

Employment

Vision Statement



Every person with a learning disability has the right and should have the opportunity to work¹. We believe that employment should be considered as a fundamental part of their life.

Mencap wants to see a future where people with a learning disability are receiving the right support to access and stay in work. We want employers to understand that people with a learning disability can make a valuable contribution to the workplace, when supported properly. And we ask that employers look beyond someone's learning disability and employ more individuals based on their skills and merit. This will help people with a learning disability have a better choice about what work they do.

Employment can take many forms, ranging from a few hours a week to full-time. Mencap wants people with a learning disability to have real jobs in the open labour market, with regular hours and to be paid at the same rate as everyone else.

Current situation

Approximately 8 out of 10 working age people with a learning disability have a mild or moderate learning disability, but less than 2 in 10 are in employment². When we consider people with a more severe learning disability who are 'known to social services', then only 6 in 100 are in work³.

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Many people with a learning disability face a range of barriers to accessing employment, including a lack of high quality support. This makes it very difficult to not only gain employment, but to make it last. This shortage of support also means individuals are denied the opportunity to develop the skills and confidence needed to break into the world of work. Another barrier is employers' attitudes and lack of understanding about what people with a learning disability can achieve with the right support. A comparison to the wider disability community and the general population, where 49% and 79% work respectively⁴, shows the extent of the barriers faced by people with a learning disability.

What we want

Mencap supports the UK government's ambition to halve the disability employment gap, as we know that most people with a learning disability can and want to work, if they are given the right support. We also know that doing so has a positive impact on their health and wellbeing. Being employed is not just about earning money, it is a sign of social inclusion and being seen as an equal member of society.

Mencap wants the government to develop a clear strategy, aimed at tackling the employment barriers faced by people with a learning disability.

Mencap believes that, for this strategy to have any impact, it must:

- improve the employment support available for all people with a learning disability ensuring it is tailored to individual needs, available to those furthest away from the labour market, and contains measurable employment outcomes
- provide support to employers to take on more people with a learning disability
- promote positive employer attitudes towards people with a learning disability in employment, ensuring they recognise the value of their work
- ensure the health and wellbeing of people with a learning disability is central to the strategy
- make sure the education system equips pupils with special educational needs with the skills to gain employment
- create more jobs and training opportunities for people with a learning disability, including work experience openings and apprenticeships with on-the-job support.

Last reviewed: July 2016

Next review: currently being reviewed

1. UNCRPD, clause 27

2. Taken from Mencap Manifesto (find original reference)

3. <http://www.hscic.gov.uk/catalogue/PUB18657/meas-from-asc-of-eng-1415-fin-rpt.pdf>, Section 1E, page 36

4. Annual population survey, June 2015