



- *equality information for providers*

#### **Edition 4: September 2009**

Welcome to the fourth edition of “EQUIP” the newsletter that keeps learning providers updated about their equality and diversity obligations.

Following on from the last newsletter this edition features articles and updates specifically related to learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.



#### **Independence for People with Autism**

People with autistic spectrum conditions, their parents and carers are a hidden minority and often fail to have their needs identified and met. By December 2009 a national strategy will be published that will support the individuals who have the condition, their families and carers. One of it's aims is to give the right support when individuals are in transition from child to adulthood. ***Watch this space!***

This newsletter has been prepared by HarperVenney [www.harpervenney.com](http://www.harpervenney.com) . Whilst every effort is made to check the accuracy of the information provided legislation and funding streams constantly change. This publication is not a legal document and if advice is needed up to date information should be sought.

“Valuing People Now – a three year strategy for people with learning disabilities” follows the principle set out in “Valuing People”: that all people with a learning disability, their families and carers are entitled to the same aspirations and life chances as other citizens. It also expands the remit to cover health, housing, employment and community care. A new national Learning Disability Programme Board and regional boards will review progress annually. [www.dh.gov.uk](http://www.dh.gov.uk)

### **A Framework for Progression Pathways to Employment for Learners with Learning Difficulties & Disabilities**

As a development from the article featured in the last edition research has been carried out in the Borough of Sefton to establish how activities move work experience into sustainable employment. Special schools, FE colleges, WBL providers and the EBP took part in the project<sup>1</sup>. These responded to a questionnaire survey that identified what practice was already in place and also explored “job coaching” within the context of professional development needs.

The research identified a number of issues:

<sup>1</sup> FE=further education/WBL=workbased learning/EBP=education business partnership

- The need for more employer support
- The ways that awareness of LLDD is integrated into staff development
- Consideration of how “buddy systems” could be developed
- The need to place activities into wider organisational and borough contexts including utilising and enhancing existing systems.
- Developing a more coherent learner tracking system through each transition stage that incorporates monitoring all equality dimensions as a requirement.

Further development work based on the findings is now underway.

Ref: “Report: Key Task 1 – Questionnaire Findings” HarperVenney Ltd May 2009

---

## Case Study Corner

The “**A Chance to Work**” project, run by **Barnados**, offers supported work placements to disabled school leavers.

Before he joined, **Lewis** thought he had few prospects of finding or holding down a job. He felt let down and frustrated by the school system and had difficulty in making contact with young people in a similar situation.

Since joining the project he has developed valuable skills and gained in confidence:

*“The last year has been great. I have worked at a fire station where I have felt comfortable and supported. I have also had a work placement at a school, working alongside teachers and other support staff. I now have the confidence to travel to work by public transport and take up other*

*interests and hobbies. My own experiences have taught me that it is important that young people get the right support to give them the best start in life.”*

**Steven** joined the project in September 2006.

He had been in college but had stopped going after 3 months because of problems with transport. Money was difficult and he ended up staying home for most of his time.

His learning disability was not specific but he was unable to read more than a few familiar words, write his name and copy write, although he needed pictures to understand what he had copied .

Steven had low confidence and self-esteem but he had strength of character and was willing to work hard. He successfully completed a 12 week induction training and was found a work experience placement in a pub. Initially he worked part-time for 2 days a week. His work involved setting up the restaurant area to ensure it was ready for customers.

Throughout his work placement he had a Job Trainer who taught him the job in a systematic way, and Steven picked the job up very quickly.

There were some issues that had to be addressed including time-keeping, leaving the house without money and personal hygiene.

These were worked on with both Steven and his family. A “fading strategy” was then introduced, where the Job Trainer gave decreasing levels of support and Steven became independent.

Following this his working hours were extended and his duties increased. The employer was so impressed that he offered to pay Steven.

After taking advice from a Disability Employment Officer Steven accepted the offer and further increased his hours to 3 full days.

He went on to learn to travel to work by himself via a travel training strategy, and now travels to work by bus and takes a taxi home. He is paid the going rate for the job, is still working 3 days a week, and also does extra hours when required. He is not supported directly in work but the agency continues to oversee the placement and negotiates with the employer and family if there are any issues. A real success story!

---

## What do you know?

**Q: Currently we employ 10 people. Recently one of our staff members, a young man, was promoted to a more senior role. This involves doing more written work and he is struggling with it. He thinks he may have dyslexia because others in his family have been diagnosed with it, and has requested that a “reasonable adjustment “ is made for him. When asked what he wanted he wasn’t sure but said it was up to us to help him. He was fine in his old job, which is why we promoted him. Can we demote him back to his old role as a “reasonable adjustment” if this requirement actually does apply to a company of our size? I have heard that most adjustments are very expensive.**

**A:** *The Disability Discrimination Act identifies the need to make a “reasonable adjustment” when someone has a condition that is having an adverse impact on their ability to do their job on a day to day basis. This applies to all employers,*

*whatever the size. As an employer you need to be able to evidence that you have made every effort to help the individual. If challenged, what you have done will be considered within your particular working context. At the moment you do not know if he has dyslexia so it would be reasonable to have an assessment done from a specialist organisation (see links below). They will then be able to advise you further. Often adjustments can be quite small and inexpensive such as printing information on different coloured paper or utilising ICT options. Clearly you value this employee and it would not be acceptable to demote him back to his old role. On another point, you do not describe the process used when you promoted him to his new role. It will be worth reviewing your systems, including job descriptions and any assessment methods used. However, this would not remove the need to make a “reasonable adjustment” at point of application if one was requested by either internal or external applicants..*

Access to Work: [www.jobcentreplus.gov.uk](http://www.jobcentreplus.gov.uk)  
[www.dyslexiaaction.org.uk](http://www.dyslexiaaction.org.uk)

**Q: I have been told that there is a new Equality Bill going through Parliament and that because we bid for publicly funded work we need to be aware of the new requirements. As a work based learning provider I feel that we are quite well set up for supporting people with learning difficulties but I’m unsure if there are any other equality issues we should be addressing?**

**A:** *The Equality Bill was put before Parliament last April and it is anticipated that it will receive*

*Royal Assent by April next year, when it will become an Act. The idea behind it is that all equality law will be contained within one piece of legislation. There are a number of clauses in the Bill and the detail of these could change before it is finalised. However, in addition to expanding the number of public sector duties and a number of other things procurement is also included. Basically the requirement will mean that any organisation that is bidding for publicly funded work will have specific equality and diversity requirements to meet, including the monitoring of all equality dimensions. These will apply to both your workforce and the individuals to whom you deliver your services. Recent research has indicated that just 18% of private sector organisations currently undertake such monitoring. A further update of the Bill will appear in the next edition of EQUIP.*

**LMHA (Liverpool Mental Health Awareness)**

supports other agencies to achieve positive mental health promotion. The website has a wealth of useful information.

Visit: [www.livementalhealth.org.uk](http://www.livementalhealth.org.uk)

## Information & Statistics

According to **Mencap** there are 1.5 million people with a learning disability in the UK. The National Forum of People with Learning Difficulties has been set up to tell the government what people with learning disabilities think about services, plans and changes that are being made. There are a number of advocacy groups in the North West.

Visit: [www.nationalforum.co.uk](http://www.nationalforum.co.uk)

Only 50% of the UK's 6.9 million disabled people of working age are in employment compared with 81% of non-disabled people.

**The Royal National Institute for Deaf People**

(RNID) is leading a campaign to persuade school Ofsted Inspectors to consider educational outcomes for disabled children as part of their statutory inspection regime. It has already been recommended by the Lamb Inquiry that schools whose outcomes are not good enough for disabled children should be unable to receive either a "good" or "outstanding" Ofsted rating. Outcomes for disabled children need to be better defined if progress is to be made.

**Visit:** The Alliance for Inclusive Education:

[www.allfie.org.uk](http://www.allfie.org.uk)

Scope: [www.scope.org.uk](http://www.scope.org.uk)

RNID: [www.rnid.org.uk](http://www.rnid.org.uk)

Skill: [www.skill.org.uk](http://www.skill.org.uk)

The Lamb Inquiry: [www.dcsf.gov.uk/lambinquiry](http://www.dcsf.gov.uk/lambinquiry)

**NB:** Remember that signing up for and contributing to this newsletter can be used as evidence of good practice in inspection.

If you have any feedback, questions, views or successful practice to share that you would like featured in the next edition of EQUIP, please e-mail: [consult@harpervenney.com](mailto:consult@harpervenney.com) .

Funded by:



Leading learning and skills