. Day services should be helping people to think about working.

What needs to happen?



- The Government will ask councils to make sure that peoples' support plans include the goal of getting a paid job.
- New Government projects will show how personal budgets can help people get a paid job.
- The Government will ask Learning Disability Partnership Boards to look at local plans for developing day centres. Plans for people of working age should all be looking at employment.

5. More high quality job coaching



Job coaches can support people with moderate to severe learning disabilities into paid work. Job coaches help people to learn the skills for a job.



But there are not enough really good job coaches in this country. Some people with learning disabilities may need lots of support for a long time before and after they get a job.



Some of the money that is spent on education and social care could be used to pay for job coaches and **supported employment.**

Supported employment is where you have support from a job coach who helps you learn the skills for a job. There are supported employment agencies where you can find a job coach.

What needs to happen?



- The Government will make a plan to increase the number of skilled job coaches.



- The Government is also changing its 'Access to Work' funding so it can more easily pay for a job coach.



Richard loves trains. He has a moderate learning disability. Sabre Supported Employment found Richard a job as a Train Care Assistant. His job coach stayed with him for a year. He taught Richard the tasks of the job to make sure he never made any mistakes. Fourteen years later, Richard is still in full time employment on the railways.

6. Helping people understand that they can come off benefits and be better off



Where people with learning disabilities do have jobs, these are usually only for a few hours, or they are not paid, or sometimes both.



This is usually because people have been told that working for money could mean their benefits will stop. People are often told that they shouldn't work for more than 16 hours a week because they will lose all their benefits.



The Government is doing some work now to make the benefits system easier to understand. We will make sure that the benefits system doesn't put people off working.



The people who support people with learning disabilities sometimes do not understand the benefits system. They give people the wrong advice.



Supported employment services that give people good benefits advice have supported lots of people into paid work.

What needs to happen?



- Councils should make sure that supported employment programmes include good benefits advice.



- The Government will run a benefits campaign to tell people that they can be better off in full time work.



- The Government will make the benefits system more easy to understand.

7. More self-employment



One in ten people in England are **self-employed**, but this includes very few people with learning disabilities.

Self-employed means that you have your own business or company.



Being self employed can be better for people with more complex disabilities because they can run their business in the way that works best for them. They can be based at home which is easier for some people.

What needs to happen?



- The Government will tell people about the work that has been done in other places to help people be self employed.



- Local self employment advice and training should be made easy for people to understand and get to.

8. Showing employers that they should employ people with learning disabilities



The Disability Discrimination Act (2004) says that employers have to make changes to the way they do things, to give disabled people equal chances of getting a job.

All **public bodies** have to give equal chances to disabled people.

Examples of **public bodies** are:

- Councils
- The National Health Service (NHS)
- Government Departments (like the Department of Health)
- Schools and colleges



But people with learning disabilities are missing out when they apply for jobs. There are usually a lot of complicated forms to fill out and difficult interview questions.

What needs to happen?



- The Government will help employers to understand that employing people with learning disabilities is a good idea.



- The public sector will set a better example and employ more people with learning disabilities.

DWP

- The Department of Work and Pensions will offer jobs to 400 people with learning disabilities by 2011.

9. Transport to get to work



Public transport is often not accessible for people with learning disabilities.



Many people rely on expensive taxi journeys. But **travel training** can cost less money and help people to be much more independent.

People with learning disabilities can be supported to travel using public transport so that they can learn how to do it on their own. This is called **travel training**.

What needs to happen?



- The Government will encourage more travel training.



- The Government will help transport providers to develop staff training and more easy-read signs.



- Learning Disability Partnership Boards should work with local schools, police and transport providers to stop hate crime against people with learning disabilities on public transport.

10. Making sure that where people live does not stop them getting work



For some people with learning disabilities the way housing benefit is paid can mean they can't afford to work full time. Councils also charge people in residential care when they work, so they don't get to keep their wages.



It is also hard to have a job if you do not live near to where the good jobs are.

What needs to happen?



- The Government's work on housing for people with learning disabilities will link to the work on employment.



- Councils should make sure that people are given choices about getting paid work when they decide where to live.

11. Including Everyone



Valuing People Now showed that some people are not being included in plans for people with learning disabilities. Sometimes these people need extra support. These are:



- people with the most complex needs
- people with autism who also have a learning disability



- people from Black and Minority Ethnic communities
- people who have committed a crime.



These people also need to be fully included in plans about employment. They may also need more support to get a job.

What needs to happen?



- The Government will make sure that these people are included in all plans about employment.



- Councils and other organisations need to fully include these people too.



Shamima is 22 years old. She is an Asian woman with a mild learning disability. She has been supported by Ansaar. Ansaar is a voluntary organisation that supports family carers and people with learning disabilities within the Asian community.

Rehana is a support worker at Ansaar. Rehana supported Shamima to have a job interview with Leicester City Council. Shamima has built up her work there from three to 16 hours a week. She no longer receives incapacity benefit. Her family is very proud of her.

12. People with learning disabilities and their families as experts



People with learning disabilities and their families are very important to making change happen. They need to be fully involved in all work around employment.

What needs to happen?



- Someone with a learning disability will have a job in the Government team that makes the employment strategy happen.



- A family carer will also have a job in this Government team.



- All local plans about employment need to fully involve people with learning disabilities and their families.

13. Better information and checking how well things are working



At the moment we do not know how many people with moderate and severe learning disabilities have got a job.



This means the Government can't set targets for this strategy yet.



The Government will start to find out more about employment of people with learning disabilities this year. When we know more, we will be able to check how well we are doing with this strategy.



We will be able to set targets in 2010. The targets will say how many more people need to have a job.



The Government will find out:

- How many people have a job
- People's age
- Whether people are male or female
- People's ethnic background.

What needs to happen?



- The Government will find out more about who is working at the moment.



- The Government will set proper targets in 2010.



- Learning Disability Partnership Boards should check how many more people are getting jobs every year.

14. Checking the strategy and showing what has changed



If this strategy works, it will get more people with learning disabilities into paid jobs. We will check what has changed, and what has been learnt. If not enough things have changed, we might decide to do some things differently.

What needs to happen?



- Every year the Government will tell the Learning Disability Programme Board what has changed.



- In three years time Government will check how well the strategy is working.

15. Making it Happen



Learning Disability Partnership Boards will include employment as an important part of making Valuing People Now happen. They will tell Regional Boards every year about the changes that have happened because of this strategy.



Deputy Regional Directors for Social Care and Valuing People Regional Leads, based in Government Offices, will support local people to do what the strategy says.



There will be a new cross-government team based in the Office of the National Director for Learning Disabilities in the Department of Health.



The team will include a person with a learning disability and a family carer.



The team will report to the national Learning Disability Programme Board which makes sure Valuing People Now is happening.



Big changes only happen if there is good leadership.

Good Leadership

Leadership is needed from:



- Council Chief Executives and Members and Head Teachers.
 - This will make employment for people with learning disabilities a big priority for all local areas and schools and colleges.
- Directors of Adult and Children's Social Services.
 - This will make sure that people include employment in their person centred plans. It will make social care staff work together better so that this happens.



- Managers in NHS Trusts, Councils, Jobcentre Plus and other public bodies.

- This will mean that more people get jobs in these places.

- Trade Unions

- They can talk to people who have already got jobs and tell them that people with learning disabilities should be working too.



- Employers

- They will show other employers that people with learning disabilities can work and do a good job.





- Further Education college principals
 - They can make sure that colleges are helping people to get jobs when they leave college.



- Places that give advice
 - They can make sure they give the right information about working and benefits.



- People with learning disabilities and family carers
 - People will need to be supported to make sure change happens.

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296550d 2ap 1.8p 2k July 09 (ESP)

Produced by COI for the Department of Health

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