



Learning Disability Work Experience Week 7-11 Nov 2016



www.ldwew.co.uk



Employers Guide

About Learning Disability Work Experience Week (L.D.W.E.W)

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Working with different people can promote creativity, empathy and importantly a culture where people can be themselves. Creating environments where it is safe to suggest new ideas and be yourself means increased innovation and enhanced performance.¹

With this in mind, Inclusive Employers approached Mencap in 2013 with an idea to deliver the first learning disability specific, national work experience week.

Every year the initiative has grown, and it now involves other partners and organisations that support people with a learning disability, as well as a multitude of employers from all sectors.

¹ Evidence document on how diversity and inclusion enhances performance can be provided.

Richard McKenna, Director of Inclusive Employers, says:

“Developing an inclusive and rewarding working environment for all individuals is at the heart of everything we do.

Inclusive Employers’ initiatives such as Learning Disability Work Experience Week allow us to make organisations aware of the social and commercial benefit of employing people with a disability, and gives our members new perspectives on inclusion and opportunities to harness different talent. Working with Mencap and other partners has enabled us to create workplace cultures where all people are valued, and where all people can add value.”

Why is work experience so important?

Currently, only 6% of people with a learning disability known to social services in England are in paid employment compared to 49% of the wider disability community and 79% of the general population. 65% of people with a learning disability would like to have a job. Having access to work experience is the first and most important step to finding a job.

One of the most significant barriers is the lack of opportunities to develop skills in a working environment. By offering someone a minimum of a week in a placement can help build confidence, self-esteem, motivation and self-worth, as well as giving a new experience and something to add to a CV.

Feedback from participants in 2015 offered very different scenarios when they were asked what they would be doing if they had not participated in placements during the week. After speaking with participants we found responses such as “nothing”, “playing on the Xbox” and “watching TV” were common, and there was nothing to suggest that anyone had given up something significant to take part.

It's important for employers too! The impact of being involved in this initiative has been incredible for employers. Over the past three years, every employer has reported a positive experience and many have gone on to employ people with a learning disability, as a result of the confidence and reward they've received by being part of it. See the case studies on the L.D.W.E.W website, www.LDWEW.co.uk.



Chaz on work experience at South West Trains

What do we want to achieve?



We would like to see a world where people with a learning disability having jobs is seen as the norm rather than the exception.

For this to happen, we need employers to understand learning disabilities, be confident in working with people with a learning disability and to understand the benefits of employing people with a learning disability.

We think that Learning Disability Work Experience Week is an ideal opportunity for employers to offer a small commitment that could have a huge impact, not only for people with a learning disability but also for them as employers and for society in general.



Daviyani on work experience at the House of Commons

Benefits for employers

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Brand and commercial success

- 77% of the general public think more highly of companies that employ people with a disability²
- You gain first-hand knowledge of disabled customer base
- Your organisation is more reflective of society
- The disabled population have a spending power of £80bn³ and are more likely to spend it with an organisation that employs disabled people
- There is evidence to suggest that people with Learning Disabilities stay in a role longer and take less time off, therefore decreasing sickness and recruitment costs



Kate on work experience at Cleary Gottlieb Steen & Hamilton LLP

People power benefits

- Colleagues will become more aware of disability issues, and overcome any misconceptions or bias about the capabilities of a disabled person
- Colleagues will improve their people management and relationship building skills by working with someone who approaches tasks and communicates differently to them
- Many people with a learning disability are very enthusiastic about working, as they have often been searching for a job for a long time, this enthusiasm can be infectious and boost team morale
- Some people with a learning disability enjoy repetitive tasks which can offer the perfect recruitment solution for hard to fill roles.

Wider societal benefits

- The Social Market Foundation identified an economic benefit and estimated that with an increasing number disabled people entering the workforce, it could potentially lead to a huge boost in the UK economy by at least £13 billion ⁴

² Mencap Factsheet for Employers

³ ONS

⁴ Social Market Foundation, 2007

What happens next?

A step-by-step guide



Step 1: If your organisation is interested in offering a placement then get in touch using the sign up form on our website www.LDWEW.co.uk. We will contact you to learn more about your organisation, what you can offer and the type of person who would best suit the placement(s).

Step 2: We will endeavour to match a person with a learning disability to the placement and will facilitate introductions to ensure everyone is in agreement that this is the right placement for all concerned.

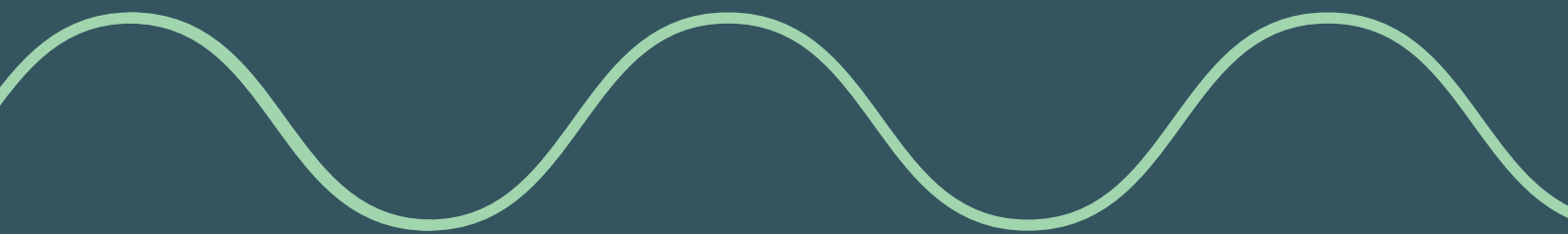


Step 3: We will agree a plan for the placement. This will include the duration, days and times that the placement will take place. The placement can be a week or longer, and could be flexible to meet all parties' expectations. We will also talk about support that will be provided, employer's responsibilities, our responsibilities, and any training and development needs you may have.

Step 4: The placement commences.

Step 5: The placement is completed and you will be asked to provide feedback on the scheme and your experiences.

Step 6: We will work with you to review the success of the placement(s) and discuss any next steps that your organisation may want to take.



Our responsibilities



Inclusive Employers and Mencap are leading a partnership of other charities that work with people with a learning disability such as; the Down's Syndrome Association, Leonard Cheshire, and The Camden Society.

Inclusive Employers and one of our designated charity partners will support you, depending on which candidate you are matched with.

Our responsibilities are:

- To agree a learning plan for the employee with the employer to ensure the placement is meaningful
- To set out and agree a support plan for the employee during their placement as agreed with the employee and employer
- To ensure that the employee receives and understands health and safety induction from the employer
- To provide any relevant information about the employee that we are aware of to the employer that is relevant to the role (with their permission)

- To offer support and guidance to the employee and employer, enabling the employee to perform their tasks safely and to the required standard; and to continue to monitor this
- To offer information to the employer on issues concerning learning disability and reasonable adjustments
- Where possible, to provide learning disability awareness training for other staff



James on work experience at the House of Commons

Employers' responsibilities

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As an employer taking part in L.D.W.E.W, you will be asked to:

- Offer a meaningful and mutually beneficial placement
- Give feedback on the progress of the employee, and any identified support needs or difficulties, e.g. lateness or poor performance
- Set relevant tasks for the job role, provide the necessary supervision and equipment required for the role, and allow access to training and development opportunities where appropriate
- Participate in reviews of progress with the employee and supporting organisation's staff to identify good practice, and areas for continuing support or learning
- Protect the employee from harassment and discrimination at all times whilst they are in employment, and to report any occurrences to designated supporting staff
- Notify supporting organisations of any accidents or incidents that occur in the workplace relating to the employee (with permission)
- Provide a safe working environment in line with health and safety legislation, to have in place risk assessments for the role, and ensure that the duty of 'reasonable adjustment' required under the Equality Act 2010 is met



Jordan on work experience at McDonalds

Sponsor

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L.D.W.E.W 2016 has kindly been sponsored by Vanquis Bank.

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If you are interested in sponsoring in 2017 please get in touch.

Feedback



“We are in such a privileged position to be able to work with some really great institutions to give back to the communities we work within, and provide our people with experiences that enrich their lives and those of the people they support. A really fantastic opportunity for our people to add value in the lead up and indeed during the Learning Disabilities Work Experience week and work with some incredible people to help make the week a true success for all involved.”

Dolena Orr, Head of Human Resources, Vanquis Bank

“Vanquis is committed to becoming a learning disabilities inclusive employer. Through our partnership with Mencap we are aware of the challenges people with learning disabilities face gaining employment. We are pleased to be supporting this year’s Learning Disabilities Work Experience Week. Our involvement in last year’s L.D.W.E.W was a positive experience, not just for the young person involved but for our employees as well. It’s fantastic to see that more learning disabilities charities are involved in this year’s week, covering more of the UK; we hope more businesses get involved this year as well.”

Annette Saunders, Corporate Responsibility Manager, Vanquis Bank

“We started working with Mencap when the Employer Engagement team got in touch after the People Manager event. It was great to know that we had support in place for candidates if we needed it, they never sent us anyone who wasn’t work-ready”

Carol Evans, People Manager, McDonald’s Restaurants

“We have had an absolutely brilliant experience all round with Nick and Rita themselves and both Jon and Matt at Mencap who delivered our awareness training. Due to the success of our first placements we will be lining up 6 more”.

Katie Pearce, Human Resources, Cleary, Gottlieb, Steen & Hamilton LLP

“Mencap show amazing support for their candidates and know them all extremely well due to the close working nature they have. The support Mencap give also extends to the employer and I feel the success we have had in placing candidates has been to this close working relationship that was built at day 1. Whilst offering work experience is an essential element of the work we have done together I am pleased that the candidates put forward were all so suitable they have been offered permanent full time employment with us.”

Mark Lovett, Recruitment & Selection Manager, South West Trains

“We had a fantastic and mutually rewarding experience participating in work experience week for the first time last year. We were impressed by the people Mencap placed in our London office, and we understand they got a lot out of their time with us too. So when we had positions open up in our facilities team, as part of finding the best people for the job, it made perfect sense to include Mencap in helping to fill those vacancies. As a firm, we strongly believe that fostering a diverse and inclusive environment creates an open and more exciting place to work, and we have seen that employing people with learning disabilities is positive for productivity as well as morale. It’s undoubtedly a win-win proposition.”

Raj Panasar, Partner, Cleary, Gottlieb, Steen & Hamilton LLP

“We’ve taken part in the Learning Disabilities Work Experience Week since it began. It’s been a great experience for Anglia Ruskin University and a pleasure to host the participants who’ve been enthusiastic and keen to contribute to the working environment. Staff who’ve hosted look back on the week really positively having formed a good working relationship and got to know participants, who do visibly appear to benefit from increased confidence gained from the work experience. We’re looking forward to participating again this year.”

Jane Hay, HR Manager: Learning and Development, Anglia Ruskin University



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