

Plain facts

Employing people with learning difficulties

CHANGE into Jobs was a project about getting more jobs for people with learning difficulties. A group of people from CHANGE and from People First in North Essex had the idea to write a guide for employers. They want employers to understand that people with learning difficulties can do lots of jobs well.

The group talked about jobs they had done. They talked to employers who employ people with learning difficulties. They worked with Susan Hemmings and Jenny Morris who then wrote the guide for employers.



These are some of the things a good employer should do:



A good employer has an equal opportunities policy. This makes sure everyone has the same chances.



A good employer shows you respect. This means that they treat you right.



A good employer understands that you may need extra time.



A good employer understands you may need extra support.



A good employer will not let you be bullied.



A good employer will give you training opportunities.



A good employer will value your work.

Why employers should take on more people with learning difficulties

People with learning difficulties have a right to get a job if they have the right skills. People with learning difficulties usually learn their job well. Many people with learning difficulties do not need lots of support once they have learnt their job. They like their jobs and work hard. They just mix in with the other workers and get on fine.

People like to see all kinds of people working in places like Sainsbury's or McDonalds. It can bring more customers in. It is good for the local council or hospital to employ people with learning difficulties. It shows they care about everyone in their community. It shows they are equal opportunity employers.



Organisations who do things for people with learning difficulties should employ people with learning difficulties. The Thera Trust runs services for disabled people. Their Director has learning difficulties and the staff respect him.

All employers can think about giving people with learning difficulties better jobs.

Employers can learn how to provide good training and support so people can have better jobs.



People with learning difficulties can be very good at their job

A supermarket manager said: 'Emma is so good at her job she does not make the same mistakes that other people make at the checkout. She always gives customers their cashback. She may be a bit slower, but she hardly ever makes any mistakes.'



A person with learning difficulties who worked at a university said: 'I learnt to set up a website. Now I want to have a job using my IT skills. I am good at working with people, and team work. And I want a well-paid job. But it's not just pay. I want to enjoy my work.'

Employers can help people with learning difficulties do their job well

People with learning difficulties need to be treated right. They need good support. A boss said: 'When someone with a learning disability starts here, I put them next to someone with experience so that they can learn the job. I try to make sure it is the same person on every shift.'

A good boss will talk things over with you.

They will let you use an advocate or support worker.

They will plan your job so you can learn to do it well.


They will leave you alone when you can do your job.

They will get you any special aids you need.

They will sort out problems quickly.



Things to do

- You could ask your boss, your tutor at college or your supported employment agency to get a copy of the pack. It is called **Employing people with learning disabilities**. The guide is in 10 sections. Each section looks at a different part of an employer's or manager's job. It explains what the law says. It gives a list of tips at the end of each chapter. So an employer, manager or tutor could look in the guide to find answers to any questions they have. Employers can use special cards in the guide to train their other workers so they treat people with learning difficulties equally and with respect.
- You can look at a pack called **Making the Jump**. It is about getting a job. It has a CD. It costs £15. You can phone NIACE for an order form, on  **0 1 1 6 2 0 4 4 2 1 6** or email them on: **orders@niace.org.uk**
- If you are looking for a job, you could visit the **Disability Employment Advisor** at your local Job Centre.
- You could find out more about supported employment. You can read or listen to **Plain Facts 5, 21, 28 and 32**.

About the Project



Susan





Jenny

Susan Hemmings wrote this Plain Facts. Susan and Jenny Morris wrote the guide for employers which is called **Employing people with learning disabilities**. The guide costs £14.95 plus £2 postage and packing. You can get it from York Publishing on:

 **0 1 9 0 4 4 3 0 0 3 3** or email:
orders@yps-publishing.co.uk

You can download the handbook free from the Joseph Rowntree website **www.jrf.org.uk** If you are a self advocacy group and cannot download the report, you can contact the Plain Facts team about a free copy.

www.plain-facts.org

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