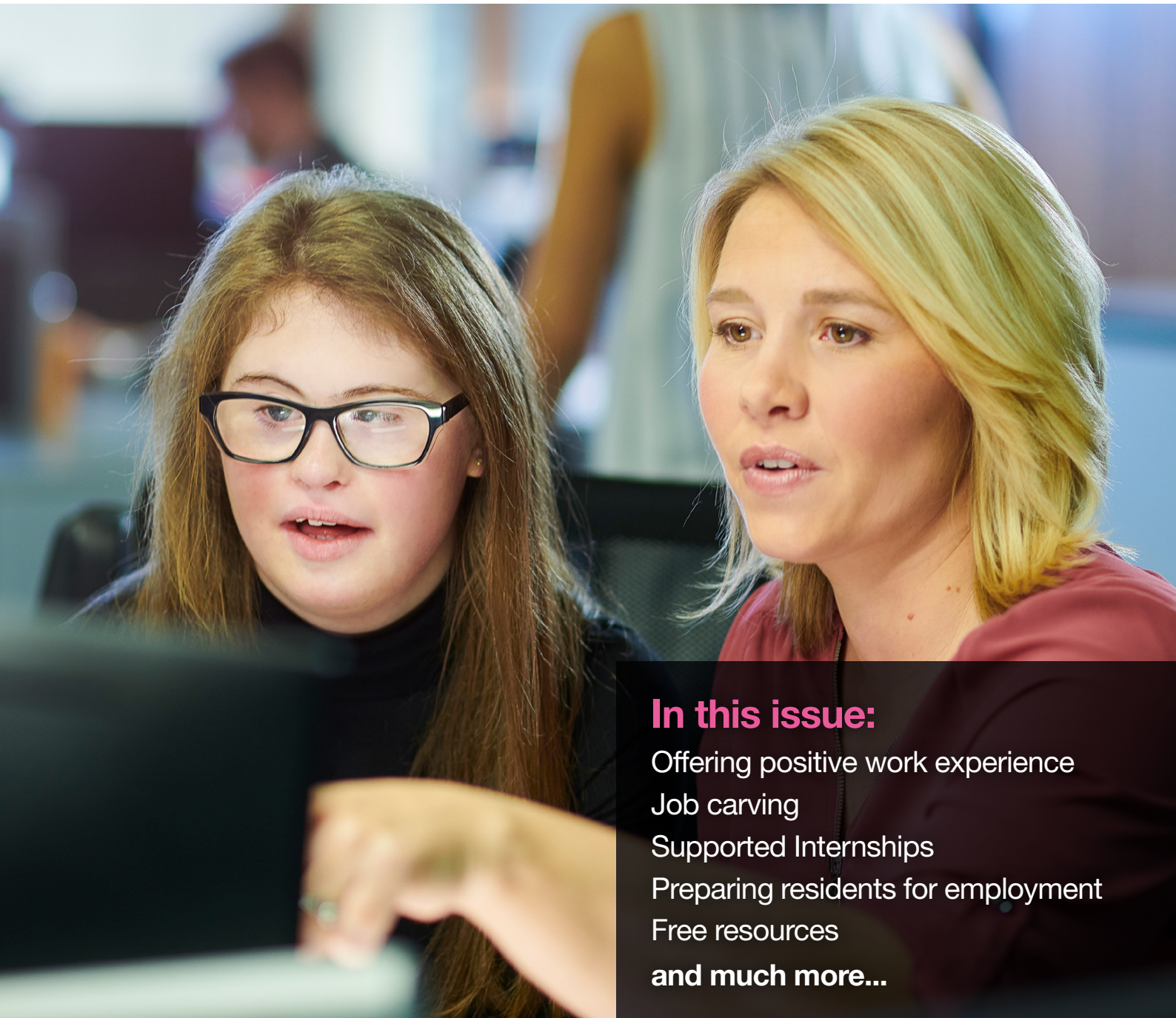


Worcestershire Inclusive Employment

Helping local businesses develop their inclusive employment



In this issue:

Offering positive work experience
Job carving
Supported Internships
Preparing residents for employment
Free resources
and much more...



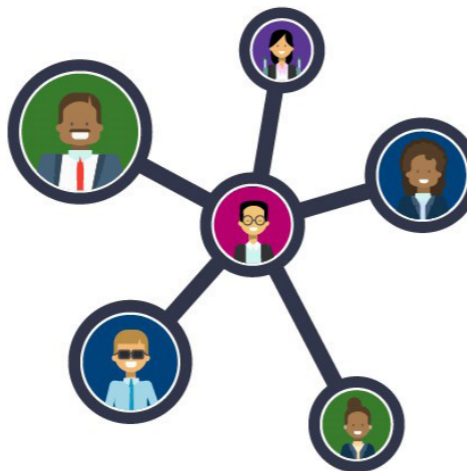
More than
11 million
paid employees work for
Disability Confident businesses



Find out more: gov.uk/disability-confident



Join a network of over
20,000
Disability Confident employers



Find out more: gov.uk/disability-confident



Worcestershire Inclusive Employment

This magazine has been produced by Worcestershire County Council and Worcestershire Local Enterprise Partnership to provide a comprehensive guide to support employers in widening their recruitment pool and to become inclusive employers.

We are very grateful to all the individuals and organisations who have contributed to this publication.

Worcestershire County Council welcomes your input. Please get in touch if you have any questions or comments by emailing the Inclusive Employment team at inclusiveemployment@worcestershire.gov.uk

This magazine can be produced as a PDF. To request a copy please email the Inclusive Worcestershire team at inclusiveemployment@worcestershire.gov.uk

Produced for Worcestershire County Council and Worcestershire Local Enterprise Partnership by Careermap Ltd

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If you would like to discuss how Careermap can help your organisation to create bespoke useful guides, please contact Sharon Walpole, Partnerships Director at info@careermap.co.uk

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Foreword

Since 2012 the employment rate of people with disabilities has fallen from 7.9% to 4.8% in 2022. It is sad to see such a decline in this percentage in the modern world we live in, where employment should be accessible to all. All people of eligible working age who have a desire to work have the right to gain meaningful employment, are we doing enough to support this in the UK?

Worcestershire County Council has reflected on the data and aims to support the transition of residents into employment no matter their background, age and personal circumstances over the coming years. The West Midlands employment rate of people with disabilities and health challenges may not be as detrimental as other regions of the UK, but the fact remains that more work is needed and our ambition to improve is mighty. Moving forward Worcestershire County Council and Worcestershire Local Enterprise Partnership have many projects, resources and guidance in place and plan to increase support to address this worrying statistic.

It is no secret that employers are facing a myriad of challenges in 2023 and are finding that recruitment and sourcing the skills they need are at the forefront of these challenges. Now is the time to access this untapped pool of people out there, who regardless of their health and learning challenges dream of having meaningful paid employment, and it is our duty as a local authority to support not only the people looking for work, but to upskill and guide employers to welcome all people through their doors no matter of their personal circumstances.

Fear of the unknown can limit even the bravest of people. We understand the worries and concerns that may come from employing someone with additional learning needs or disabilities. However, we cannot and will not let this stop us lobbying for this cohort of our community. We have designed this magazine with useful tools, articles and good news stories that will support you, the employer, to be brave and take the steps to become an inclusive employer.

There are a registered 5.5 million businesses in the UK with around 28 thousand based in Worcestershire as of the start of 2022, with a mere 21,000 of these businesses registered as disability confident employers in the UK, and sadly only around 140 in our county. This however does not mean that all of these employers are actually employing from the wider pool. Working with our colleagues at DWP we wish to change the disability confident stamp into real life successful employment stories that will not only benefit the person gaining employment but recruit dedicated, happy, and reliable staff for our local businesses.

We invite you to join our pledge in making sure Worcestershire businesses are all inclusive employers.



Mark Fitton
Director of People at
Worcestershire County Council



STEM employer RIFT opens their doors to all

RIFT Technology Ltd prides itself on being an inclusive employer and not just recruiting and advertising for people that they say 'fit in the box' or the set job description.

Each member of staff is unique for their own individual reasons, and they believe this is what makes them RIFT. RIFT tries to accommodate and cater for everyone's needs and make their environment safe for people to be able to go to work and be themselves. More often than not, a large proportion of individuals can be made to feel as though they have to act a certain way in order to fit in with what they perceive as the 'working norm'. RIFT does not discriminate against any of their members of staff and are always open to employ and support anyone that applies to work for RIFT. At the moment, they currently employ two transgender members of staff, individuals with learning difficulties, ADHD, Asperger's and other disabilities.

RIFT saw that their HR and recruitment process could be adjusted to ensure all have a fair interview. They moved to a more relaxed approach to CV design and interviewed a wider candidate pool to make sure they gave everyone a fair chance. RIFT then went onto to more relaxed interviews, conducting them in a more casual environment with comfortable sofa style chairs, not around a formal table. Furthermore, RIFT gives anyone they are interested in recruiting a 3-day trial period to allow the candidate to shine in the working environment, removing those nervous interview barriers and allowing them to see the whole person.

RIFT recently conducted a staff survey where they asked individuals what they have in their mental health toolboxes. It was truly warming to read that some members of staff put down that going into work supported their mental health. They believe that they are more themselves at work than when they are at home or with some of their friends. As an employer, this is all you can really ask for - to create a working culture that results in overall staff satisfaction and appreciation.

With some of the more recent changes as a result of COVID, they now adopt and support the ideology that individuals can have flexibility in their working if this supports the function of the business. For example, people who are more office based have the flexibility to work from home one day per week as they believe it is extremely beneficial for mental well-being to still have those face-to-face working interactions. Additionally, RIFT also has some employees that have asked to start an hour earlier so that they can benefit from commuting to work in less traffic. For them, this was an absolute given as it was extremely beneficial for those individuals and their overall mental wellbeing to be afforded the ability to start their working day an hour earlier. RIFT understands and sympathises because they know that some of their staff travel almost 2 hours each day to come into the workplace and something so simple can have a great impact.



Katrina Kerr,
Operation Director at
RIFT Technology Ltd



Find out more about what RIFT does on the RIFT Technology website www.rifttechnology.com

How will inclusive employment benefit your business?

Reputation, economic benefits, a sustainable workforce, increased productivity, an overall increase in morale within your team and a wider talent base are a few of the many benefits of inclusive employment. Broadening your talent pool allowing for inclusive employment will benefit your business in the short and long term.

The data shows that thousands of UK employers are stating that they inclusively employ by showcasing their disability confident badge on their marketing materials, websites and more, but unfortunately the employment data does not back this up.

Businesses can hugely benefit from following this through, changing from 'talking the talk' to 'walking the walk'. Corporate social responsibility reputations cannot be overlooked and will improve when the local community and wider market see you actively being an inclusive employer.

With this comes a sustainable workforce. Gaining meaningful, paid employment for this cohort brings true happiness and therefore creates a happy working wider environment. Employees are 13% more productive when happy according to **Oxford Universities study in 2019 (www.ox.ac.uk)** and are therefore more likely to remain in your employment. In addition, this cohort of employees are proven to be loyal, trustworthy, and honest and can also be extremely creative thinkers.

Your inclusive workforce – the benefits of inclusive employment

Whilst employing individuals with SEND adds value to a business's reputation and supports them to develop future employability skills, businesses can also see commercial benefits - 87% of customers would rather give their custom to organisations who hire a diverse workforce.

92% think more highly of a company that hires and proactively supports disabled people.

- It is also the case that working with Young people with SEND has a positive impact on other workers
- Employers hold the potential to change life outcomes through inclusive employment
- There are 1000 Special Schools in England and there are 9 in Worcestershire who need support, demonstrating a significant talent pool

Finding the right role and exploring the job description is crucial. Often understanding them and their needs, such as needs for repetition, order, and attention to detail can be important and in turn result in an effective, reliable, and proactive employee. Employing someone that is happy to remain in the same role for long periods of time will reduce your time and cost on recruitment.

Moving from employment benefits to the benefits to be seen in sales we talk about the 'Purple pound', this refers to the spending power of a disability household. More than 1 in 5 potential UK consumers have a disability, 73% of this potential number have experienced barriers whilst shopping. If your business is seen to employ from the wider recruitment pool and actively promote and support these consumers you're less likely to be affected by the approximate £2 billion lost each month, which happens to those businesses who ignore the needs of disabled people.

- Young people with SEND often have far fewer additional needs than employers think, which cost less than anticipated (average cost is £75 according to Mencap)
- Young people with SEND sometimes need more time and more support but this eventually reaps dividends for both the employer and young person
- There is support available both from their DWP Job Coaches and financially for young people with an Education Healthcare Plan (EHCP) which reduces costs for employers
- Be amongst the 21,000 employers across the UK who have signed up to the disability confident scheme
- 4.8% people with a disability employed



How can my business be more inclusive outside of Employment ?

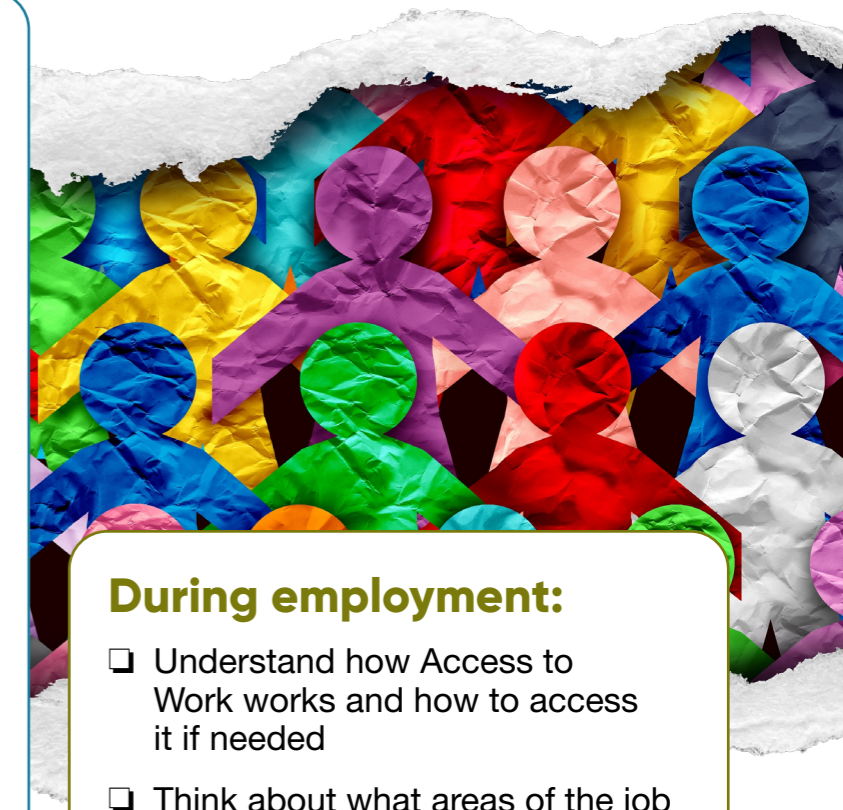
Employing more inclusively is just the start and helping young people with SEND within education to understand your business and industry is essential to continue to help you to **address skills gaps** and be productive.

How you can get involved to help individuals with SEND needs –

- Offer to support programmes such as supported internships, helping young people to improve their work-related skills and raise their awareness of career opportunities across a wide range of sectors in Worcestershire.
- Inspire your future workforce through work experience and give a young person understanding of your industry and careers within it and fill future recruitment shortages in the county by raising awareness of career pathways and local opportunities
- Prepare students for the world of work by working with schools to make learning more relevant to their future careers.
- Support events intended for young people with SEND to help them understand the career choices they have.

Employees with Disabilities are proven to be less likely to take time off sick, 3.5 times more likely to stay in the role (saving recruitment and downtime costs), less likely to be late and to increase overall staff morale

Don't let perceived barriers stop you as an organisation from benefiting from employing individuals with health barriers. If you wish to find out more on this topic you can read an in depth article from Mencap systematic review of the literature on the benefits for employers of employing people with learning disabilities on the Mencap website - www.mencap.org.uk



Adjusting your HR processes to be more inclusive

Did you know that all potential candidates are legally entitled to ask for adjustments when interviewing?

Following the Equality Act 2010 employer must provide reasonable adjustments for application through in to employment. Normally companies will ask an applicant during the application process if they need adjustments for interview but what if that isn't early enough to allow all potential candidates to apply for the role?

Have you reflected on your whole application process lately?

Use these tips to assess where you are and identify changes to your processes which would make you a more inclusive employer.

Application:

- Have a contact name and number for someone to reach out for inclusive recruitment support
- Be willing to take a CV over an application form
- Have an assessable application applicable for screen readers
- Take unconscious bias training

Interview:

- Allow for a job coach from Access to Work or other alternative recruitment support to support the process
- Think about replacing a normal interview for an alternative encounter like a tasked interview/ work trials
- Remove milestones when interviewing like 'did they make eye contacts?'
- Ensure the building is accessible for all
- Allow for extra time in an interview
- Provide the interview questions beforehand and during the interview so they can be read
- Minimise sensory overload- reduce lighting, noise, heating etc.
- Be upfront and provide the following: what the interview will involve, what you will need from the applicant on the day, will there be any tests involved, what is the building accessibility be like, will there be a computer to use, will there be any handwritten tests, how long will the interview last. How many people will be on the panel and can this be adjusted

During employment:

- Understand how Access to Work works and how to access it if needed
- Think about what areas of the job role is needed by one person or can it be adjusted or job carved
- Think through how a job can be changed to meet needs
- Can working hours be adjusted
- Can the location of the job be moved (remote worker)
- Increase the number of 1-2-1
- Use a buddy support system
- Break KPIs down into manageable milestones

Helpful resources for you the employer to support your HR process and reasonable adjustments:

Employment toolkit - BeyondAutism -

www.beyondautism.org.uk/professionals/employability/toolkit/employment-toolkit

How to implement inclusive recruitment and workplace diversity - theewgroup.com/blog/seven-steps-inclusive-recruitment-workplace-diversity/#application-process

Information for Employers | British Association for Supported Employment -

www.base-uk.org/information-employers

Supported internships

Mencap - Passionate about changing the world for everyone with learning disabilities.

Mencap Supported Internships offer opportunities for young people aged 16-24 with a learning disability to make the important step from education to employment.

What is a supported internship?

A supported internship is a type of study programme specifically aimed at young people aged 16 to 24 with a EHCP (education health and care plan) who wish to move into employment.

During this year, learners are supported in work experience which is matched to their skills and interests, as well as further English and maths qualifications, with the goal of gaining paid employment.

Josh is one of many of the amazing Mencap interns

Josh was on Mencap's programme from September 2021 to July 2022. Josh was already in employment within hospitality, however he was not enjoying this and did not feel he was achieving his potential. Initially Josh thought he would be best suited to work in a nursery, and so a placement was set up for Josh to try this with support from a Job Coach.

Josh developed his communication skills, confidence and organisation skills during this placement, as well as in class with a group of his peers. He also developed his English and maths skills and later on in the course was able to update his CV and apply for jobs independently.

After trying work in a nursery, Josh decided he'd also like to try working as an Activities Coordinator in a care home, as this would suit his caring nature and also allow him to express his sense of humour a bit more! We set up another placement and with support from Mencap and the staff at Regent Care Home, Josh flourished and soon began planning and leading activities himself and starting to volunteer independently.

Diane Hughes, Programme Coordinator, Mencap
Call Diane on 01905740501 | 07941377734
Email Diane at diane.hughes@mencap.org.uk



Later in the course, Josh was supported at interviews with care homes in the local area, and performed so well he was offered two jobs- one at Regent Care Home's 'sister' venue, Juniper Care Home, and another at Fernhill House. Josh remains in these jobs now and is still very much enjoying himself.

Josh had the following to say about the course- *'I am rubbish with the internet and indeed was quite alien to me, so being taught useful stuff like interview skills and help with searching for jobs was great as there is no way I would have been able to do it on my own. The staff on the course were really lovely, I highly respected that they treated us like adults, they helped me a lot and I made some good friends. I am enjoying my new jobs, 110% more than my old hospitality role that I had when I started the course. At work I can be goofy, be myself and can show my true colours. Work experience showed me it's not easy and days in a care home are never the same, you do get the regulars, but it taught me and helped me with moving into my new role.'*



Find out more on the Mencap website:
www.mencap.org.uk/advice-and-support/education-skills-and-work/supported-internship

The importance of work experience for all young people

Can you support those with Special Educational needs (SEND) to access opportunities? Creating your future workforce #inspiringworcestershire

Employment engagement from a young age can make all the difference and young people with SEND are no different.

All students have mountains to climb through their teenage years. There are so many variable factors to contend with and gaining meaningful employment within the right vocational area is just one. As I am sure you can imagine these factors are multiplied for a student with additional learning needs or disabilities, whilst still having an aspirational destination, as for many students, of paid employment.

As an educational establishment that cares greatly for their students' futures we invest time, curriculum focus and funding on ensuring that all applicable students have exposure to the working world. This, however, is becoming increasingly difficult as many businesses find the thought of accepting a student with additional learning needs and disabilities too much to ask. We understand the worries and barriers that may be involved but we are here to share how we can support you in this, working together to find a happy solution, therefore allowing the student to gain work experience and employer encounters.

The benefits of gaining different experiences of the workplace for these students have many advantages: understanding the working world, building relationships, a clear focus on the right industry, gaining skills and maturing are just a few of the benefits. In addition, these students also learn how to be accepted into society, understand that they can be just like others, grow their confidence in a way that that school can't offer, learn how to interact with new people, find new levels of independence and even brave travelling alone.

Written by **Ben Homer**, Assistant Head Teacher at Rigby Hall School

If you are willing to work with a local school or college and would be open to allowing students to visit or take part in a short or longer term work experience you will not be left alone. The setting will:

- ensure you have a clear understanding of the additional needs of the students and how best to work with them
- send support staff if the student requires that level of care
- write and share a risk assessment
- signpost you to training that might help you with interactions
- provide check ins and follow up feedback
- be on call for any emergencies
- conduct an introductory visit to the site with the student if needed
- prepare the student within the school ready for the encounter
- share simple solutions to working with the student if they are worried or in conflict

A business will never be left to work through these things on their own, all parties wish for the best outcome and will endeavour to work together to allow this for the students.

For more information on how to support work experience opportunities within your local education establishment, get in touch with the Inspiring Worcestershire team cec@worcestershire.gov.uk



For more information on Rigby School, visit the School website
www.rigbyhallschool.com

Don't be nervous about neurodiversity

Not all disabilities are visible, and many IT solutions can make it easier for people who are neurodivergent to do a fantastic job.

It makes sense that bosses want to employ the best person for the job. But what if the applicant who ticks all the right boxes has special educational needs? Neurodiversity can make employers nervous. According to the Institute of Leadership & Management's Workplace Neurodiversity report in 2020, (www.institutelm.com/resourceLibrary/workplace-neurodiversity-the-power-of-difference.html) half of managers admit they are uncomfortable with employing neurodiverse people.

It's thought that about one in seven of the population is neurodiverse, which includes conditions such as dyslexia, ADHD, and autism. Legally, employers have to make 'reasonable adjustments' so SEND workers are not 'substantially disadvantaged' when doing their jobs. The right technology can make those adjustments cost-effective.

Adaptations

Matthew Bellringer from the BCS Neurodiversity specialist members group said: "The adaptations for workers with SEND aren't necessarily onerous. Assistive technology is widely available and has greatly improved in the last ten years. Much of it, like speech-to-text, is built into modern devices as standard." He added: "In many cases, implementing adaptations for employees with specific needs can also benefit many others in the workforce."

Different strengths

Needs vary, so offering a variety of relatively simple adaptations is an effective way to support neurodiverse employees. Matthew said there is no one-size-fits-all when making adaptations: "Even though someone has a specific diagnosis, they might experience things in very different ways than another person with the same condition."

Neurodivergent people often find incidental aspects of their workplace difficult. These unseen barriers might prevent them from making a full contribution at work.

For example, the intricate, detail-focused work in which many autistic people excel can be difficult

in a busy office, so they may find working remotely from home easier. People with ADHD may find it valuable to use apps that help structure and schedule their abundant creative ideas.

Assessments

Not all neurodivergent people have had a professional external assessment. Young people aged under 18, however, might have had an evaluation through their school or college.

Such needs assessments provide recommendations for technology and skills development and cost between £400 to £1500. Matthew adds: "Firms can pay for an external assessment and find out quickly what can help. But that's got to be a decision for the organisation and depends on their resources. They might instead try a range of different approaches first."

Lived experience

Neurodivergent people often have unique strengths, such as being good at problem-solving, seeing the bigger picture or hyper-focusing. Matthew said: "If we want our workplaces to be as inclusive as possible, we need to adapt to the needs of all employees. This is good business sense, not charity. The talent and perspective neurodivergent employees have can give any organisation a competitive edge."

"Don't be afraid of employing neurodivergent people as the benefits outweigh the costs many times over."

To find out more about BCS, The Chartered Institute for IT, go to www.bcs.org

BCS Senior Press Officer **Claire Penketh** reports on behalf of BCS, The Chartered Institute for IT, the professional body for the digital industries, advocates using information technology for the greater good.



How to best support SEND candidates

By Emma Berwick. Emma identifies as dyspraxic and is a member of The Careers & Enterprise Company Youth Advisory Group.

Current situation

As 1000 able intern indicates, the current rate of disability employment is at 52%, and at 81% for non-disabled people. This gap highlights that something needs to be done. Employers certainly have a role to play in this.

I have been really fortunate to participate in mentoring schemes and other insight schemes which have given me a different way to demonstrate my potential. This has often taken the shape of a short form to understand my interest in the industry, my previous experience and what I wanted to gain from the scheme – no interview needed.

From the experiences I have had, I would recommend employers have really clear and smooth recruitment practices. One of the things that is helpful is having an email or person who candidates can contact for reasonable adjustments.

In addition, mentoring programmes help young people to gain insights in a sector and build meaningful connections. From my experiences, I have gained insight into different industries and gained clarity on my own career aspirations. Partnering with organisations, can help employers to reach those who really need the connections the most - the untapped potential. This helps to broaden reach and the talent pool. Employers should look to give a fair exchange by delivering workshops or webinars, to build skills or sector insights for their young people.

Having a member of staff who is informed and readily available or can point the candidate in the right direction can make all the difference to a potential job seeker. From the moment the person starts their application with you, that applicant

Emma Berwick, The Careers & Enterprise Company Youth Advisory Group.

should feel informed about the support on offer. Creating a welcoming culture can make someone feel a lot more comfortable in explaining what would work for them, which will aid them to go on to do their best work for that company. Something that can help is pairing employees to those who have a similar experience or career journey to them or supporting them to look for opportunities that enhance their career progression.



It's important to consider that just because a young person has landed a job, or you've been impressed with their talent, it doesn't mean that they are good to go from day one. It's important to regularly check-in, to seek feedback to improve employee experiences. It's important to recognise that many employees have faced systemic barriers throughout their personal and professional life, thus it's necessary to ensure their reasonable adjustments are respected and adhered to. This has made me much more resilient and persevering, which has definitely shaped me as a person. What has impacted me most is mentoring, as I've been able to get specific support on the application process and get more clarity on what roles actually entail. Fostering a culture of kindness and willingness to listen and learn from employees is a huge way to ensure that staff feel valued and supported.



The importance of job carving

Supported Internships are a key programme to improve preparation for employment for young people (16-25) with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND).

This programme brings together education providers and employers to support young people who would otherwise face barriers to employment in accessing local opportunities. Supported internships are an unpaid work placement supported by a job coach and takes place predominantly on an employer's site. This allows young people to learn 'on the job'.

Heart of Worcestershire College was amongst the first in the county to introduce the supported internship model and to date have supported over 150 interns, working with large and small employers. It is a primary goal to support the interns into paid employment, but we also consider voluntary work as meaningful activity. Overall, this programme delivers good outcomes, where national statistics show that only 4.8% of people with a learning disability are in paid work, to date the College has achieved an average rate of 61% into paid work. Adding in voluntary work, a total of 73% have moved into positive destinations.

Just one of a number of our Interns who has gone on to secure successful long-term employment is Chloe who needed extra support to enable her role to be adapted to suit her strengths. In Chloe's case, a role on the checkouts wasn't the right fit for her due to the demands this would place on her with speed and communication and so her employer 'carved' her role to enable her to spend more time on the shop floor doing other important and necessary tasks. This approach is called 'job carving'.

Job carving is used where a person can successfully undertake most tasks in their job role but there may be an element of their duties which they are not able or comfortable to complete. Chloe was successful and gained employment from her placement on the programme and has gone on to gain further employment where she is able to contribute in an important role for her new employer.

Written by **Claire Heywood**, Deputy Principal at Heart of Worcestershire College



Chloe is now happily employed, enjoying all the benefits that being employed brings which those of us who do not face additional barriers, can take for granted. Chloe is contributing equally in society with everyone else, and above all is happy, fulfilled and doing a great job for her employer where amongst other duties she is now working on the checkouts.



**HEART OF
WORCESTERSHIRE
COLLEGE**

Find out more about the Heart of
Worcestershire College on their website -
www.howcollege.ac.uk

The Health Adjustment Passport

What it is and why you need to know about it

The Health Adjustment Passport can be used if someone has a disability or health condition that makes it harder for them to move into work or stay in a job.

It can be used for:

- support to identify what assistance and changes (known as reasonable adjustments) someone may need when they are in work or moving into work
- applying for support from Access to Work. This could include funding for specialist equipment to support somebody to do their job, support getting to and from work or support when a person is in work, such as job coaching
- help for someone to talk to employers about adjustments and in-work support they may need

A job could also include self-employment, an apprenticeship, work experience or a supported internship.

How can a health adjustment passport benefit an employer?

Having a health adjustment passport in place for a possible employee or current employee can support you, the employer in the following ways:

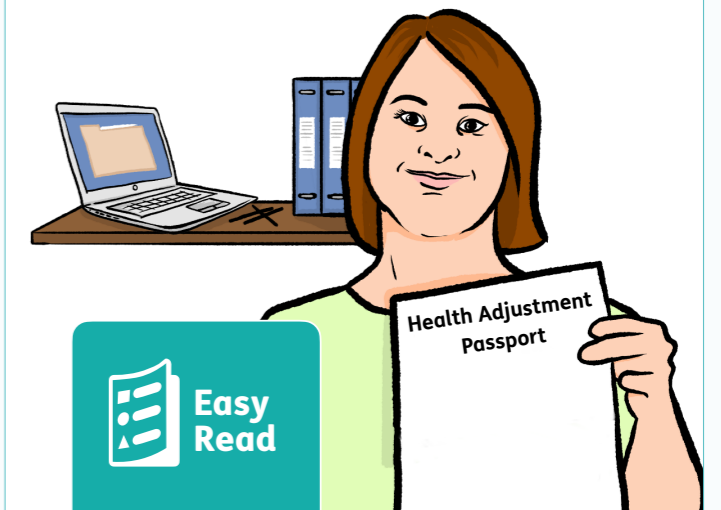
- Help you understand where the employee may need additional support or reasonable adjustments in the workplace.
- Help you identify and apply for support from the Access to Work scheme
- Help you work with the employee during their appraisals or 1-2-1s
- Support you to meet the need of the individual when they attend an interview



Department
for Work &
Pensions

Your Health Adjustment Passport

Support to work



Department
for Work &
Pensions

The health adjustment passport information can be found in many accessible formats through the following website link www.gov.uk/government/publications/health-adjustment-passport

Worcestershire Individual Placement and Support

As an innovative and FREE service to match jobs to local people, Worcestershire IPS can help.

We provide a bespoke service to employers to help and support to achieve successful recruitment solutions to aid sustainment which benefits both employer and employee.

What is IPS?

IPS is an evidence-based initiative that is internationally recognised as the most effective way of supporting clients who have experienced mental health difficulties return to and sustain mainstream employment. IPS is underpinned by 8 key principles:

1. It aims to get people into **competitive employment**
2. It is **open to all** those who want to work, as opposed to being mandated
3. It tries to find jobs consistent with **people's preferences**
4. It works **quickly**
5. It brings employment specialists into **clinical teams**
6. Employment specialists develop **relationships with employers** based upon a person's work preferences
7. It provides **time unlimited**, individualised support for the person and their employer
8. **Benefits counselling** is included.

IPS has been delivered within Worcestershire by Herefordshire and Worcestershire Health and Care NHS Trust since 2011. In this time the service has grown and developed each year.

As a non-payment by result initiative the focus is working collaboratively with clients and local employers to ensure sustainable employment is a positive part of the local community.

Through working with an understanding not just the needs but also the values of local employers IPS aim to ensure a positive match when working to assist employers fill job vacancies.

Through carrying a relatively small caseload of clients, IPS Employment Support Workers (ESW's), can really understand individuals needs and aspirations, as well as that of employers within the local area.

Once clients are placed in employment the support continues with the same worker to be able to provide support to the client and their employer to aid a smooth transition into employment.

The provision of in work support can take many forms, such as, advice and guidance on reasonable adjustments, support with problem solving and helping employers to gain evidence and recognition of being disability confident.

Feedback is essential to the development of our programme, here is what some of our wonderful clients said:

'I have felt fully supported and feel confident that our Employment Support Worker understands the ethos of the company'

'I feel that it has been a triangle with each person playing their role equally'

'I feel so lucky that the employment worker hunted out our job vacancy for her candidate but also put forward others for me to interview. I felt they got the right balance of supporting my business and my employee'

'I don't think there is anything you could do to improve this service. It is very supportive of all individuals involved and I am very grateful for all the fantastic support we have received'



Our Clients:

Are skilled and unskilled, qualified, and unqualified from every part of society and the local population
Are from every sector of the workforce:

Managers, Drivers, Production Line Operators, Labourers, Cleaners, Administrators, Nurses, Chefs, Security Workers, Support Workers, Instructors, Teachers/Teaching Assistants – to name just a few.

IPS work closely with DWP through Jobcentre Plus, Access to Work and other associated schemes.

Through the successful delivery of IPS clients supported in Worcestershire are far more likely to

secure employment than on-traditional schemes (around 50% of clients supported gain employment). From those supported to gain employment high numbers (around 80% each year) are still in employment 12 months after starting work.

The benefits of this are clear to local employers with the associated costs of recruitment and training of new staff.

Please contact either of our service leads on the information below or through our generic email address so that we can get you in contact with an employment support worker local to your business to start discussions around how we can help.

Get in touch with Worcestershire Individual Placement and Support (IPS) by emailing them at whcnhs.ipsemploymentservices@nhs.net

Contact Employment Services Co-ordinators directly:
Carrie Cooling (North) carrie.cooling@nhs.net
Paul Wilcox (South) paul.wilcox@nhs.net

Herefordshire and Worcestershire Health and Care
NHS Trust



Considering reasonable adjustments

More than ever, it is important to be an inclusive employer, but for this to happen, it is essential that considerations are made with regard to adjustments, especially when it comes to employing people with additional needs.

The Equality Act 2010 states that an employer must make reasonable adjustments for anyone who applies for a job, current employees and also any contractors/ self-employed people hired into the business.

So, what does reasonable adjustments mean? Reasonable adjustments are essentially a change put in place by an employer, which will reduce or remove someone's disadvantage, allowing them to carry out their role. There are many things that need to be considered, such as the practicality of the adjustment, affordability and the health and safety of others. It is always good to remember that a person's disability may not be visible or easily identifiable.

As an employer, checking if adjustments are needed could form part of your recruitment or onboarding processes, such as giving a job seeker the opportunity to request reasonable adjustments when organising interviews or buddying them up with someone when starting their new role.

Regularly checking in with the team should also form part of your day-to-day management as current employees may have the need for adjustments to be made.

Adjustments need to be considered if:

- A person is known to have a disability.
- A current disabled employee asks for adjustments to be made.
- A disabled employee is struggling with part of their job.
- An employee's absence/ sickness record is related to their disability.
- An employee's return to work after an absence is delayed due to their disability.

So, what could a reasonable adjustment be? A reasonable adjustment could be considered as providing a specific desk for a wheelchair user, or purchasing coloured overlays for a team member with dyslexia which can assist them in reading documents.

However, not all adjustments have to be physical thing. If you have a team member who needs routine, consider looking at their working pattern to accommodate this, or if a team member is struggling with their mental health, consider a reduction in working hours or them working on specific days to help.

It is worth noting that not everyone will identify themselves as needing reasonable adjustments to be made, so getting to know your team and regularly checking in will help with this.

Providing reasonable adjustments can be a real benefit for any business, so why wouldn't you put them in place? Not only could the provision give you a more diverse workforce, and a reduction in absence, but it can also improve team engagement, which in turn can increase retention rates.

If an adjustment is identified to be greater than reasonable or require a large amount of cost, you can enquire if the employee is entitled to gain support through Access to Work.

Access to Work can fund a business up to £64,000 a year for adjustments to be made allowing an employee to continue on or gain employment. You can find out more about Access to Work through the **Gov.uk** website.

More information on employing people with additional needs and reasonable adjustments, can be found here:

On the ACAS website www.acas.org.uk/reasonable-adjustments

On the Citizen's Advice Bureau website www.citizensadvice.org.uk



Access to Work Making work possible

Access to Work can provide advice and support to enable people with a disability, mental health or physical health condition to start or stay in work.

It can provide support with:

- a Mental Health Support Service for people who are experiencing difficulties with their mental wellbeing in the workplace
- special equipment or adaptations
- fares to work for those who can't use public transport
- a support worker or job coach to support you in the workplace
- disability awareness training for work colleagues
- a communicator at a job interview or in the workplace
- the cost of moving equipment following a change in location or job
- help and advice for employers to retain and employ staff.

WHITE RABBIT PROJECTS

Article By **Joel Whitehouse**, Recruitment manager for White Rabbit Projects.

Dolphin Computers leading the way in computer access for all

Dolphin Computer Access develops assistive technology for people who are blind or partially sighted. Dolphin software empowers people with visual impairments to use computers independently - at work, in education and at home.

Dolphin software is developed, tested and built at its headquarters in Worcester, with offices around the world.

Dolphin is a great example of a Worcestershire based Disability Confident Employer. As a company, they are well aware of the benefits of a diverse workforce and how to offer accessible apprenticeships. They have strong ties with many local schools and colleges around Worcester. These include New College Worcester and the Royal National College in Hereford which has supported them to access high quality candidates for their workforce.

Dolphin's ethos is to ensure everyone who applies for a job with them has an equal opportunity to work comfortably and without barriers to achieving their goals. This runs throughout their recruitment, interview and induction training processes. In practice, it means that they ask, recognise and adapt their recruitment and employment processes accordingly.

Dolphin ensures they don't miss out on hiring amazing talent, because they adapt their processes accordingly. Now and in the past, Dolphin welcomes apprentices with disabilities and from other underrepresented groups who have disclosed visual impairments and neurodiversities including dyslexia, dyspraxia and Tourette's Syndrome recognising that these individuals bring strength in skills and add diversity to the workforce.

As a company, Dolphin is aware of the benefits of Access to Work funding for their employees. They often assist their apprentices with funding applications. Access to Work is a government funding scheme that supports people with physical or mental health conditions or disabilities. It is designed to help people get to work and stay in work which in turn supports the company. This funding can help pay for things like trains and

other public transport, or taxis to the office. It can also help pay for other support such as BSL interpretation or support workers which means these barriers and challenges are removed from day one.

Many companies might not realise how easy it is to make adaptations to welcome disabled people into a business. Dolphin want to spread the word that it's really simple and they want to demonstrate the significant benefits you can gain from employing a more diverse team to make a real difference to your company.



Kieran and Horatio, his service dog



Article by **Kim Piff**, Communications Manager

Examples of the adaptations Dolphin use include

- hybrid working
- presenting documents in accessible formats
- providing screen readers or other assistive tech
- making provisions so a guide dog is comfortable while its owner works.

But it doesn't just stop there; at Dolphin, they ensure all supervisors and managers are trained as managers to support and skilled in inclusivity and reasonable adjustments. They also provide regular training for all staff on equality, diversity and inclusion.

Most recently Dolphin welcomed speakers to provide awareness training on dyslexia, deaf blindness, braille reading and sighted guiding. These were all really interesting and help expand the collective knowledge and dispelled common preconceptions!

One of Dolphins core company values – and a key part of the culture at Dolphin – is that their team feel comfortable talking about disability, neurodiversity, mental health and wellbeing. This means both more people feel comfortable asking for support, if and when it's needed, helping their whole staff base and in turn benefiting the company through productivity and lower absence levels. Dolphin encourages you and your team to do the same.



To find out more about Dolphin Computer Access, visit the Dolphin website www.yourdolphin.com

f @yourdolphin **t @yourdolphin**
in @dolphin-computer-access

Thinking outside the box to offer inclusive employment

Café H20 in Malvern is a prime example of how working together truly gives wonderful opportunities to local people.

Jamboree is an established local Co-operative of adult members each of whom have a learning disability. The café gives the members an opportunity to prepare and serve fresh food, interact with the customers, and share in the profits. Team Jamboree operates the cafe at weekends as well as during the week.

The café, based at Wyche Innovation Centre, is truly one of a kind with around 16 members of staff supporting the running, cooking, and serving of the wonderful food on offer. All of the staff members have learning disabilities and have, generally, in the past found it difficult to find meaningful paid employment and managed to fit in. However, Café H20 has allowed just that. The brilliant initiative was initiated by Emma Philpot, Adrian Burden and Jamboree Support Services and has been running for 10 years.

This opportunity has allowed the staff members to thrive, improving their employability skills, growing

their knowledge around hospitality, building self-confidence, developing their customer service and so much more. The café allows all community members to find a place where they are valued and invested in. This is imperative to them becoming part of an inclusive community.

This cooperative has been such a wonderful addition to the Innovation Park and attracts customers from across the county and from all walks of life. They love the interaction with the staff and really value what this café is trying to achieve.

Jamboree are more than happy to share their knowledge and findings on the success of the café and have presented to different local authorities about the initiative to encourage others to follow suit. Their doors are always open if you ever want to find out more or even pop in for a warm cup of tea.

Café H20 is a collaboration between Key IQ www.key-iq.com and Jamboree www.jamboree-preservers.co.uk.



A safe workplace is a happy workplace

Safeguarding vulnerable people in the workplace



A safe space to work is something we sometimes take for granted. It's one of the most important things employers need to think about, and we will all have health and safety policies. Employing individuals with SEND can bring many positives to the workplace. Understanding safeguarding requirements will protect you and the vulnerable people you work with. There is legislation in place that promotes wellbeing and productivity you should be aware of that will help make the experience safe and healthy for everyone.

A vulnerable person is defined as someone who:

- has a dependency upon others, or a requirement for assistance from others, in the performance of basic physical functions, or
- needs community care services by reason of mental health or other disability, age or illness, or
- has a severe impairment in their ability to communicate with others, or
- has an impairment in their ability to protect themselves from assault, abuse, neglect, harm or exploitation, or
- is detained in lawful custody, or
- is being supervised as a result of a court order

You, as businesses, will always be looking for ways to promote inclusion in your workplaces and an important part of embedding it is having robust and up to date policies and practices at every level of your organisation which ensure the well-being of your team.

If you are recruiting people with SEND, or offering work experience to them, you may want to either create a safeguarding policy or review your existing one. If you haven't already written one, or want to compare yours to another, the Careers and Enterprise Company's **Safeguarding Children and Vulnerable Adults Policy** is a great example.

Best Practice

Here are some common-sense examples of how to create a positive culture for vulnerable people to work in.

- Treat vulnerable people with respect and dignity. It is everyone's responsibility to make sure all staff feel valued and respected at all times
- Work in an open environment and try to avoid private situations. There might be times when a meeting or interview needs to be one-to-one. If this is unavoidable, make sure there is other staff nearby and the space you use is visible i.e. keeping the door open
- Creating positive relationships in the workplace which empower vulnerable people, include them in decision making processes and build trust
- Being a good role model for working professionally, including clear demarcation of work and private lives
- Not making gratuitous physical contact with a vulnerable person
- Using positive and encouraging feedback rather than criticism
- If staff are working from home and conducting online meetings, appropriate protocols for safeguarding need to be in place - recording of meetings, dress codes etc

These and other practices will already be part of your organisation's ethos. You may already have equality, diversity and inclusion policies in place. It's worth taking the time to review them and add a safeguarding policy, if you don't have one, when you are planning for inclusive recruitment.

Above all, the most important thing is to remember that an inclusive and safe workplace is a happy and productive workplace - for everyone!

Communication is key

How to communicate effectively

The methods you use for communicating with individuals with Special Education needs has to be clear.

Here are some tips for making sure your communication is effective.

In person

When you are with a potential employee, student, school or college these tips will help you get the most from the meeting.

- Use clear, simple language, avoiding technical terms, jargon, acronyms and abbreviations. Make sure you provide a clear explanation of the term, acronym or abbreviation if you need to use one.
- Where relevant find out from the school/college what communication format works best for them and their students.
- When you are sharing information about your organisation, it's unlikely the individual will need to know lots of detail about your business. Share only what they need to know.
- Be aware of the amount of information you share. Remember - one long piece of information is much more difficult to retain than smaller 'bite-sized' pieces.
- Use questions to check that what you've shared has been understood.
- Be positive - this will engage potential employees students, schools and colleges

Written documents

- Use colours, images and photos where you can to make your document visually appealing and accessible. Ask the education establishment to advise on any students' visual needs.
- If potential employees/students will be reading your information, use a font size of at least 12 and sans serif fonts such as Arial, Calibri or Verdana.
- Keep sentences short and use simple punctuation.
- Break up text with bullet points.
- Use numbers rather than the word e.g. 4 instead of four.
- Think about using videos recorded on smartphones or tablets. They are often very effective ways to communicate more complex messages.
- Use open questions.
- Use visual cues from your audience to adapt your style of communication. Be aware of your own body language and facial expressions.
- Be patient. You may need to take more time to ensure that what you are communicating is understood and is received well.

Have a look at Mencap's guides 'Am I Making Myself Clear?' (available online at www.issuu.com/gemmaorp) and 'Communicating with people with a learning disability' (available on Mencap's website: www.mencap.org.uk)

For more information of The Careers & Enterprise Company, visit their website www.careersandenterprise.co.uk

How WCC and WLEP are preparing residents for employment

Worcestershire County Council and Worcestershire Local Enterprise Partnership are working closely to ensure the supported and inclusive employment agenda is progressing and at the forefront of their thinking.

Worcestershire Careers Hub, supporting education to work closely with business and improve careers planning and its relevance for young people within the county is one of the leading careers hubs within the UK and is always striving to support Worcestershire students with meaningful careers education and encounters.

Worcestershire's employers play a huge part within this agenda, with over 80 local businesses matched to local schools supporting them with strategic development and a further 200 supporting on the ground offering talks, event support, curriculum support and more around careers education.

There are many other projects ensuring the local community have access to a variety of support

into work from the Worcestershire Careers Youth Hub at the Hive library in Worcester to a wide network of careers advisors working across the county to inform and signpost people into education, training or employment.

Worcestershire County Council is in the process of an internal audit of their supported employment and employment offer and is working with a range of parties to further this much needed resource. For this purpose, along with the Worcestershire LEP they have been awarded some additional funding to focus on the growth of Supported Internships and the development of the local offer around this. This focus will continue over the next few years with an aim to double the number of supported internship places within Worcestershire by 2025.



Worcestershire
Local Enterprise Partnership



worcestershire
county council

If you would like to be part of this drive to be more inclusive and get involved in our stakeholders programmes, please contact the team cec@worcestershire.gov.uk



Autism online training

Free to organisations in Worcestershire

Worcestershire County Council has worked with the National Autistic Society to provide learners with a selection of our autism online training modules.

Learners can choose the modules that are right for them and their job role. The training will help to increase their knowledge of autism and help them offer the best support to autistic customers and colleagues.

For more information please visit

www.autism.org.uk/wcc

Delivered on behalf of

Worcestershire County Council Supported Employment Service

Helping individuals with learning difficulties into the workplace

The 6-month milestone for D

Like most local authorities, Worcestershire County Council has a Supported Employment offer, one of the key areas of support is breaching the gap between employee and employer. The Supported Employment Service team at WCC works with a caseload of residents from across the county assisting them into meaningful paid employment and retaining them within the position. There is a myriad of support from preparing for an interview to finding an employer. This broad range of support helps ensure a positive placement is suitable for the employee's needs and has longevity. The Supported Employment Service utilises the support and training from BASE (British Association of Supported Employment). This link drives best practice and sustainable placement.

One of the amazing participants on the programme is D. He has been working at a local Worcestershire bar/restaurant and kitchen garden business called 'The Flyford'. D is now an established member of the team, completing grounds maintenance, gardening, weeding, and general assistant duties around the site.

The owner at 'The Flyford' had not worked with a Supported Employment Programme previously but was keen to give a person with a disability an opportunity to work and support someone from the local community.

This is D's first paid job! He has progressed to gain qualifications and 'The Flyford' owner and team are working with D to progress his skills and career even further.

'It is great to see the progress and contribution D has made in his role after being given this opportunity by a local business'

How they met D

D had attended courses and gained skills in construction and had an interest in outdoor work. D told the service that he wanted to use the skills he had learnt and find a business that would give him an opportunity to work and develop. He wanted to earn a salary and be more like his brothers and friends.

D was referred to the team at Worcestershire County Council. To start, The Supported Employment Service team met with D and his family on several occasions, taking time to understand his motivations, aspirations, interests, skills and support needs. D has ADHD, Dyspraxia, Dyslexia, and a nonspecific learning disability. He was very keen to use his skills to find work, but his disability meant he required support with finding suitable opportunities, applications, and interviews.

How the Supported Employment Service team worked with the business

The team made a speculative visit to 'The Flyford' and approached the owner. They asked if there was potential to develop or 'carve' a job opportunity that would be beneficial to the business and suitable for one of the people they were supporting. The supported Employment Service team explained that the people they support were aiming to find paid employment but had disabilities which meant they often experienced more barriers to employment. The Supported Employment Service focuses on the person's ability and skills and matching people to appropriate work environments.

The owner of 'The Flyford' was open to speak with the team again and after 3 meetings they had developed a Job Description for an outdoor 'Maintenance Assistant', for 3 hours per week to start. 'The Flyford' is a busy and thriving business and they needed to ensure they found a suitable match and a person that had potential to develop after training.



Supported Recruitment – Bringing People and Business Together

The Supported Employment Service team introduced D to the owner at 'The Flyford'. The owner agreed D had some appropriate skills and an interview was arranged.

As an alternative to the more formal recruitment and selection process, the team suggested that D could complete an informal Supported Interview visit followed by a Work Taster. This gave the business an opportunity to find out how D performed and fitted in the team and what support and adjustments might be required.

The team supported D to attend the informal Supported Interview Visit and the first days of his Work Taster as well as get start papers and pre-employment checks in place. D was offered employment before the Work Taster was complete.

D started working gradually at 3 hours per week. D continued to attend his other voluntary and sport activity on other days, playing a part in motivating and supporting his ongoing health and wellbeing in his new employment.

D did not require ongoing support from the Supported Employment Service in his new role, but they did arrange regular Supported Review Meetings. These meetings allow a time for all parties to discuss and assess progress and highlight any support or adjustments required.

6 Months Later

D worked hard and was motivated to complete further construction training and a qualification during the quieter seasonal period. This has resulted in the business owner offering D extra hours, developing his skills within the business. The Supported Employment Service team will be helping D to integrate with the business team at the 'The Flyford' to assess D in his new role.

D will be working towards increasing his hours to around 8 hours a week. Potentially working more hours in busier seasonal periods.

It is great to see the progress and contribution D has made in his role after being given this opportunity by a local business.

Sally-Ann Parker, Employment Partnership officer

Useful links

Careers Portal (skills4worcestershireshire.co.uk)

Worcestershire LEP - independent collaboration between the local councils, local business, trade organisations and the voluntary sector (wlep.co.uk)

Worcestershire Apprenticeships | Helping young people and employers achieve through Apprenticeships (worcsapprenticeships.org.uk)

Department for Work and Pensions - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)

Home - Worcestershire Growth Hub

Supporting Employers: Working with Young People with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) | CEC Resource Directory (careersandenterprise.co.uk)

Employers and Volunteers | CEC Resource Directory (careersandenterprise.co.uk)

Employer engagement in careers education: Insights 2020/21 | CEC Resource Directory (careersandenterprise.co.uk)

Ambitious about Autism Toolkits | CEC Resource Directory (careersandenterprise.co.uk)

DMA Talent: Dyslexia Employers guide | CEC Resource Directory (careersandenterprise.co.uk)

DMA Talent: Autism Employers guide | CEC Resource Directory (careersandenterprise.co.uk)

Get In touch

To offer your support, find out more or share your interest in becoming a disability confident employer, contact the team at Worcestershire County Council and Worcestershire LEP
inclusiveemployment@worcestershireshire.gov.uk



Scan me

to find out more and pledge your support and interest in becoming an inclusive employer.

www.worcestershireshiregrowthhub.co.uk