

FACTSHEET 4

What support is available to employers who take on a person with a learning disability?

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 as Access to Work, to practical support in the workplace from agencies such as Mencap or other supported employment services.

Access to Work

Access to Work is a discretionary government grant. Jobcentre Plus pays a grant to employers, through Access to Work, towards any extra employment costs that result from a person's disability.

Access to Work can pay for things like aids and adaptations, transport costs, a communicator at a job interview, a support worker/job coach. It can cover 100% of the costs of aids and adaptations for a new employee with a learning disability.

To find out more, you should contact your local disability employment adviser (DEA) through your nearest Jobcentre Plus office. The DEA will put you in touch with an Access to Work adviser who will be able to tell you more and advise on your particular circumstances.

It is important to remember that Access to Work does not replace the normal responsibilities of the employer to implement health and safety regulations or replace the responsibilities required by the Equality Act 2010.

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.

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.

Disability employment advisers (DEAs), based in Jobcentre Plus offices, are dedicated to supporting disabled people who want to find work, and employers who wish to employ someone with a disability. DEAs can also advise employers on specialist support services in the area. To speak to your DEA, contact your local Jobcentre Plus office.

Disability awareness training

Organisations such as Mencap can provide disability awareness training to your staff, with a particular focus on learning disability. Contact us to find out more about Mencap's learning disability awareness training.

Equality and Human Rights Commission

The Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) can give advice and information to employers to help them meet their duties and promote equality in the workplace.