

Factsheet 2: The benefits of employing someone with a learning disability in your workplace

“What’s not to like about hiring exceptional candidates? We’ve quickly learned that there can be a fabulous overlap between candidates with learning disabilities 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.

Getting the right person for the right job

By welcoming candidates with a learning disability, you will be tapping into a pool of talent 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 a particular group for no good reason.

“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

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 be a good fit in your business.

Reputational advantages

Your customer base will appreciate the efforts you are making to be an equal opportunities employer. Many of your actual and potential customers are disabled people. Your organisation will be more representative of the community. 77% of the public think more highly of companies that make an extra effort to employ disabled people.¹

Benefits to staff teams

Your staff will overcome any misconceptions about learning disability by getting to know a colleague with a learning disability. This will also be useful when dealing with disabled clients or customers.

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.

Most people with a learning disability face multiple barriers to finding employment. Overcoming challenges to find work is a huge achievement and this is often reflected in the positive attitudes they bring to the workplace as a result. Their enthusiasm can be infectious and improves staff morale.² Team dynamics and overall performance have been known to improve

as a result of employing someone with a learning disability. To find out more about the benefits to companies employing people with a learning disability, read Good for Business

“As Head of Talent Acquisition for Clipper and the Project Manager for our Fresh Start Diversity & Inclusion programme, I am delighted with the success of our partnership with Mencap and the traineeship programme they have provided for us.

The trainee programme (set up by Mencap) began just over 6 months ago and it has surpassed all my expectations in terms of the impact and success it has had. Mencap worked hard for 6 months before launching the scheme, to understand our business intrinsically which has paid dividends in that the trainees they have provided are completely in tune with our business and are a great asset to Clipper.

The trainees I have met are passionate, hard-working and loyal to Clipper. One of them has already received Employee of the Month and I understand that 3 Mencap workers achieved the top 3 pick rates within the operation a week or so ago. This is amazing and proves to me how successful the Mencap scheme is in terms of training the trainees to do the job well. Equally important, Mencap ensure that the trainees enjoy their work, do not feel undue pressure, and are assimilated into the Clipper culture effectively. I am confident that the Mencap trainees are happy in their work and the experience of working with Mencap and Clipper has had a very positive effect on their mental health and wellbeing.

Similarly, I have had feedback from my Clipper colleagues that the experience of working with Mencap and the traineeship has been an entirely positive experience, very rewarding, and has enhanced their working life.

The Mencap employees are subject matter experts, completely authentic, and a pleasure to work alongside. Nothing is ever too much trouble for them and they are always very responsive to any queries Clipper have. I would highly recommend the Mencap traineeship to all businesses as an effective and positive scheme that benefits all involved.”

– Jennifer Swain, Head of Resourcing,
Clipper Logistics plc

1. Charity Awareness Monitor, September 2004
2. Good for Business, 2018