

## FACTSHEET 2

# About Mencap and learning disability

A learning disability is caused by the way the brain develops. There are many different types and most develop before a baby is born, during birth or because of a serious illness in early childhood. A learning disability is lifelong and usually has a significant impact on a person's life.

Learning disability is not mental illness or a learning difficulty such as dyslexia or Attention Deficit Disorder.

People with a learning disability find it harder than others to learn, understand and communicate. People with profound and multiple learning disabilities need full-time help with every aspect of their lives – including eating, drinking, washing, dressing and toileting.

There are 1.5 million people with a learning disability in the UK. Most are treated as 'different'.

They do not have the same control over their own lives as the rest of our society. That's why Mencap is here. We work with people with a learning disability to change laws and services, challenge prejudice and directly support thousands of people to live their lives as they choose.

## What can you expect from someone with a learning disability in your workplace?

If someone has a learning disability, it doesn't mean that they can't learn. In fact, although a person with a learning disability will learn more slowly than some people, they will often learn more carefully and may perform tasks better than others over time.

People with a learning disability often need support to learn new tasks or to understand new situations. Mencap's staff will help with this process so there is no increased expectation on the employer. They will also be available if there are queries or changes or if something goes wrong.

The vast majority of people with a learning disability have little or no experience of paid work.

They may lack confidence and need a little extra attention at the start. It might be wise to let your team know that you have a person with a learning disability joining you, and make sure that everyone is positive and welcoming.