

## FACTSHEET 1

# The benefits of employing someone with a learning disability in your workplace

Many employers are anxious about employing people with a learning disability as they don't know what to expect, what they might need to do or perhaps not know how to act around someone with a learning disability. Work Experience offers a way to help break down barriers and help develop confidence in working with this client group.

People with a learning disability can make great employees! Generally, they have lower sickness levels and stay in entry level jobs longer so can save employers money on recruitment. Many employers also report that their staff team morale increases as a result of working with their colleagues with a learning disability.

It will also help to ensure your company to be compliant with the Equality Act 2010 and to be part of the government's Disability Confident campaign.

## Do you want the right person for the job?

By welcoming candidates with a learning disability, you will be accessing a part of the workforce that you are unlikely to have reached before. You are more likely to recruit the right person to the right job if you are not excluding anybody.

## Do you have trouble recruiting for certain positions?

If you have jobs that are hard to recruit to, or tasks that your staff struggle to fit in to their workload, you may find that a candidate with a learning disability would perform these tasks willingly and very well.

## Do you need to recruit and retain loyal, hard-working staff?

There is evidence to suggest that employees with a learning disability stay with one employer for a longer time than most other employees, and take less time off work. This saves time and money for employers!

## Are you committed to equal opportunities and a having a diverse workforce?

77% of the public think more highly of companies that make an extra effort to employ people with a disability.<sup>1</sup>

## Do you lack the first-hand knowledge to reach your disabled customer base?

Your customer base will appreciate the efforts you are making to be an equal opportunities employer. Many of your actual and potential customers are people with a learning disability. Your organisation will be more representative of the community.

**“Succeeding in business is your top priority. So finding the best people is essential. Over 7 million people (17.5%) of working age in the UK are disabled or have a health condition.”**

Disability Confident 2016

## Do you want your staff to be more aware of disability issues?

Your staff will overcome any misconceptions about learning disability by getting to know a colleague with a learning disability.

## Would your managers benefit from the challenge of supporting a diverse team?

Your staff are likely to respond well to a more diverse team, particularly if they are given the chance to ‘buddy’ or line manage the person.

## Does your team lack morale? Is there a high rate of sickness?

Many people with a learning disability have been excluded from the workplace for a long time, and are very keen to work hard. Their enthusiasm can be infectious. Team dynamics and overall performance have been known to improve as a result of employing someone with a learning disability.

**"I currently employ more than 480 people across six restaurants in the South London area and our restaurants offer jobs with a culture of flexibility, opportunity, equality and development. Our customers come from all walks of life and it's important to us that our employees do too. Providing equal opportunities for people from all backgrounds is key to our company ethos."**

Terry Eagle, McDonald's franchise holder, London.

“What’s not to like about hiring exceptional candidates? We’ve quickly learned that there can be a fabulous overlap between candidates with learning difficulties and exceptional employees – and any employer that isn’t interested in that overlap is missing out in a big way.”

Raj Panasar, partner at law firm Cleary Gottlieb.

“The opportunity came up and we were keen to be involved in employing someone with a disability. Jonathan is more than capable of doing the jobs we have allocated to him. He is very good at his job – he just gets on with things. You ask him to do something and he does it without any fuss. He is very hard working and has an excellent attitude. He is always smiling and is very popular with the customers. We make sure we don’t ask him to do jobs that would be too difficult or risky for him to do but his work ethic makes him a really valuable member of the team.”

Reece Eggleton, Assistant Manager at Costa Coffee