

There are a number of support mechanisms available to employers who want to employ someone with a learning disability. These range from government initiatives like Access to Work, to practical support in the workplace from agencies such as Mencap or other supported employment services. For more information on how to apply for this support, please see [Fact sheet 6: Financial support for workplace adjustments](#). Funding plays a big part in what services are available in different parts of the country.

Supported employment services

Supported employment services such as those offered by Mencap provide specialised employment help for people with a disability. In particular, they will put employers in touch with candidates with a disability and can support those candidates through the recruitment process and beyond. A supported employment agency will work with both the individual and the employer to ensure success.

Some supported employment services, including Mencap, are specifically aimed at supporting people with a learning disability into paid work.

Mencap and other support providers can offer people with a learning disability support through a range of employment programmes. Mencap have a range of programmes that cater for people with a range of needs. These include our Supported Internships and our more bespoke employment programme, Employ Me.

Supported Internships

A supported internship is a 12-month vocational programme for young people, aged 16-24 with an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP). They are funded by the Education, Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) and local authorities. Supported internships involve some classroom learning on topics relevant to the world of work, for example, creating a CV and preparing for interviews. However, the primary focus is an extended work-experience placement with an employer, supported by a job coach.

The work experience is unpaid as this is classed as an education programme.

Mencap deliver supported internships across England and you can find a list of our programmes on [our Supported Internships page](#). In areas where Mencap does not deliver supported internships, there may be other providers running them like local colleges.

Employ Me

This is the brand name for Mencap's bespoke supported employment models which cannot be supported through education funding. Our different Employ Me programmes include:

- **Head Start and Right Start** – these are programmes we run in schools to ensure young people with learning disabilities receive some exposure to careers learning and work experience before being expected to find a job or complete programmes like supported internships.
- **Employ Me NEET** – these programmes are delivered to young people who are not in employment, education or training (NEET) or who are still in school but at risk of becoming NEET. They provide individually tailored support through a caseworker to re-engage/motivate young people.
- **Employ Me Skills and Training** – these are supported employment programmes open to people with learning disabilities over the age of 25 who may still need support.

You can find more information about our different Employ Me models and where we currently have provision on our [Employ Me page](#).

Mencap's own programmes do not have complete UK coverage, so we cannot guarantee we currently work in your area. Where this is the case, please refer to the Job Centre Plus, local authority or local offer website for what support is available in

your local area. You can search for supported internship programmes using [the National Careers Service's Find a Course website](#).

Apprenticeships

Mencap does not deliver apprenticeships but these can be well suited to some people with a learning disability as they are all about learning on the job. However, it is important to note that people with a learning disability will be using the same apprenticeship frameworks and standards as all other, non-learning-disabled apprentices. Training providers may be able to secure extra funding to support someone with additional needs, and they may also be able to offer more flexibility with regards to the English and maths requirements of the apprenticeship, but these are only available to those apprentices who can evidence need through an EHCP or SEN statement which many older would-be apprentices won't have.

For more information regarding how you can support people with a learning disability to undertake an apprenticeship, see [Fact sheet 7: Apprenticeships for people with a learning disability](#).

Learning disability awareness sessions

For organisation that work with Mencap to provide work experience to learners on our programmes, we can provide learning disability awareness training sessions to staff.

[Contact us](#) to find out more about Mencap's learning disability awareness training.

Other information

Jobcentre Plus

Jobcentre Plus is a Department for Work and Pensions agency. There are Jobcentre Plus offices throughout the country. Jobcentre Plus staff will advise on benefits and employment and can provide employers with disabled candidates.

Work Coaches in Jobcentre Plus offices are dedicated to supporting disabled people who want to find work, and can help employers who wish to employ someone with a disability. Some Jobcentre Plus sites also have a Disability Employment Advisor (DEA). DEAs can also advise employers on specialist support services in the area.

To speak to your Work Coach, contact your local Jobcentre Plus office.

Local Offer

Under the Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) code of practice, which can be found [here](#), there is a statutory duty on local authorities to develop and publish a Local Offer setting out the support they expect to be available for local children and young people with SEND aged 0-25. Visit your local authority website to find out what is available in your area.

Local Authorities

For people outside of this age bracket there should be information about what is available on the local authority website under the heading 'Supported Employment'.

BASE

The British Association of Supported Employment (BASE) is a membership body for providers of supported employment. Information about their members can be found [on the BASE website](#).

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