NHSScotland Learning Disability Employment: Tools and Guidance

Scottish Government
Riaghaltas na h-Alba
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Foreword

The Scottish Government is committed to employing more people with learning disabilities in NHSScotland organisations. This sector specific guidance has been created to build on the recommendations outlined in "The Route to Employment for People with Learning Disabilities in Scotland" published by the Scottish Commission for Learning Disability Employment Task Group in December 2018 which explores what needs to be done to create more and better opportunities for those with a learning disability.

This guidance has been produced in partnership with NHSScotland employers' staff side and the Scottish Government, to support NHS organisations to increase the number of people with learning disabilities employed within NHSScotland organisations.

A learning disability is significant and lifelong. It starts before adulthood and affects the person's development. This means that a person with a learning disability will be likely to need help to understand information, learn skills and live a fulfilling life. Some people with a learning disability will also have healthcare needs and require support to communicate. But this is only part of a description. It does not capture the whole person who can be a friend, a family member, a community activist, a student, a parent, an employee or employer to name just a few roles. It is essential that we keep in mind all of those possibilities.

The principals and tools set out in this guidance may also help you in making arrangements for your organisation to become a welcoming place to work for individuals with Autism spectrum disorder (ASD), particularly for those individuals whose intelligence is not impaired.

The Scottish Government has developed an implementation framework for 'The keys to life'. The framework has four strategic outcomes which relate to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of People with

Disabilities. Strategic Outcome 4 of the framework aims to create Active Citizenship by ensuring that 'people with learning disabilities are able to participate in all aspects of community and society'. Within this, two specific priorities are to:

- Contribute to relevant outcomes across key policy areas to further develop employment opportunities for people with learning disabilities;
- Facilitate innovative social connectedness and employment opportunities for people with learning disabilities.

Employment rates for people with learning disabilities are among the lowest, compared to all people with a disability. Tackling employment for people with learning disabilities in the NHSScotland isn't just the right thing to do for people with learning disabilities; it's the right thing to do for our NHS. Changing the culture around learning disabilities will not only help us to deliver better care, but also makes business sense, helping to fill vacancies and ensuring our workforce represents the population that we serve. Getting recruitment and employment of people with learning disabilities right is a step towards an accessible, and supportive working environment for everyone.

As with so many aspects of diversity, it isn't a "quick fix". Organisations need to first of all create the right culture and workplace for people with learning disabilities to be comfortable and safe. The aim of this toolkit is to raise awareness and break down some of the barriers that both employers and potential employees may face. This will help you to create a culture which welcomes people with learning disabilities and promotes equitable access to job opportunities across NHSScotland.

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1. Introduction

This toolkit has been developed to support organisations in NHSScotland to increase the number of people with learning disabilities employed by them.

It addresses the specific commitment within the Scottish Government publication: [A Fairer Scotland for Disabled People: Our Delivery Plan to 2021 for the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities](#) for NHSScotland to deliver a Learning Disability Employment Programme.

The toolkit should be read in conjunction with the [Embracing Equality, Diversity and Human Rights in NHSScotland](#) Partnership Information Network Policy (PIN Policy).

1.1 Context

The Fairer Scotland for Disabled People delivery plan has been developed as an outcome to address inequalities by recognising and valuing diversity, promoting a patient-focused approach, and involving people in the design and delivery of health care. It is based on the social model of disability rather than the medical model and aims to support societal changes to improve the lives of deaf and disabled people in Scotland. The Scottish Government is also committed to halve the disability employment gap and has published [A Fairer Scotland for Disabled People; Employment Action Plan](#) which sets out our belief that the public sector has a key role in supporting our ambitions though recruiting and retaining disabled people.

As set out in the PIN Policy, NHSScotland Boards have a duty to comply with the existing equality and human rights legal framework including the [Equality Act 2010](#) which covers nine protected characteristics age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, race,

pregnancy and maternity, religion or belief, sex, and sexual orientation. Learning disabilities are a subsection of the disability protected characteristic and key points of the Act relevant to learning disabilities include:

- The Act puts a duty on you as an employer to make reasonable adjustments for disabled staff to help them overcome disadvantage resulting from their impairment;
- The Act allows you to take positive action if you think that employees or job applicants who share a particular protected characteristic are disadvantaged, or if their participation in an activity is disproportionality low.

1.2 Principles

Beyond compliance with national policy and legislative obligations, there are clear organisational and societal benefits associated with implementing and maintaining good employment practices in relation to equality, diversity and human rights. Employing people with learning disabilities supports a holistic approach to healthcare by providing all members of the public as service users the opportunity to work in the service.

Evidence demonstrates that work is generally good for physical health, mental health and wellbeing. The nature and quality of the work is important. Jobs should be safe and take account of individuals' needs by applying reasonable adjustments, as appropriate, noting that not everyone will need adjustments. Employing people with learning disabilities is beneficial for a number of reasons:

- Meaningful employment can support positive health outcomes;
- People with learning disabilities provide an untapped resource for employers with a high proportion of people who want to work;

- Increasing the employment of people with learning disabilities will not only benefit the individual, but also have benefits to the wider community and economy;
- People with learning disabilities grow in their confidence when they are employed, supporting them to become more independent;
- The act of going to work each day adds security and routine to people's lives and a sense of belonging, both to the organisation and to society;
- Having a job can be fundamental to building confidence and providing the opportunity to make friends and build a social life.

1.3 Employer Benefits

The benefits of employing people with learning disabilities includes recruiting from a larger talent pool. Increasing diversity can also add value to the organisation and contribute to employee wellbeing and engagement. As the lead strategic partner to the Scottish Government in the delivery of learning disability strategy and policy, the Scottish Commission for Learning Disability (SCLD) is committed to finding new and better ways to improve the lives of people with learning disabilities. This video produced by SCLD explores the value of employing people with learning disabilities – for both employees and employers alike.

Hiring a more diverse workforce that includes people with learning disabilities is part of a good recruitment and retention strategy, reduces costs of staff turnover and employers enjoy reduced vacancy rates. Expenditure on staff turnover can be up to £30,000 per employee when taking into consideration that it takes on average 27 weeks to gain and train a new employee to reach optimum productivity. Disability confident employers save the time and costs of rehiring new staff in areas where they employ people with learning disabilities. It also enables employing organisations within NHSScotland to reflect the populations they serve.

2. Creating an accessible organisation

Taking steps to employ people with learning disabilities will help to create a more accessible organisation by increasing interactions. As organisations go through the process of hiring people with learning disabilities, this will provide a practical opportunity to review organisational policies and processes to make sure they are accessible for all applicants. Organisations that implement equitable hiring practices to create a more diverse workplace see the positive effects in the whole organisation.

2.1 Reasonable Adjustments

There is an expectation that where reasonable adjustments (as set out in the Equality Act 2010) are necessary they are provided efficiently. The provision of reasonable adjustments ensures that all disabled workers, including people with learning disabilities, are not disadvantaged when doing their jobs. These adjustments apply to all contract workers, trainees, apprentices, and full and part time employees. Adjustments apply throughout the recruitment process and the duration of employment at an organisation. Reasonable adjustments may include equipment and changes to the physical environment, they may also include changes to working practices and the working day (including shift changes, different methods, line management arrangements etc.) It is very important not to make assumptions about an individual's ability to perform a task. They will know the effect of their disability/impairment and they should be given the chance to demonstrate whether they can do the job. Everyone is different, which means that not everyone will need the same adjustments; employees need to be engaged in conversations about adjustments needed to support them in the workplace.

Adjustments should be reviewed frequently to ensure that the adjustment is effective. Several adjustments may be required to reduce an array of disadvantages that may not be obvious to an employer.

There are several considerations that should be made when thinking about reasonable adjustments:

- how effective the change will be in avoiding the disadvantage the worker would otherwise experience;
- is it practical;
- the cost;
- your organisation's resources and size;
- the availability of financial resources.

The duty contains three requirements that apply in situations where a disabled person would be substantially disadvantaged compared to people who are not disabled.

2.1.1 Changing the way things are done

Where a disabled worker is put at a disadvantage by a provision, criterion or practice of their employer, amending the way of doing things will make it more inclusive for employees with disabilities. For example, changes to the existing induction, onboarding, and mandatory training processes could make a real difference to the experience of an employee with a learning disability. Some adjustments that NHSScotland Boards have taken include face-to-face training, or using the aid of a support worker.

2.1.2 Changes to overcome barriers created by the physical workplace

Thinking creatively about the physical environment and considering adding prompts may help people with learning disabilities complete their jobs more efficiently. Some adjustments that NHSScotland Boards have taken include restructuring working hours, such as shifting the start and end times of the working day, or working shorter days.

2.1.3 Providing extra equipment

Additional or different equipment may make it easier for some people with learning disabilities to communicate or access information within the team and wider organisation. This can take the form of providing specialist software, easy read documents, or by working with a support worker when necessary.

The Equality and Human Rights Commission provide examples of how the three requirements work in practice. Please refer to their webpage for an in-depth explanation of reasonable adjustments in practice.

2.2 External Support

There is often a perception that employers will face increased costs and challenges to employ people with a disability when reasonable adjustments will need to be made. The reality is that there is a lot of support available to employers, including funding, much of it at zero, or low cost to the employer. For example, the UK Government Access to Work scheme can help pay for reasonable adjustments which will minimise the financial burden on organisations. Further information and references to external support can be found in Annex A.

2.3 The Accessibility Information Standard

All organisations that provide NHS or adult social care have a legal duty (produced under section 250 of the Health and Social Care Act 2012 and supported by the Equality Act 2010 obligations) to make 'reasonable adjustments' to improve access for disabled people. The 'Accessible Information Standard' aims to clarify what is 'reasonable'. The Standard is only legally enforceable to health services in England, but it is seen as best practice for the NHSScotland Boards to help implement the duties in the Equality Act.

The aim of the Accessible Information Standard is to ensure that people who have a disability or sensory loss get information that they can access and understand, and any communication support that they need. This includes providing accessible information and communication support for people with a learning disability. Further information can be sought from the [Scottish Accessible information forum](#).

2.4 Inclusive Communication

Everyone needs to communicate effectively to take part in daily life, whether at home, school, work or going to a café. Some people face barriers in doing this due to other people's lack of:

- awareness of how they communicate;
- knowledge about how best to support them.

Inclusive communication refers to all forms of communication, including spoken language, written language and all forms of non-verbal communication. It can be face to face or by telephone, written information or online. Inclusive communication is vital to ensure equity of access to services, person centred care, increased participation, and social interaction.

Everyone is responsible for communicating in ways that include others and for creating supportive environments. Inclusive communication demonstrates that, as a society, we value, respect and include people with communication support needs. It promotes functional, effective and valued communication so social inclusion can be achieved and maintained.

Organisations should consider how to support staff to communicate in ways which are more accessible and inclusive to support the recruitment and retention of colleagues with learning disabilities.

Some general tips when communicating either verbally or through written means include:

- use plain English;
- avoid jargon, acronyms and figures of speech;
- use clear, short sentences.

2.4.1 Face-to-face

Some 'top tips' for effective face-to-face communication with people with learning disabilities are as follows:

- clearly identify or introduce yourself - if appropriate, explain who you are and what you do;
- find a suitable place to talk, ideally away from noise and distractions;
- speak clearly and perhaps a little slower than you would do usually, but do not shout;
- use gestures and facial expressions to support what you are saying;
- if necessary, repeat phrases, re-phrase the sentence or use simpler words or phrases;
- check if the person has understood what you are saying; look for visual clues as well as asking if they have understood;
- encourage people to ask questions or request further information; ask if they would like anything in writing as a reminder or reference;
- try different ways of getting your point across, for example writing things down, drawing or using symbols or objects to support your point.

2.4.2 Written and Printed

Equally, it is important to ensure that written or printed communication is accessible. Some 'top tips' for accessible printed communication are as follows:

- use a minimum font size of 14 point;
- use a clear, uncluttered and sans serif font such as Arial;
- align text to the left margin and avoid 'justifying' text;
- ensure plenty of 'white space' on documents, especially between sections and avoid 'squashing' text onto a page; if possible, include a double-space between paragraphs;
- print on matt, not gloss, paper;
- use page numbers;
- if printing double-sided ensure that the paper is of sufficient thickness to avoid text showing through from the other side;
- consider making all 'standard' printed letters / documents 'easier to read' – using plain English, highlighting important information, and supporting text with diagrams, images or photographs.

Many people with a learning disability will need written information in 'easy read' format. 'Easy read' refers to information which is written using simpler words and phrases, supported by images, symbols or photographs. It is good practice to ensure that people with learning disabilities are involved in the development of easy read documents.

Organisations should take steps to ensure that their internet and intranet sites are accessible, including to people with a learning disability and to users of assistive technology. For more information on how to make your webpage recognised as accessible refer to the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines. The BBC My Web My Way website has a very useful best practice page which provides information on making your website accessible for people with learning disabilities.

Consideration should also be given to colleagues with other information or communication needs, and to the fact that some people with a learning disability may also have additional communication needs, for example sensory loss. More information about correctly formatting documents to ensure that they are accessible to users of assistive

technology is included in the [NHS Guide in Creating Accessible Documents.](#)

3. Creating a Supportive Environment

NHSScotland Boards have a shared responsibility to promote equality and diversity in their organisation and help create an inclusive and welcoming environment for people to work in. In addition to the practical changes outlined above, it is important that Organisations also look at the culture and engagement of their staff, to create a supportive environment for employees with learning disabilities.

3.1 Staff Equality and Diversity Training

The Staff Governance Standard requires all NHSScotland Boards to demonstrate that staff are:

- Well informed;
- Appropriately trained and developed;
- Informed in decisions;
- Treated fairly and consistently, with dignity and respect, in an environment where diversity is valued; and
- Provided with a continuously improving and safe working environment, promoting the health and wellbeing of staff, patients and the wider community.

Further information relating to the Staff Governance Standard including training can be accessed via the [Staff Governance Website](#).

Equality and diversity training in NHSScotland Boards already exists, nonetheless additional training with specific learning disability components could help promote cultural changes. Additional training at all levels should be considered, particularly for managers, leaders and team members of someone with a learning disability. Key messages to include in addition to equality and diversity training include:

- myth busting;
- champion the idea - organisations that 'get it right' for people with a learning disability will become better at supporting a wider range of disabilities;
- when managers tailor work to a range of skills, they become better at tailoring jobs to employee's strengths therefore strengthen the team;
- everyone is different;
- an on-going commitment to flexibility and inclusion, including in recruitment and retention;
- reasonable adjustments;
- communicating in an accessible way;
- visibility of learning disabilities within the organisation.

Face-to-face training is a good way to increase understanding of the day-to-day issues facing people with learning disabilities. This enables training to be more interactive, giving more hands-on practice on specific areas of support, increasing confidence in communicating and interacting with colleagues with a learning disability.

Think about involving people with a learning disability as part of your training. This will provide a user-led perspective, which will give groups a better understanding of the issues and how best to adjust practice. NHSScotland can also access external support, through its membership with the Business Disability Forum. Further information can be found in Annex A.

3.2 Staff Engagement Group

Staff engagement groups are one way of supporting staff and providing a forum to listen. They can facilitate the creation of a safe space for sharing experiences. Examples of how staff engagement groups can be used to help spread good practice or fix issues include: sharing their

day-to-day experiences of work; thinking through what is working well, and not so well; learning from their experiences; and developing practical solutions.

Listening to staff will help managers identify the type of additional support needed to increase their confidence in working together and ultimately show that your organisation is serious about employing people with learning disabilities. Staff groups can also be a useful mechanism to reach others from learning disability groups for future recruitment.

The formality of the staff engagement group can depend on what the need and purpose is in your organisation. Some practical considerations are set out below:

- consider if there be a senior leader or sponsor;
- consider how insights report back to the senior management team;
- appoint a chair;
- administrative support for the group (including meetings, room booking etc.);access to meeting rooms;
- allow reasonable time to attend meetings, with agreement and support from line managers.

3.3 Learning Disability Champion

Learning disability champions in your organisation can promote and help maintain momentum around diversity culture change. Learning disability champions are volunteers who become expert points of contact in their organisation, and promote best practice. This includes disseminating information to colleagues, encouraging myth-busting and becoming experts on Access to Work, learning disability programmes and networking with other partners. [This video](#) highlights the benefits of using Access to Work to fund a Job Coach to support people with learning disabilities in NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde.

Areas of responsibility for a Learning Disability Champion could include:

- promoting the safety and wellbeing of employees with learning disabilities;
- sharing lessons learnt and best practice across the organisation;
- ensuring communications are in an accessible format;
- being an advocate for employing people with learning disabilities in the organisation and sharing successful case studies;
- supporting the training, recruitment and retention of employees with learning disabilities;
- liaising directly with employees with a learning disability, managers and staff groups;
- supporting colleagues who are new to working with someone with a learning disability.

3.4 Individual Support

Someone with a learning disability may need additional individual support for various aspects of their role. This could be during training and induction or when completing certain tasks. The Scottish Government's Supported Employment Framework that was published in February 2010 by the Scottish Government and Convention of Scottish Local Authorities (COSLA) lays out the five stepped approach to supported employment, recognising it as "an employment first approach", which focuses on positive outcomes for individuals and is the agreed best practice of support in Scotland.

Engagement by SE service	Vocational Profiling	Job Finding	Employer Engagement	On/Off the Job Support and Aftercare
Helping disabled people most distanced from the labour market to make informed choices on their own future	Identifying skills and preferences for work, giving work experiences that will help the individual make their own vocational choices	Identifying the preferred job through employer engagement, also providing support to the employer.	Finding out about the workplace environment, co-workers and the 'supports' a person might need.	Providing backup to the employee and their employer, developing independence in the workplace and addressing career progression in due course.

It recognises that there isn't a one-size-fits-all model that can be applied to all employees. Individual centred support will go beyond establishing what support is needed to give insight to their employee's skills and experience. Consequently, jobs can be tailored to their skills to facilitate a successful role, and will need individual specific goals and training. Further information on how the supported employment framework works in practice can be found in [Annex A](#).

Individual support for colleagues and managers is equally important, especially where adjustments are being made to team working practices or changes to responsibilities. The onus remains with the manager to find solutions to potential problems that arise and ensure all colleagues can work effectively in their surroundings. The SCLD can help provide advice and support to organisations to strengthen their capability to support people with learning disabilities.

4. Creating Employment Opportunities

It is important to identify real employment opportunities within the organisation that someone with a learning disability can consider. There is not a single definition of the type of jobs that you can consider as everyone, including those with a learning disability, is different, with different skills and experiences.

4.1 Identifying Real Jobs

If your organisation has yet to employ someone with a learning disability start recruitment with the most interested and committed departments. The employment process may have existing barriers and it is more likely that a committed department will put in the extra time and effort to overcome these. Once your organisation has identified a sustainable path to employment the process can be completed by other departments. Jobs that are commonly suitable for people with a learning disability tend to be in operational departments. The cyclical nature of operational departments makes it more likely to have fixed, repetitive tasks that are easier for some employees with a learning disability to learn.

4.1.1 Real Jobs

When considering recruiting someone with a learning disability all jobs should have real and proven demand. People with learning disabilities should only be recruited for jobs that are valued by managers and colleagues alike. Real jobs have wages paid at the going rate, and have the same terms and conditions as similar jobs.

Nevertheless, job descriptions and recruitment practices should make reasonable accommodation ensuring in particular that essential criteria are regulated when advertising so that the bar isn't inadvertently set too high. As a result, it would be useful to regularly review job descriptions

with this in mind, thinking, as you would for any candidate how skills and experience can be evidenced in a number of ways.

4.1.2 Development

Similar to roles for the rest of the workforce, each job should have the possibility of development and progression. Development in a role can include increasing working hours, gaining more responsibility, or completing more tasks.

4.1.3 What types of jobs can I consider?

To help identify the suitability of potential roles there are some general principles that can be applied within the organisation. The following are not 'hard' rules, and you need to look at individual skills and experiences, mindful that this may be a candidate's first job:

- the candidate may be starting to build their skill base and experience, making lower bands (1 – 4) more accessible as first roles;
- jobs that have a fixed element, as people with learning disabilities can find change difficult to manage;
- roles that do not require constant problem solving;

Some of these roles may come from within existing jobs. A suite of case studies can be found on the NHS Employers webpage.

4.2 Entry Routes to Employment

Employability scheme, internships and work experience opportunities can play an important role in securing employment for people with learning disabilities in NHSScotland. The following are examples of different employability schemes that exist in the NHS.

For the younger workforce, a [Modern Apprenticeship](#) provides the opportunity to work towards earning a vocational qualification and promotes social inclusion by offering not just meaningful employment, but qualifications whilst working. This also leads to further career prospects and opportunities to develop.

Project Search offers an internship programme supporting young people with additional needs to gain skills and experience aimed at helping them move into sustainable employment within the NHS.

The Prince's Trust and NHSScotland launched a three-year employability partnership support on 01 October 2018. The 'Get Into Healthcare Programme' provides 6 week intensive pre-employment programme of accredited work-based training, targeted at young people furthest from the job market. This will support young people to gain access to entry-level roles within NHSScotland, with the opportunity for this to act as a platform for a career pathway in non-clinical and clinical roles.

'Place and Train' approaches such as Supported Employment, where disabled people work with support from colleagues and a job coach are considered to be particularly effective as they allow employees to be trained on the job and help employees acquire the skills they need to perform. Organisations may wish to offer work experience placements as another way for individuals with learning disabilities to understand the opportunities available in the NHS, requirements of the role, and the environment they will be working in to help inform their decision-making when choosing an employer.

The Scottish Union of Supported Employment advocates an employment model which is an evidence-based, personalised approach to supporting people with significant disabilities (i.e. learning disability) find and retain a job. Many of Scotland's local authorities offer supported employment services and would be willing to work with health

boards to help more of their service participants into work if not already doing so. Further information on the supported employment model can be found in [Annex A](#).

5. Advertising and Recruitment

To prepare your organisation and recruiters for hiring people with a learning disability, it is helpful to start thinking about the advertising and recruitment process early. Tapping into the local networks will help reach your target audience more easily.

Often people with a learning disability are hesitant in applying for roles. Pre-employment support will encourage applicants to apply for roles by increasing their confidence that the NHS is committed to employing people with learning disabilities. As a part of pre-employment support individuals and families should be given clear and accurate information about job conditions and requirements.

5.1 NHS Banding and Agenda for Change

As for all roles in NHSScotland, the job will have to match an NHS Band level as outlined by Agenda for Change. This band matching process occurs at the organisation where the job will be carried out. If you are considering carving a job, or altering the tasks in a job then you will have to match the job to a band.

5.2 Advertising

Advertising solely on NHS Jobs may not be enough to reach everyone who might be able to do the job. Building local networks will help you reach the largest possible pool of candidates. Some examples of alternative locations for advertising could include participating in jobs fairs or sharing the advert with local partners who work with people with learning disabilities (such as Supported Employment Organisations, the

disability and employment advisor at your local Jobcentre Plus, SCVOs, and Adult Social Services departments).

5.3 Positive Action

The Equality Act 2010 allows you to take a protected characteristic into consideration when deciding who to recruit or promote.

As employers, you can take positive action pre-application to encourage applications from under-represented groups, such as targeted advertising, offering pre-application training, offering work shadowing, work trials or open days for specific groups.

At the point of making job offers, employers can also take positive action to select candidates from a protected characteristic. However, candidates have to be as qualified as each other; this does not mean the same qualifications, but it does mean that the selection assessment on a range of criteria can rate applicants as equally capable of doing the same job.

You might routinely consider a number of mechanisms outlined above as part of your standard recruitment process.

5.4 Accessible Applications

Applications need to be available in an accessible form. Key considerations are set out in relevant and existing PIN Policies and are included below:

- easy read job descriptions and application forms – use clear simple language;
- have clear descriptions of the job and tasks that need to be done;

- do not ask for qualifications that are not directly related to the tasks of the job;
- flexibility in how candidates apply – offer alternative application formats.

5.5 Selection Process

The design of the selection process will also need to be considered to ensure that you are giving applicants the best chance to show their skills for the job. This may mean moving away from a traditional interview-only format. Some examples of adjustments to the selection process are:

- conduct the selection process through an assessment centre where candidates can trial aspects of the job;
- have an informal atmosphere with a small panel;
- allow for longer interviews;
- consider giving the questions ahead of time;
- keep questions to assess their ability to do the job at hand;
- group exercises;
- have someone with a learning disability on the interview panel.

5.5.1 Getting to the Interview

Provide clear instructions for how to get to the interview location in an easy read format and who to contact on arrival.

5.5.2 Feedback to Unsuccessful Candidates

It is good practice to give detailed feedback to unsuccessful candidates so they can improve. For many people with learning disabilities this may be their first job interview. To prevent them from being discouraged, positive and specific feedback on areas to improve is good practice. Additionally, managers can provide job trials or internships to help unsuccessful candidates build up their skill base.

6. Onboarding and Development of Employees

Once in employment, there are contractual obligations for the employer and adjustments that can be made to assist employees with learning disabilities. There are also steps that employers can make to improve the onboarding experience for employees, resulting in higher retention rates.

6.1 Pre-employment checks

All the same pre-employment checks will apply for people with learning disabilities, such as identity checks (see the [Safer Pre and Post Employment Checks in NHSScotland](#) PIN Policy for a comprehensive overview) and rights to work in the UK (see the Home Office '[Full guide for employer on preventing illegal working in the UK](#)').

6.2 References

References are also an important part, and may be more challenging for people with learning disabilities who may have limited employment experiences to draw on. References should be sought to try and build up a picture about a person's suitability for certain role. Where they are not available, they can be sourced from non-employment sources, such as volunteering activities, and/or training, as reflected in the relevant PIN Policy. Where the person cannot provide a suitable referee from any of these sources; character or personal references may be sought as described by the employment history and reference check standard.

6.3 Employment Contract

Employees must be issued with an employment contract within 8 weeks of their start date. An employee with a learning disability may require some assistance to understand this contract. Although the employment contract itself cannot be changed to easy read, a summary sheet in easy read can be provided with the full contract. This summary sheet will explain some of the most important and relevant information, including

pay, hours worked, annual leave, sick days, and notice period. Section 1 of the Employment Rights Act 1996 states that you should always consider offering this to your employee. If you are unsure how to present this, you can liaise with [Central Legal Office](#).

6.4 Induction Process

Like all other employees, people with learning disabilities will need an induction where necessary to the organisation and their new role. You should make reasonable adjustments to deliver training and refer to local policies to do so. Managers should keep in mind that it may take longer for people with learning disabilities to become comfortable in their new role and learn the skills required.

For example, in one organisation an employee with a learning disability attended two half day accessible training sessions, rather than one full day. If there is no co-worker, employment support organisations may be able to provide individual assistance for the training and induction process.

6.5 Employee Development

Once someone with a learning disability has successfully been hired, they should be supported through the normal Personal Development Planning and Review process. Plans should include support required to complete mandatory training and the accessing of online tools and resources on the intranet. This may be a good structure for thinking about any adjustments that may be needed to support the individual.

7. Annex A – External Support and Resources

Department for Work and Pensions [Access to Work]() programme provides money towards a support worker or for the cost of equipment or travelling to work. A number of disabled people in employment have said they would not have been in employment without the help of Access to Work. Depending on circumstances and need, the [Access to Work]() grant can pay for practical support including:

- adaptations to equipment used;
- special equipment;
- fares to work for those who can't use public transport;
- a support worker or job coach to help in the workplace;
- a support service for those who have a mental health condition, are absent from work or finding it difficult to work;
- disability awareness training for colleagues;
- a communicator at a job interview;
- the cost of moving equipment for a change in job location or job.

Disability Confident Scheme: The Department of Work and Pensions (DWP) Disability Confident scheme replaced the Positive about Disabled People 'two tick' scheme in 2017. NHSScotland are expected to complete the Disability Confident Actions to become accredited. Employers can progress through various levels of the award once they have met the necessary criteria. This scheme offers tools to recruit, retain and developed disabled staff. Guidance on the scheme can be found [here.]()

Jobcentre Plus: The local Jobcentre Plus can help NHSScotland Boards tap into a pool of candidates that have learning disabilities and are looking for work. Disability Employment Advisers in Jobcentre Plus help clients to find work or to gain new skills and also provide information about disability friendly employers within their local area.

Local Authorities: Local Authorities have a wide range of responsibilities, including adult social services. Learning Disability Statistics Scotland (LDSS) publish statistics about adults with learning disabilities who are known to local authorities in Scotland. [The 2017 report](#) shows a low level of employment of adults with a learning disability.

The integration across health and social care services, forging partnerships between patients, their families and service providers provides a mutually beneficial opportunity for NHSScotland Boards and local authorities to collaborate on this agenda, including:

- for NHSScotland Boards to reach their target population by working with local authorities and sharing data on people with learning disabilities who are known to adult social services;
- for local authorities to increase meaningful employment of people with learning disabilities;
- for NHSScotland and local authorities to work together and develop new service models for people with learning disabilities.

Your local authority contact can be found on the [directory.](#)

Employability in Scotland: This Government hosted website provides key information on the employment services supported by government, the policies and partnerships, and specific sections on key client groups which includes a section on Learning Disabilities. This [dedicated page](#) provides information on the policies and interventions that exist to support those with Learning Disabilities.

Fair Start Scotland: Fair Start Scotland is the Scottish Government's devolved employment services and is delivered by providers in 9 contract areas across Scotland. The service offers up to 12 months in-work support to both participants and employers. You can contact the

service provider who is responsible for delivering Fair Start Scotland in your area by visiting this [page.](#)

Project Search: The primary aim of Project SEARCH is to connect young people with learning disabilities and additional support needs with competitive employment. Interns are supported through placements with large employers, such as NHSScotland. They get hands-on experience and are given the opportunity to demonstrate their skills and abilities while learning new complex and varied, practical and vocational skills to help ready them for the world of work. You can access their website [here](#)

Scottish Union of Support Employment (SUSE): This [website](#) provides videos and case studies of how the supported employment model works in practice. SUSE is working with the Scottish Government to improve the quality and consistency of supported employment services in Scotland. Supported employment has been defined in Scotland as, "promoting the rights of all individuals to achieve their full potential through a model of flexible support that enables people to overcome barriers to their employability and access real jobs for real pay". The '[Good Practice Guide](#)' provides information for managerial practice and organisational culture to create inclusive workplaces and support people with disabilities.

Scottish Commission for Learning Disabilities (SCLD): The SCLD are committed to finding new and better ways to improve the lives of people with learning disabilities. Their [website](#) is a knowledge hub – offering support, information and new ideas about learning disability in Scotland.

Business Disability Forum (BDF): NHS Scotland, is a partner of Business Disability Forum, and is entitled to Member and Partner Benefits. This includes 5 days consultancy or training per year across NHSScotland. They also provide an advice service, line manager guides and content resources. A full list of the benefits included in the partnership can be found [here.](#)

Scottish Council for Voluntary Organisations: The national membership organisation provides support for Scotland's charities, voluntary organisations and social enterprises. The [website](#) signposts to their different partners which is a really valuable source of contacts and resources.

Social Enterprise UK: Work with the public sector to deliver on local health and social care challenges, focusing on social value priorities and creating a more inclusive society. Information on campaigns they've been involved in, or to find out more access their website [here.](#)

The Scottish Accessibility Forum (SAIF): Aims to make information accessible to everyone who needs it. SAIF does this by raising awareness and understanding of the importance of accessible information and by providing a range of guidance, advice and practical support to information providers across Scotland. The website can be accessed [here](#).

Other Resources:

Policy Documents	• Department of Health: 'A White Paper: A new strategy for learning disabilities for the 21st century': • The Scottish Government: Supported Employment Framework February 2010: • Scottish Commission for Learning Disability 'The Route to Employment for People with Learning Disabilities in Scotland' • The keys to life - Improving Quality of Life for People with Learning Disabilities EASY READ version • The keys to life - Improving Quality of Life for People with Learning Disabilities • A Fairer Scotland for Disabled People: delivery plan • A Fairer Scotland for Disabled People: EASY READ version • Equality Act 2010: Guidance • Equality Act 2010: EASY READ • A Working Life for All Disabled People: The Supported Employment Framework for Scotland: Summary Report • Embracing Equality, Diversity and Human Rights in NHSScotland Partnership Information Network Policy: • The Safer Pre and Post Employment Checks in NHSScotland PIN Policy • Mapping the Employability Landscape (SCLD)
Learning Disability: Background Information	• Autism spectrum disorder: ASD
Other sources of Information and Support	• Hemming's, S. and Morris, J. (2004): Employing people with learning disabilities. • Foundation for People with Learning Disabilities • BASE: 'What is Supported Employment?' • Mencap: 'You can work it out! Best practice in employment for people with learning disabilities'

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