

London West Works Protocols for Providers

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Introduction to the London West Works Protocols For Supporting People With Learning Difficulties And/Or Disabilities Into Sustainable Employment.

The protocols for supporting people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities into sustainable employment have been developed based on the work of providers delivering the London West Works project in West London since January 2008.

The London West Works project was funded by the Learning and Skills Council in West London, to address the issues around sustainable employment for people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and for employers.

The project has been managed by SLLP (Skills and Learning for London Partnership) and delivered by the following organisations:

Hammersmith and Fulham Action on Disability (HAFAD) (2008 -2009)
Learning Curve (London Borough of Ealing) (2008)
Brent Connexions in partnership with Choices for All (2008 – 2009)
Brent Mencap (2008 -2009)
Ealing Hammersmith and West London College (2009)
College of North West London (2009)
Tri UK Ltd (2009)

The project has taken the Learning for Living and Working in London strategy as its guide and framework for developing the protocols.

A variety of strategies and working practices have been developed over the lifetime of the project which are shared in these protocols. This has included raising expectations and aspirations, improved employer engagement and partnership working as key elements of successful strategies and processes.

The protocols are intended as guidance and support for providers to increase and expand the opportunities for sustainable employment for people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Providers are encouraged to use these protocols to develop, revise and improve their own strategies, processes and activities with additional support available from SLLP during phase 3 of London West Works from July 2009.

Throughout the protocols case studies have been included to illustrate successful processes, partnerships and outcomes. Some of the case studies have been used more than once which illustrates the integration of raising expectations, employer engagement, job coaching and partnership working to achieve successful sustainable employment.

The protocols emphasise the need for an integrated and coordinated approach of several elements for success.

Grateful thanks are extended to all of the providers who contributed to the protocols and the training workshops. A particular thank you goes to Bromley Mencap who attended most of the workshops and shared their experience of successful job coaching with other participants. They kindly supplied many of the case studies for these protocols.

Raising Expectations and Aspirations - Why does it Matter?

Low expectations and aspirations on the part of people with learning disabilities and/or difficulties together with parents/carers and/or providers are the biggest obstacle to improving the quality of life for this group through the benefit of sustainable paid employment.

The Department of Health published a white paper *'Valuing People Now'* which emphasised that people with learning disabilities are entitled to the same aspirations and life chances as other people, including the opportunity to work.

http://www.dh.gov.uk/en/Publicationsandstatistics/Publications/PublicationsPolicyAndGuidance/DH_093377

A new cross-government strategy was launched by the Cabinet Office in June 2009 called **'Valuing Employment Now: real jobs for people with Learning Disabilities'**.

http://www.dh.gov.uk/en/Publicationsandstatistics/Publications/PublicationsPolicyAndGuidance/DH_101401

"Valuing Employment Now is based on the Government's belief that all people with learning disabilities, like all other people, can and should have the chance to work. To deny people that opportunity is a waste of talent for the individuals, employers, society and the wider economy. The current economic situation makes it all the more urgent to take action."

Care Services Minister Phil Hope said:

"Two thirds of people with a learning disability would like to work. Huge progress has been made in getting physically disabled people into employment but more must be done to help people with a learning disability - we're missing a huge talent pool which employers can tap into.

"This strategy lays out an ambitious but achievable goal - to close the employment gap, for people with learning disabilities.

This demonstrates that within the current climate of activity, government policy and strategy there has never been a better time to achieve sustainable employment for people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Despite the economic influences, there are real opportunities for paid sustainable employment but the first step is to achieve the expectations and aspirations for employment to become the reality."

Raising expectations and aspirations for employment as a realistic and achievable goal for people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is the underpinning first step to successful outcomes. Without the expectations or belief, achievement becomes very difficult to accomplish.

First Steps to Raising Expectations

Providers

A clear policy led by Senior Management is necessary to raise expectations within providers.

The policy should include the goals for achieving successful, sustainable employment for learners and clients and the belief that everybody deserves the opportunity to maximise their talents and improve their quality of life. Learners/clients should be assessed on their abilities and skills, ambitions and goals and support needs to enable them to achieve sustainable paid employment.

The first step should be:

Raising expectations that paid employment is:

- a. Desirable
- b. Attainable
- c. A priority
- d. The rule not the exception

Engaging stakeholders and introducing the 'tools of discovery' at the earliest opportunity. Ideally this stage should begin at school as it does with non disabled learners but the engagement of the learner at any stage is important.

Providers should review their current curriculum and processes in order to raise their expectations and aspirations and impact on the learners' ability to undertake paid employment in a supported or unsupported environment according to their needs.

A partnership approach to the implementation of the policy by working with and learning from other organisations who successfully place people in employment is something that all providers should consider. (Please see partnership working protocol)

The Employability Pathway and Plan

Providers need to understand the pathway to employment for somebody with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and the role that they play in supporting the client/learner on this pathway.

Each client/learner should have their own employability plan which they are an integral part of and which will take them through the stages of the pathway to employability. It should include the following:

- Assessment of skills and abilities
- Understanding of their ambitions and goals for employment
- Plan for the achievement of further skills and abilities most especially employability skills
- Effective assessment of their support needs for work
- Useful and meaningful work experience
- Help with job searching, interview skills,
- Support for when they have achieved employment.

Key Areas for Review

It is appropriate to review the organisational belief and policy on the ability and importance of learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities to aspire to and achieve sustainable paid employment. A review will identify barriers and issues among team members which need to be addressed in order to provide the best possible service and support to this learner/client group. Senior Management needs to establish clear policies and processes within their organisation to ensure that each learner has the maximum opportunity to prepare for and achieve sustainable employment.

Team meetings can be used to demonstrate successful case studies and every effort should be made to learn from the positive examples that exist. Providers should be prepared to invest in the professional development of their staff to broaden their knowledge of skills requirements, person centred planning and its value and the writing of effective meaningful employment and support plans for their learners.

Attached to the end of this protocol are some sample exercises which were used in the London West Works Raising Expectations Workshop. These exercises can be implemented by providers as part of their in house professional development programme.

It is important to remember that it is **everybody's responsibility** to have raised expectations and to support the raising of expectations with learners, to make every effort to identify the skills, abilities and aspirations of the learner and to have the conversation about employment as a realistic goal.

Discovering the abilities and skills of the learner is a key step in raising expectations for learners, their parents and carers and providers. Discovering the skills and abilities of the learner leads to the translation into employment skills and informs and advises all concerned on the opportunity for further achievement and sustainable paid employment. The Discovery model was demonstrated at a two day workshop delivered by Stephen Parr and Anne O'Bryan of Sabre Employment in June 2008 as part of the London West Works project. Details are available on the Live Learn Work website
http://www.livelearnwork.org/view_event.aspx?ID=53

Understanding the World Of Work

Providers need to increase their effort to understand the requirements and needs of employers and the roles on offer in a broad range of sectors in order to match skills and training with employment. A wider knowledge of the different sectors and the opportunities will enable providers to work with their learners and client to meet both the needs of employers and those of the learner. Realistic approaches to employability pathways are important but should not be negative. Learners may have no idea of the skills and abilities that are needed for what they perceive as their ideal job and their expectations can only be managed in a realistic fashion if the people supporting and guiding them on their pathway understand the requirements and levels of support needed for a successful outcome.

There is a wide diversity of roles which would match the skills, abilities and ambitions of the learner with the needs of the employer. This might include job carving or it might involve self employment as an option.

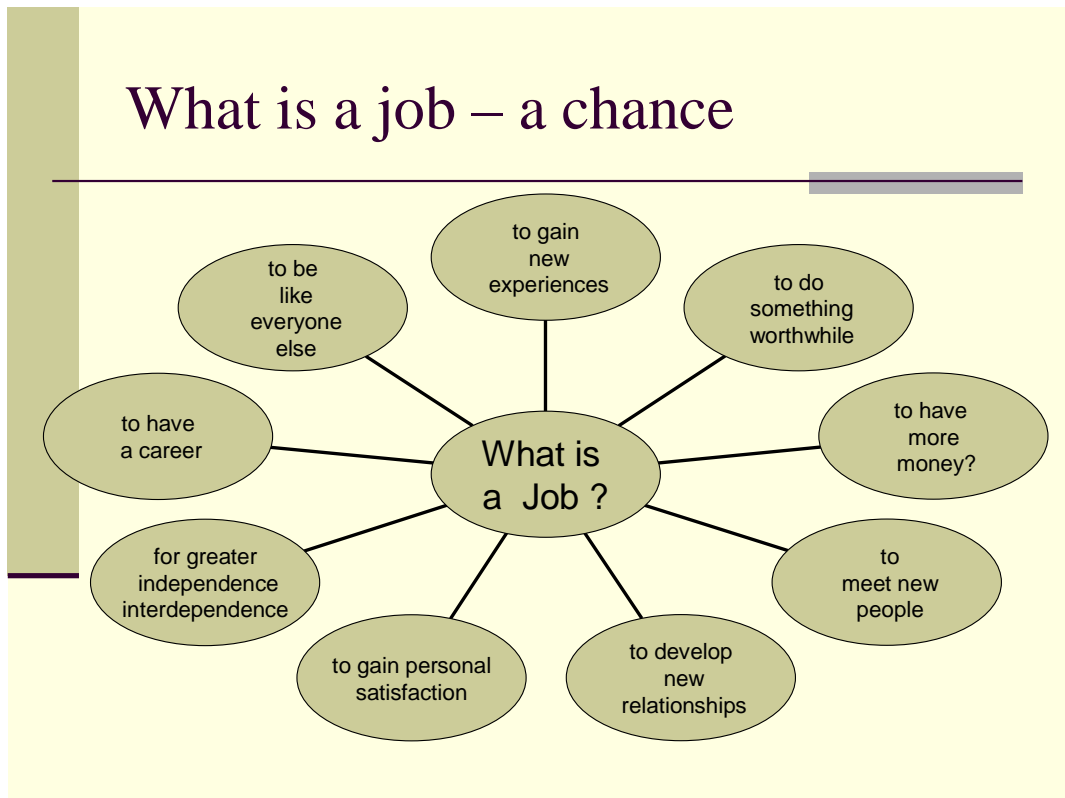
Please see the Employer Engagement protocol for more ideas about understanding different roles in different sectors and the Working in Partnership Protocol for more ideas and examples of working in partnership with the type of organizations who can advise and help on finding appropriate opportunities for people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

Providers should also consider themselves as employers and examine the roles and job descriptions within their own organization to consider where opportunities might arise.

What Is A Job?

This is an important question for providers, learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and parents/carers alike to consider.

One thing is clear. Paid employment – a job - offers a wealth of benefits to everybody as outlined in ‘What is a Job?’ in the next section



Providers need to evaluate what a job means to them and further what a paid job means to them. In this way, the same criteria can be applied to what a paid job means to somebody with learning disabilities.

This is what it meant to one client:

What a Difference a Job Makes

My name is Sarah and I am 20 years old. I first heard about Jobmatch at Bromley College when Anne came in and told me and a group about Jobmatch. Anne got to know us and with Maureen taught us about interviews, what type of jobs there are, health and safety at work and other things about work.

Then Anne arranged a work placement at the Cancer Research Shop in Orpington because I told her I wanted to work in retail. I liked it there straight away and learnt how to use the till, priced up books and bric-a-brac and steamed clothes. It made me feel more confident. While I was there Anne was helping me find a job by going to the job centre and filling out application forms for e.g. Habitat, Army and Navy, Tesco, Debenhams, Ethel Austin and Marks and Spencer.

Then I had an interview at Marks and Spencer and Anne came with me. It was scary but they said they liked me and would contact me later in the year. They offered me a Christmas job. I felt pleased but nervous. Anne came with me to help me settle in and use the till. It was very hectic but I coped well trying to be calm with moody customers because it was the busiest time for shopping.

After Marks and Spencer's Christmas job Anne and I carried on applying to places for jobs and now I work in Safeway in Sidcup. I pack peoples bags and put back things that people don't want anymore. I like my job because everyone is nice and it is a nice new store to work in.

Since working at Safeway I have been going to the pub on Fridays for a drink with my work friends. I am still able to train with my gymnastics team after work and at the weekends. I take this activity very seriously and have represented Great Britain in the past.

I now work at Safeway on my own without help from Jobmatch and have been asked to train to use the till. I feel confident enough to do this on my own, but if I have any problems I know I can always phone Anne at Jobmatch and she will give me further support. This makes me feel happy.

Self Employment as a Route

Self employment can often provide the ideal solution to match a client or learner's skills and abilities and meet their working needs and goals as well as offering greater flexibility and control over their working lives. There is support available from a range of organizations although mainstream business support still does not cater sufficiently for the needs of people with learning disabilities. Business Link are currently reviewing their information, advice and support and plan to improve this area. Further information is available from SLLP.

The Foundation for People with Learning Disabilities have developed a suite of online guides to help people with learning disabilities consider self employment or enterprise as an option. There is a great deal of information in easy read guides and further support together with ideas for business and enterprise are available from the website www.learningdisabilities.org.uk

What is Discovery?

Discovery - the process of gathering information about a person for the purpose of ideal job development. Only when we learn the full ability and capability of the learner can we identify begin to appreciate the talents and help to take the learner still further. This method is particularly effective for people with moderate to severe learning difficulties because the discover process will form the basis for ideal job development. Working with employers who best meet the needs and desires of the person with learning disabilities.

Discovery

- Uncovers existing information
- Not measuring or comparing
- Not testing or evaluating
- Does not predict performance

- Provides valid information in context
- Empowers students and families

Why do Discovery?

- To identify the individual's contributions and tasks that they can do
- To understand how the person's disability impacts their life
- To identify what is needed for supports in the work environment
- To develop a training/support plan.

Through Discovery we learn:

- Connections to people and the community
- Interests and preferences
- Individual contributions
- Support needs
- Strategies or adaptations that currently are used by the person or their supports

Using a series of questions and methodologies to really understand what a person with learning difficulties and/or disabilities can do; their likes, dislikes, abilities and skills. The starting point for the Discovery Model begins with the premise that everyone can work and that the needs of the person with a disability and the needs of the employer must be considered.

Traditional Assessments tend to Measure readiness in unfamiliar and often artificial environments; Compare production and performance of people with disabilities to others, or to a standard norm; Typically this highlight deficits of people with significant disabilities.

In order to market an individual's contributions and design jobs which emphasise skills and abilities or create self-employment which maximises a person's participation, the questions need to be about their strengths, interests and contributions. The environments, supports and strategies where the person is at their best, the impact of the disability to identify conditions of employment, plan for supports and negotiate with the employer.

The Discovery model identifies the individual's contributions and tasks that they can do, how the person's disability impacts their life, what is needed for supports in the work environment and contributes to the development of a training/support plan.

Learners – Raising Expectations and Aspirations

For many people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities the discussion about employment as a realistic and achievable goal has never been held never mind discussions about specific jobs that they might like to do.

It is essential for providers to introduce the idea of employment through the curriculum and support process and through the process of discovery, build the learner confidence and understanding of the world of work and its benefits. For some learners who have talked about employment, they may have been told that their ambitions or desires are unachievable and it will take a considerable amount of time to reassure them and rebuild their confidence. Providers have often expressed concern about unrealistic expectations of work and are reluctant to raise hopes only to have them dashed. There is a difference between realistic raising of aspirations to stretch somebody to achieve their goal and false encouragement of unrealistic ideas. The balance is achieved through discussion and assessment of the skills,

qualifications and experience needed for a particular dream job to enable the learner themselves to conclude that this might not be the ideal job and they might need to modify their plans to meet their abilities and skills. For example: A learner might have a passion for aeroplanes and talk of becoming a pilot. This is a specialist job which is only open to a number of skilled people. Looking at developing the learner skills to enable them to work at an airport around aeroplanes would be a positive and effective way of managing those expectations.

Some learners have had bad experiences at work through lack of support and their confidence and self esteem needs to be improved together with the appropriate encouragement and reassurance that they need.

Choices4All in partnership with Brent Connexions developed a peer mentoring programme where people with learning disabilities worked with learners to support them in understanding work, assisting them with job searching and interview techniques.

Some of the barriers with learners are included here:

- Learner expectations can be low because there is a lack of focus on their ability and skills. Employment is not discussed at an early enough age and this is continued through school and sometimes further education. Employment is often something that learners have not even considered and there is a lack of knowledge and understanding of the world of work and how they might fit in.
- Tutors often congratulate low achievement and are not encouraging students to stretch themselves. Low expectations of providers can be passed on to the individual.
- The inability to travel independently can be a barrier if learners are unable to attend employment.
- Lack of Confidence – some learners have had negative experiences of employment and have developed wariness of any type of work. These negative experiences could range from: them being away from their usual network of family and friends for long spells; moving away from like people

Raising expectations and aspirations with learners should be seen as an integral part of the process of raising expectations with providers themselves as well as parents and carers. The learner of whatever age or disability should be at the centre of the planning. Learners should be encouraged to stretch themselves and build on the skills and abilities that they have. Developing employability skills can be achieved through skills and training but it is really effective in discovering what the person does at home and in their leisure time in order to assess their abilities and translate these into employability skills.

Work experience is a very important stage in the process to sustainable paid employment. This should be recognised as a stage in the process of an individual pathway to employment and not the goal.

Work experience provides the learner or client with an opportunity to try different roles in different work settings, they can build up a track record and references as well as their confidence as they demonstrate the ability to complete different tasks and build on or gain new skills.

Involve the learner in their employability plan including the support that they need, the skills and training they need and the type of jobs they think that they are best suited to.

If everybody is part of the raising expectations process, the reality of improved opportunity for people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and equal opportunities for the same chances and choices as everybody else will become more of a reality.

Job coaching – Case Study

Bill had been employed for 20 years in a government department and during this time Jobmatch had provided job coaching to ensure that he could achieve the required standard. Bill eventually settled into his role, apart from his reticence to use IT, and became familiar with his schedule, the pace of work and his colleagues. Unfortunately the post was made redundant and at the same time a close family member died. Within the space of a few weeks, his life had changed dramatically.

However hope was on the horizon when Jobmatch was advised of a part time Administration Assistant post in a very busy department at the local Civic Centre and Bill's skills matched closely. Following completion of the application and attending an interview (helped throughout by Jobmatch), Bill was selected for the post. He was supported by a job coach on a gradually reducing basis over the first 5 weeks; she not only coached him in his new duties but also encouraged him to interact with his colleagues – he is shy and reserved by nature. All tasks and procedures were explained clearly to Bill, his questions were dealt with and the job coach suggested alternative ways of completing the work and provided feedback on his performance. With this encouragement Bill has become more confident; he takes pride in maintaining the filing room to a high standard and his willingness to help colleagues has had a positive effect on the team.

His job coach encouraged him to use e-mail to keep up to date with team news and to use the in-house system to trace files. Bill has attended induction courses, customer service training and completed 2 IT courses too. His job coach supported him at all of these.

Bill's manager nominated him for a Bromley Mencap Personal Achievement award and it was clear from her comments that he is highly regarded by management and colleagues. He was a key player when the Council were recognised and rewarded for their Job Carving Initiative, and instrumental in helping his department win a further prestigious Council award for the quality of the service they provide; encouraged by his job coach he recorded a voiceover for a video shown at this award ceremony. He and his job coach attended both ceremonies and celebratory dinners; Bill engaged in conversation not only with colleagues/peers but also with senior management. Life has certainly changed for him!

Parents

Some parents are supportive and keen to help their son or daughter to progress into employment but many are over protective, nervous of the exposure of their child to ridicule or bullying and some have centred their lives around their child and find it hard to let go. The varying fears and concerns present themselves in an assortment of ways and in order to help the person with learning difficulties and or disabilities to progress, these issues need to be addressed.

Where possible, parents should be included in all plans and most especially in the Discovery stage. Parents have enormous influence over their son and daughter and reassuring them of the support available in moving towards sustainable, paid employment is essential whilst at the same time engaging their support in encouraging the client/learner towards paid employment as a goal..

Parents - Issues and Barriers

Some barriers to raising expectations with parents:

- Parents are aware that there is support available for their son or daughter to move into employment but not everyone understands what is available and how to access it and this can be challenging to navigate and there may be eligibility restrictions in place which provide additional barriers.
- Parents are over protective of their children in some cases. They are afraid that their son or daughter is vulnerable and may be subject to bullying in the workplace. Some parents do not work so that they can care for their children so their expectations of work are low. Some parents are dependent on caring for their children as a lifestyle and would find it hard to let go. As such, these parents may not have worked for a very long time or even not at all.
- Parents themselves may not have high expectations of themselves or may have had negative experiences at work which can sometimes be translated into their relationship with their children and any support networks.
- Parents are afraid that the system will disappoint their children and want to avoid 'picking up the pieces if the employment opportunities are negative'. They are left to deal with the disappointment if their son or daughter is unable to maintain the job.
- Parents sometimes do not recognise the skills and abilities of their children and may not understand how those skills and abilities could translate to employability skills. Parents can be over protective and not allow their child to mature into making decisions or being empowered to make choices for their future.

The following example illustrates the point:

CASE STUDY A (Choices 4 All)

The student, to whom this case study is applicable, is a person who has a learning disability and who is also physically challenged. She is accessing Choices' training programme in order to acquire better independent living skills while endeavouring to improve her basic skills levels. Her programme consists of both practical Independent Living Skills training and improvement in general knowledge and basic skills. The practical training takes place in the vocational area which consists of a training kitchen and café area. The café is where the students have their lunch and on completion are encouraged to take their plates to the dishwasher area and this includes Ruth who was not accustomed to undertake such tasks in her home.

During a review, the parents shared details of a development manifesting itself at home which represented a first. The student was not only wanting to take her cup

to the sink she wanted to wash the cup also. When asked by the facilitator was she allowed to undertake this task the response was “no she may break the cup”. The parents were encouraged to take a different stance. It was pointed out that students with a learning disability needed to be able to consolidate and demonstrate mastery of any tasks they have learnt in one setting to another.

- Benefits are one of the biggest barriers to people with learning disabilities moving into paid employment. Good benefits advice and better off calculations are essential. It should be noted that 16 hours plus paid employment is often the point at which a person on disability allowance can be better off. Please seek advice and guidance from the Disability Employment Advisor at your local Job Centre Plus for exact and accurate information.

Ways to Improve Engagement with Parents/Carers - and Raise Expectations

Providers should be aware of these barriers and develop connections, relationships or partnerships with organisations that can help parents to access the help, funding or support that they and their son or daughter may need.

- Parents could become advocates for people with LLDD – educate them about the rights of the child especially about their entitlement to work and being paid to work. Long years of work experience with no pay should be recognised as exploitation of their children.
- Parents should be encouraged to consider the future for their son or daughter and the importance of employment to support independent living and their quality of life. Parents will not be around for ever and while this is a sensitive and difficult subject, it should be raised with the client supported in every way to manage their lives.
- Schools and Colleges can create a support network for parents. This could be a parents evening where they share experiences and exchange ideas with providers and other parents on how to support their young people.
- Video evidence of the person carrying out various tasks or involved in different activities can illustrate their ability and showcase to parents during meetings, when offering progress reports or when organising work opportunities. This may provide the parents with a fresh view of their son or daughter and they may realise for the first time that their son or daughter is more capable than they knew. (This should also be part of the Discovery Process)
- Parents need to be involved in the process as much as possible so that they do not feel disempowered and that somebody else is trying to take control. A partnership approach is needed where the views and concerns of the parent or carer is respected.
- Parents need to be encouraged to help in recording and recognising their child’s abilities and this should include the things they like to do and the places they like to go. All of this helps to build up a profile of the learner and will begin the process of Discovery and raised expectations if these likes and dislikes can be aligned to potential employment opportunities.

- Sharing other learner or parent experiences can be very effective in helping parents to recognise the abilities of their son or daughter. IT might be helpful to encourage parents to network with each other and for parents whose son or daughter have achieved employment to act as mentors/advisors to other parents in partnership with the training organisation or provider.
- Information and communication are essential for effective working relationships with parents. Regular feedback and update on progress during work experience can help to win parents over to the benefits and possibilities of employment for their son or daughter.
- Support plans should include all the key stakeholders in the person's life and their involvement can address any issues or concerns before problems develop.

Action Plan

Guide to developing and implementing an Action Plan:

- Establish the goals for the Action Plan
- Be clear on the areas of the service that you are looking to improve
- Set milestones for achievement in the implementation of the plan
- Allocate tasks to appropriate team members and establish communication processes to ensure that the action plan will meet its goals
- Evaluate the action plan at key stages to ensure that the actions are meeting the goals and the impact can be measured.

Review and Assessment for Raising Expectations and Aspirations in Preparation for Writing and Implementing an Action Plan

Areas for Review	Guideline Questions	What needs to be revised/improved?
Staff review and assessment		
<p>Consider the skills sets that are in place in your team. Is anything missing?</p> <p>Review the roles of the team and the effectiveness of this role in supporting people into employment. E.g. is the person responsible for engaging with employers the best person for that role? Are they better at supporting learners? Are you making the best use of the skills and experience that you have?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do your team members believe that everybody should be able to work? • Do your team members believe that people with disabilities should be paid for work? • Is there a code of practice in place which included employability and employment? • What is your team understanding of a job? • What is your team understanding of a paid job? • Do your team understand what employability skills are? • What are the skills, abilities and experience of your team? Do you have all the skills, abilities and experience you need to support people into paid employment including working with clients, engaging with employers, developing partnerships? • Who delivers which elements of the employability pathway? Do your team understand the value of an employment plan? • How do the members of the team ensure that the learner/client is at the centre of planning? 	

<p>Consider the expectations and beliefs of your team. Would training or professional development improve the quality of your service?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is your team knowledge of different sectors, job requirements, tasks and skills needs for the different jobs 	
<p>Initial Assessment of the Learner/Client</p>		
<p>Consider how you currently work Who is involved in this element How successful and effective is your process What can be implemented to improve the service Who needs to be involved in implementing changes and improvements</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What methods do you use to assess a client/learners abilities and skills? • What information do you gain about their other support needs or circumstances e.g. health, housing, childcare which might impact on the effectiveness of your service delivery? • Does your current methodology give you a detailed picture of this person and what they can do? • Who is involved in the process? • Do the people involved in the initial assessment discuss employment with the client/learner? • Do you include parents/carers other family members and/or other stakeholders in the person's life in the assessment of their skills and abilities? • How do you use the information that you acquire? • Does the information form the basis for an employability plan which will build on their skills and abilities? • How would you approach the question of employment if the client/learner has no experience of expectations of employment? • Do you refer to other agencies for additional support or information for your client/learner? • Do you take into account any work experience they have had and skills that they may have used or gained during that experience? • Do you consult your learners on their experience to evaluate their experience? 	
<p>Working with Learners/Clients</p>		
<p>Consider the service you offer The ways in which you work with</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What steps/activities are in place to raise expectations of paid employment as a realistic and achievable goal? 	

<p>your learner/client Support on offer Effective employment information and advice</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How is employability covered in the curriculum or programme you are offering? • What information do you provide for learners or clients on employment opportunities including job types, skills requirements? • Do you arrange effective work experience which helps learners to practice their existing skills and gain new skills? • What support do you offer your learners/clients when they undertake work experience? • Is work experience included as a step in the pathway to employment or a continuous activity for your learner/client? 	
<p>Working with Parents</p>		
<p>Consider the relationship you have with parents and carers How effective are the relationships? What are the difficult areas? How would the barriers and issues stop your learner/client getting into paid sustainable employment? How can you overcome these barriers?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How do you currently engage with parents/carers? • How effective is your engagement • How often do you communicate with parents/carers? • How effective is your communication? • What is the parent/carer understanding or expectation of paid employment for the client/learner • What are the common barriers and issues you encounter? • How do you address these issues • Do you engage the services of partners or other stakeholder organisations in providing referral services, additional support, further information, advice and guidance to parents? 	

Action Plan to Raise Expectations and Aspirations of staff and team members

Action	Purpose	Next Steps
<p>Implement assessment of beliefs and approaches to employment for everybody who has a learning disability and/or difficulty</p> <p>Review the organisational or corporate</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduce positive approaches and policies for working with people with LDD and the expectation that everybody can work • Improve the successful paid employment 	<p>Introduce or revise the code of practice for the organisation to agree approaches to paid employment as a realistic goal for everybody. Understand what a job means.</p> <p>Understand what a paid job means.</p>

<p>approach to achieving sustainable employment for people with LDD</p> <p>Do all of your team understand the pathway to employment for somebody with LDD and therefore understand their role in helping to achieve this goal?</p> <p>Ensure that all members of your team, department or organisation believe in the importance, value and achievability of sustainable, paid employment for people with learning difficulties</p>	<p>outcomes for your learners/clients.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure that your learners/clients have the best possible support to help them achieve their goals and aspirations. 	<p>Find out about different job roles and the skills and abilities needed.</p> <p>Understand what employability skills are.</p> <p>Learn about success stories from other organisations and learners.</p>
<p>Raise Expectations and Aspirations</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focus on the abilities and skills of the learner/client • Understand what employability skills are • Share experiences of other providers and support organisations to demonstrate what success looks like 	<p>This will raise expectations with a positive focus on what the person can do.</p> <p>Understand what support they need for their disability</p> <p>Share information on employment programmes and support options including Access to Work, Work Step, Work Prep, Skills 4 Jobs</p>
<p>Learner Assessment</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discovering the skills and abilities of the learner/client What do you know about their other activities, home life, parents, siblings • Who carries out the assessment and how is this done? 	<p>Complete an employability plan for the learner with clear milestones for achievement.</p> <p>Everybody connected with the learner/client should be contributing to the achievement of their goals and their progress along the employability pathway. Include skills and training to improve employability</p>
<p>Learners</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discuss employment: • Focus on abilities • Address issues concerns and barriers • Encourage the learner to explore their skills and abilities in partnership with parents, friends and family 	<p>Include employment as a central part of the curriculum.</p> <p>Develop Employment Plans with the learner/client at the centre of the plan.</p> <p>Gather and have available information on different jobs, tasks and skills</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide clear information about work • Assure the learner about the support that is available • Ensure that the learner understands what a job can mean and listen to their dreams, ambitions and desires • Help them to find out more about work and talk to their peers about working and overcoming obstacles and barriers • Create a positive, supportive and encouraging environment where employment is central to their achievement. 	<p>Include benefits advice as part of the information, advice and guidance on offer Consider other partners to deliver elements of this service. Include employers in the planning of your employability pathways to support the learner knowledge. Encourage learners/clients to share experiences, talk about barriers and help each other on the pathway.</p>
Parents	<p>Talk positively about the learners abilities and skills Acknowledge and address concerns and worries Understand the parent position. Liaise with other programmes and organisations to help parents who are not working or negative about work to address their issues.</p>	<p>Improve communication strategies Include parents in planning and development. Share information. Establish effective methods of communication Encourage parents to talk to each other</p>
Phase 3 Evaluation	What impact has the plan had so far?	<p>What is working? What could work better? What needs to change or be refined?</p>

Engaging with Employers- Introduction

Engaging with employers is often perceived by providers responsible for educating or supporting people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities as one of the most challenging aspects of finding sustainable employment.

The challenge lies in several areas, teachers and tutors are not sales people they are educators, there is sometimes a lack of understanding of employer needs and the best approaches to use, there may be a lack of belief in the ability of the students to obtain and sustain employment and frequently the low expectations of the willingness of employers encourages a negative approach to engagement.

Providers can sometimes create barriers for themselves because they prejudge an employer or a situation and therefore do not have the appropriate approach or strategy.

Case Study 1

One provider at a London West Works workshop reported that one of their clients had a very high pitched speaking voice. Despite disabilities, the client in question was a capable administrator able to carry out tasks accurately and work as part of a team. The provider felt that the client's voice would be an irritation for the employer and was struggling to put them forward for interview. The focus here should be on the abilities of the client and the requirements of the job description.

Another provider who attended one of the workshops works with clients with mental health problems. She was not convinced that several of her clients would be able to work and was reluctant to encourage or support them in disclosing their difficulty as she thought that that would be a barrier to them taking up employment. In fact the opposite is true. Employers can only make reasonable adjustments if they understand the condition and the abilities of the potential employee. This needs to be a partnership between the employer and the provider to optimise the positive result for the client. If a disability is not disclosed and subsequently affects the employees ability to carry out their role the results will be very negative for all concerned. The employer's confidence in the provider is destroyed, the learner has a very negative experience which could result in long term loss of confidence in working and the provider creates a bad impression and the beginning of a poor reputation

The employer should make the decision about employment; but how can this happen if they do not have the chance to meet and test the skills of the client?

There will be employers who are reluctant to employ or have had previous bad experiences. In this situation the barriers or objections from the employer need to be addressed. Having an effective support plan, clear contact and customer management strategies are important. Endorsement from other employers in a similar sector or business situation will also help to reassure the employer that recruiting and retaining somebody with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is a business benefit not a business deterrent.

Case Study 2 - Negative Employer Experience

College of North West London had a very poor relationship with Asda and the organisation repeatedly refused to engage any of their students. In phase 2 of London West Works the College formed a partnership with Brent Mencap linking in with a key member of staff who had a very good relationship with Asda. Asda were comfortable working with their contact at Brent Mencap and with a clear support strategy in place they agreed to trial two students from the college. This gave College of North West London the opportunity to demonstrate their improved process and support through the services of Brent Mencap as support workers. The work experience placements were successful and Asda are now happy to take more students from the college. Negotiations are currently taking place between Asda and Brent Mencap with a view to the students obtaining paid employment.

Many employers are willing to employ people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities but have their own barriers created by a lack of understanding of what learning disabilities mean and how to engage and work with somebody who has a disability.

These barriers create a culture of fear through ignorance and this presents providers with an opportunity. The opportunity is to educate, advise and support employers to recruit and retain people with learning disabilities. Providers have the advantage in understanding their clients and knowing their skills and abilities and also know the best ways to support them into employment.

Providers have barriers which are created through a lack of knowledge of the employer and his/her business and sometimes the skills and abilities they are looking for in an employee. There can be a lack of belief in the ability of people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities to obtain paid sustainable work and expectations and aspirations need to be raised as a starting point. Employers are seen collectively in abstract but providers need to remember that they too are employers and the key to working with an employer is to build a relationship.

Stephen Parr MBE of Sabre & Associates has worked closely with the London West Works project and is a Government advisor on learning disabilities. Stephen has over 30 years experience in the disability arena and more than 20 years experience as a job coach. There are few jobs or trades that Stephen does not have experience of. His experience has enabled him to develop a sound understanding and knowledge of employers and what they both want and need. Here are some of his experiences:

- Employers are perceived to be the problem (but are they?) What we offer may be the problem
- Employers are asked (on a national scale) to provide life long work experiences
- Employers are asked to provide occupational activities (3 hours per week).
- These activities are not therefore seen as a business benefit.

- Do people move on from these positions?
- What is the possible impact?

- Employers asked to employ people in a voluntary capacity, when everyone else around them is being paid – what message does this give?

This suggests that providers need to review their perception of employers in a more positive and progressive manner. Expectations of employers need to be raised and the relationship should be a business/customer focused one.

Addressing the Issues

Contrary to common belief, employers **are** willing to employ people with learning difficulties and or disabilities. There are a number of case studies which demonstrate the willingness of employers to employ and retain this group.

Case Study 3

As part of the London West Works project, Tri UK created a vacancy filling service for employers and providers on their website. They met with employers, explained the client group and the service and support that employers could expect. Employers felt that this was a transparent process and assured of the support that they and the employees would receive, willingly signed up to the process and offered vacancies for the web page.

137 employers signed up to agreements to register their vacancies on the website knowing that the applicants would have disabilities.

Employers were also assured that any applicants would have a detailed support plan to assist them in taking up the vacancy.

The employers are clear on their role and the role of the provider. They have a single point of contact. The process is transparent and efficient.

This demonstrates that employers **will** pay people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities for the work that they do.

Employers are looking for capable, hard working and willing employees as a key requisite and this is the starting point in matching the right employee to the right job.

Reasonable adjustments do not mean that an employer should be expected to employ somebody for one morning a week and retrain them each time they come back. There is no benefit to the business and most likely very little benefit to the employee. Expectations of the employer need to be realistic.

Employers for the most part are keen to comply with the law and make a contribution to their local community. Challenging them on their compliance with the Disability Discrimination Act, Health and Safety and Effective Equality and Diversity policies is not helpful. Offering to give them a health check together with guidance and support is helpful and should be considered by an organisation as part of their employer support package.

Note: Employers should be discouraged from seeing the employment of somebody with learning disabilities as free labour. Providers need to be able to 'sell' the skills and abilities of the potential employee and make the business case. Employers should see this additional member of staff making a valuable contribution to the operation, productivity and profitability of the business for which they should be paid.

First Steps

The first steps towards successful employer engagement involve the creation of an Action Plan and process.

The action plan helps providers to be clear in their goals and their approach it also develops into a profile of the employer and the contacts that have been made within the organisation. The Action Plan supports regular contact and updates which reinforce the relationship that providers are developing with the employer.

- An effective support plan for both the employee and the employer
- Market research
- Employer Engagement Strategies
- Data collection and dissemination
- Customer Profile and Management

The first stage is discovery. Discovery is about finding out as much information as possible from different sources to understand the needs of the business. You need to research the market, find out about the different types of business and typically the types of jobs and skills required for those jobs.

This will enable you to match your learner to the job requirements and ensure that you have the right support in place to help the learner to retain and progress in the position.

Market Research

This can be done in a variety of ways:

- Use the internet to research different sectors e.g. the National Health Service has an excellent website and by looking at different jobs you can see the experience they need.

- Phone the employer/business and invite a member of the company to come to your organisation (in a voluntary capacity) to talk about what they do, what sort of skills they look for, the different jobs that people do in the company so that your learners can understand more about work and employment. You can use this opportunity to demonstrate what you are doing with learners to prepare them for work, you can also showcase some of the skills that your learners are able to demonstrate. Make the most of the opportunity to build the relationship.
- Larger providers often have an employer engagement team. Develop links with this team. Share employer information so that you can identify opportunities for your learners. Go out on joint visits with the employer engagement team to develop the relationship. Make friends with the employer before you need them. Inform and advise the employer engagement team to develop the relationship. Inform and advise the employer engagement team about your learner and their skills and abilities. Develop a good communication strategy.
- Develop a partnership approach or relationship with organisations that work with employers and help to find opportunities. Supported employment agencies and job broker organisations e.g. Remploy, Leonard Cheshire Disability
- Develop a support package for employers (Remember they may not know what you do or how they can be helped to recruit and retain people with LDD) which means you have something to offer them which makes it easier to employ a person with learning difficulties and or disabilities. Consider how partnership with another organisation might help to develop a seamless process from interview through to post employment support.
- Examples might be Disability Awareness Training for all staff in the organisation, working with members of the team to help them to engage and interact with the new member of staff, support for the new employee through a job coach or support worker who will help the person to learn the job and integrate with other members of staff. Additional support should be available for the employer to address any issues as soon as they arise to avoid situations escalating into the risk of the employee losing their job. Help to comply with the Disability Discrimination Act is useful providing it is offered to the employer as a support option rather than in a critical manner. Most employers are keen to abide by equality and diversity laws and would appreciate support to do so rather than criticism for not doing so.
- Make the business case to the employer. Employers have a commercial approach to their business decisions and need to know that the employment of the client will have a positive impact on their business. Demonstrate the benefits to the business. For more information on making the business case click on the following link: http://www.livelearnwork.org/files/Employer_Toolkit_-_Final2.pdf
- Use case studies to demonstrate successful examples of people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities at work.

What Do Employers Want?

Although skills and qualifications can be important either to demonstrate a level of ability and skill or to reflect the seniority and level of a position, research has shown that the fundamental elements that all employers want are:

- Punctuality

- Trustworthiness
- Reliability
- Enthusiasm
- Willingness To Work
- Willingness To Learn
- Ability To Follow Instructions.

These key elements are a good starting point for preparing learners for employment and a knowledge of these elements will demonstrate to an employer that you understand employability and are keen to meet their needs.

What do you want from employers?

- Sector knowledge and information
- Work experience opportunities
- Work Placements
- Job Carving opportunities
- Paid employment

Be clear on what your expectations are from the employers you work with. Different employers may offer different elements of the learner/client pathway and help you to support your client/learner into paid sustainable employment.

Engaging with Employers – Fact finding (Discovery)

In order to supply a solution to employers recruitment and staffing needs and to create an appropriate match between your learner/client and the job, you need to understand the business, the recruitment process and the culture. This can be achieved by using open ended questions e.g. How, What, Where, Why? These are the type of questions that require a full answer rather than yes or no. By paying careful attention to the answers you can begin to identify the potential opportunities for your client.

- Example Questions:
 - What size is the business?
 - What kind of customers do you have?
 - How do people progress within the organisation?
 - What size are the teams?
 - What are the most important skills that you look for in an employee?
 - What kind of training do you provide
 - What makes your organisation unique?
 - How do you currently recruit staff
 - What is the culture of the company?

Summarise what they are telling you and repeat it back to demonstrate that you have listened and understood the information. Remember that employers are people and like to talk about themselves and will respond to your interest.

- Knowing your employers and what drives them will help you to meet their recruitment needs. Making it easy for employers to recruit and retain people with LDD is essential to gaining their commitment and to developing a good business relationship.
- Use the knowledge you have to make sure your learners are gaining the skills they need to get into work. Employability skills include team work, time keeping, travel training, carrying out instructions accurately, completing tasks. Learners need to be work ready and providers need to be confident that that is what they are offering to employers.
- Seek out opportunities for job carving with an employer. Job carving means dividing up responsibilities and tasks in a role where some of the tasks which are perhaps repetitive or do not require high level skills could be undertaken by somebody with LDD.

Employer Engagement Action Plan

Revise your current employer engagement strategy and check it for effectiveness and benefit to your clients/students.

Employer Engagement Action Plan

Action	Elements	Activity	Follow on Action/ Revision
<p>Stage 1 Review the current employer information database.</p> <p>A database can be in a variety of formats paper based files, electronic spreadsheets or an IT based database programme</p> <p>Review the approaches to employers, who is responsible for it, How is information shared and disseminated</p> <p>How effective is your strategy/information gathering?</p>	<p>Have a clear understanding of current relationships, sectors business size, history and opportunity.</p> <p>Identify the key staff who engage with employers or manage the relationship</p> <p>Have a clear understanding of the size and type of business you currently work with</p> <p>Evaluate the effectiveness of the database and employer engagement processes.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Carry out a review with staff • Identify the main contact for each employer • Identify the details of the organisation • Rate the level of the relationship and opportunity available • Review how you currently manage employer relationships. How effective is it? • Who engages with the employer? Are they the best member of the team to do this? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Decide on action to follow up. • Review your service to the employer. • Does it need revising? • Plan how you will reengage with employers where the relationship is not strong or is out of date • Plan how you will manage the employers that you have a good relationship with to increase the opportunities you are able to access. • Consider how you might revise your employer engagement strategy to expand the type and size of employers with whom you work.
<p>Stage 2 Analyse and Summarise the findings from stage 1</p>	<p>Identify opportunities to revise, update or develop the employer database</p>	<p>Is the employer database fit for purpose, does it meet the needs of your organisation, your clients/students, the employer?</p>	<p>Implement or revise the database. Be clear on what you need to get out of the database and why. Document and update all relevant personnel on the use and application of the database</p>

Action	Elements	Activity	Follow on Action/ Revision
<p>Approach to Employers</p>	<p>Reviewing your approach to employers to identify areas for revision or improvement</p>	<p>What is your approach to employers? How effective is this approach? What are your expectations of employers? How do you manage the employer (customer)? Do you have a support package to offer employers?</p>	<p>Analyse your approach and success rate. Identify your goals for working with employers work experience, paid employment. Would a partnership approach with another organisation improve your success rates for sustainable employment for your clients? Do you need to implement/revise a support package? How would this be sold/delivered?</p>
<p>Implement an Action Plan</p>	<p>To establish goals and aims and increase your success rates of achieving sustainable employment for your clients</p>	<p>Involve all members of the team who engage with or work with employers. Establish aims and goals Implement an impact assessment to ensure that the activity is effective Include feedback from employers to influence further development</p>	<p>Consider further training to improve the approaches that you currently use. Consider working in partnership with other organisations who might specialise in areas that you need e.g sector specific</p>

Job Coaching

Job coaching is an essential element for many people with learning difficulties and or disabilities obtaining and retaining sustainable paid employment. Increasingly, with the implementation of the Foundation Learning Tier and the pathway to supported employment the role of the job coach will gain significance and importance. Providers should consider whether they want to introduce job coaching as an element of their provision or whether it is more effective to develop the relationships with appropriate supported employment providers in order to develop an effective pathway to work.

It is important to understand the role of the job coach, the skills, abilities and experience necessary to job coach well and consider how this role will benefit both the employer and the learner.

The role of the Job Coach

Broadly speaking, the Job Coach is the person who works alongside somebody when they take up a job. The job coach can help the person to learn the tasks, develop relationships in the office and settle into the job. The job coach is often involved in travelling to and from the workplace with the person and helping them to prepare for work. The job coach will also liaise with the employer and other staff to help the person to settle into the job. The job coach will often begin working with the client before they start work and will help them to prepare for work including presentation, social skills, workplace etiquette and ensure that they have the skills needed for the role they are taking up. The job coach should also be a link to the rest of the person's network including family, job centre plus, health and social care and be prepared to assist them with issues outside work including finance and housing if appropriate. **This is not a 9-5 job.** The job coach will need to accompany the client to work and carry out the tasks with the client until they can work independently. The job coach needs to be available to offer support and assistance outside of work and understand the client's network.

Job Coach Role Description

The following role description outlines the broad range of tasks a job coach may be asked to do:

Learner/Client

- Undertake the process of Discovery (see Raising Expectations) and through the process understand and learn about the clients abilities, skills, ambitions and dreams with the support of their family, carer or other key stakeholders.
- The job coach needs to build a strong relationship of trust.
- Design and agree a support plan with the client and employer so that the level of support is decreased over the appropriate period of time and the employee becomes more confident and able to carry out the role without constant

assistance. Each party needs to be absolutely clear and in agreement on the plan.

- Ensure that the skills, talents and abilities of the employee/client will match those required by the job.
- Travel to and from the place of work with the client to ensure that he/she is able to dress appropriately, arrive on time and understand the start and end times of their working day.
- Undertake the tasks set alongside the client to ensure that they understand what they have to do and are able to complete the tasks.
- Break the tasks into manageable areas to ensure that any training is clearly understood by the client.
- Assist the client to integrate into the working environment through the development of relationships and an understanding of how to interact socially with colleagues.
- Ensure that support is available by telephone or face to face should any issues arise so that the employer continues to feel confident and comfortable. This support is also important for the employee. Small issues should be tackled early on to avoid potentially serious problems which might result in the client losing the position.
- Be able to write notes and reports to monitor and record the progress of the employee
- Liaise with parents/carers to ensure that the employee is supported in all aspects of working

Employer

- Meet with the employer and spend time learning about the organisation (if this has not been carried out by the employer engagement team member)
- Find out the culture of the company, the nature of the business, the aims of the business and how the role being filled fits in with the business.
- Find out about the other team members and how they work together.
- Begin the process of building a relationship with the employer to develop trust and mutual respect.
- Ensure that the employer is aware of the level of support that can be expected and that the job coach is there to support both employer and employee. It is important to be absolutely clear in explaining the role and benefits of the job coach and allay any fears that the employer might have concerning the presence of an additional person on their staff.
- Compliance with health and safety regulations and the Disability Discrimination Act are extremely important but the compliance should be packaged within a benefit approach to the employer i.e. he/she will have a reliable, diligent employee who will carry out the assigned tasks well.
- Reasonable adjustments could include disability awareness training for existing members of staff to help them to adjust to working with somebody with a disability.

Case Study – Bromley Mencap

Emma's Progression into Paid Employment

Emma had previously been with Jobmatch in 1996 and had tried to work in open employment but found it very difficult to cope. She therefore returned to the day centre and joined their recycling project. She also did a lot of training around personal development, and attended a "Moving On" and "Training for Change" course, which helped build her confidence and self esteem. As well as her recycling work, Emma also worked very successfully at the Community Café in Bromley. Because of the progress Emma had made she considered joining Jobmatch again and, in particular, the Stairway to Work Programme.

Emma started at beginning of July 2004 and initially found the new environment at Jobmatch somewhat daunting. With a lot of reassurance she completed the work preparation training and then promptly announced she was returning to the day centre. Emma was very concerned about doing her work experience in an open employment environment. Jobmatch assured her that she would have a Job Coach at the placement who would work alongside her and until she was ready to work independently.

In September Emma started her 14 week work experience placement at the Education Development Centre. This was a new catering placement for Jobmatch and proved to be the ideal environment for Emma. With initial on-the-job support from her Job Coach she was able to demonstrate her skills at food preparation and customer service. The staff were very supportive and after a few short weeks Emma's confidence grew and she decided that she no longer needed 1:1 support.

Emma completed her placement in January 2005 and felt confident enough to pursue paid employment. Negotiations between Jobmatch and Bromley Day Service resulted in a paid position for Emma at the Astley Centre where she has worked for the past 4 ½ years as a Kitchen Assistant.

Job Coach – Skills and Attributes

- The job coach needs to have excellent interpersonal skills in order to liaise with the employer and other members of staff.
- Flexible in order to meet the needs of the client and ensure a successful outcome at work. Working the hours needed and delivering the support required.
- Able to effectively plan in order to assess the amount of time needed to support a client into a job with an effective and timely exit strategy.
- Have an interest in learning new tasks in different sectors in order to support somebody into work or specialise in a sector or area of business which can be used to support somebody with LDD in their job.
- Be prepared to carry out thorough research to understand the business and its operations to encourage confidence with the employer

- Underpinning knowledge of the Disability Discrimination Act and the Equalities Act. Demonstrating the ability to provide employers support and impart knowledge when necessary.
- Health and Safety qualifications in order to carry out a health and safety assessment.
- Diplomatic and discreet to negotiate the role and address any issues or difficulties as the client settles into the job. Able to listen and engage.
- Have some knowledge of the sector or working practices in general. Willing and able to learn new skills.
- High personal standards in conduct and presentation including but not limited to: Punctual, Reliable and Committed

Job Coaching and Discovery

A job coach is often the best person to lead on implementing the Discovery Model which was introduced to the London West Works Project by Stephen Parr MBE.

The job coach can build the relationship with the learner/client and be the continuous link from initial assessment to eventual employment. This is even more important and effective when working with people with moderate to severe learning disabilities as the Discovery process leads to Customised employment. Customised employment works on the skills, abilities and job ambitions for the learner/client and is used to identify an opportunity with an employer which exactly matches.

It is essential to put the learner/client at the heart of discovery and the process although time consuming is effective and beneficial.

What is Discovery?

Discovery - the process of gathering information about a person for the purpose of ideal job development. Only when we learn the full ability and capability of the learner can we identify begin to appreciate the talents and help to take the learner still further. This method is particularly effective for people with moderate to severe learning difficulties because the discover process will form the basis for ideal job development. Working with employers who best meet the needs and desires of the person with learning disabilities.

Discovery

- Uncovers existing information
- Not measuring or comparing
- Not testing or evaluating
- Does not predict performance
- Provides valid information in context
- Empowers students and families

Why do Discovery?

- To identify the individual's contributions and tasks that they can do
- To understand how the person's disability impacts their life
- To identify what is needed for supports in the work environment
- To develop a training/support plan.

Through Discovery we learn:

- Connections to people and the community
- Interests and preferences
- Individual contributions
- Support needs
- Strategies or adaptations that currently are used by the person or their supports

Using a series of questions and methodologies to really understand what a person with learning difficulties and/or disabilities can do; their likes, dislikes, abilities and skills. The starting point for the Discovery Model begins with the premise that everyone can work and that the needs of the person with a disability and the needs of the employer must be considered.

Traditional Assessments tend to Measure readiness in unfamiliar and often artificial environments; Compare production and performance of people with disabilities to others, or to a standard norm; Typically this highlight deficits of people with significant disabilities.

In order to market an individual's contributions and design jobs which emphasise skills and abilities or create self-employment which maximises a person's participation, the questions need to be about their strengths, interests and contributions. The environments, supports and strategies where the person is at their best, the impact of the disability to identify conditions of employment, plan for supports and negotiate with the employer.

The Discovery model identifies the individual's contributions and tasks that they can do, how the person's disability impacts their life, what is needed for supports in the work environment and contributes to the development of a training/support plan.

Delivering Job Coaching as a Partnership

There are a number of supported employment organisations who provide job coaching and support workers. If you are unable to develop this role in house or cover all of the needs of your clients, it makes sense to investigate a partnership approach by working with these organisations. Please see the Partnership Approach Protocol for further details on how this might work for your organization. You can find out more about potential organisations by talking to your local Job Centre Plus, Local Authority or Learning and Skills Council. It is generally thought that it is effective to have more than one partnership in place to meet the individual needs of the client. This broadens the opportunity and improved outcomes for the learner.

Job coaching can be developed as an in house service but like any other role it will need the right skills set and personality. Investigate training and skills development in this area.

Funding the Job Coaching Role

Providers may be able to restructure their department and budget to encompass/develop the role of a job coach in house.

Job coaching could also possibly be funded through:

- Additional Learner Support (ALS) - It is possible that Additional Learner Support could be used for clients undertaking a further education course but this might vary depending on the college and participants were encouraged to investigate this with their respective organisations.
- Disabled Student Allowance (DSA) – for clients in higher education. TRI UK can help with application or give advice on making applications and costs.
- Access to Work - can help you if your health or disability affects the way you do your job. It gives you and your employer advice and support with extra costs which may arise because of your needs.

For more information on **Access to Work** click on this link

http://www.direct.gov.uk/en/DisabledPeople/Employmentsupport/WorkSchemesAndProgrammes/DG_4000347

Job Coaching - Benefit to the Employer

A job coach can be of great benefit to the employer by helping the new employee to learn his/her role in the way that they learn best. Processes and tasks can be written down and the employee guided through their tasks as well as being supported to deal with any changes that might take place in the order that the tasks are carried out. The job coach will help the new employee to develop the relationships within the organisation and support the existing staff to include the new team member. The workload on the employer is reduced and a smoother induction process is assured. If the employer has the ongoing support to address any other issues which might arise he/she is likely to have a more positive approach to further recruitment of this group.

Job Coaching - Benefit to the Employee

Starting a new job is a daunting proposition for most people. Getting to know the other team members, learning the culture of the organisation, getting to grips with the processes and the tasks are all fairly stressful. For somebody with learning difficulties and/or disabilities this is even more difficult. Having somebody on hand to explain tasks and processes, make the introductions and help them to settle in will make an enormous difference to how quickly they can progress.

Everybody has issues or problems at some time in their lives and most of us try not to bring them to work. If we do bring them to work there are often friends to talk to or we have the ability to talk things through with our manager. Issues and problems outside work can also affect an employee with learning difficulties and or disabilities but they may be less able to communicate and their behaviour might be affected which could lead to dismissal. The services of a job coach or trusted support worker can prevent a difficult situation becoming a disaster.

Case Study

When Tom first joined Jobmatch he was feeling despondent and often depressed at being out of work. He hardly ever socialised with anyone other than immediate family.

Tom attended a job search programme at Jobmatch. This involved attending 1:1 sessions with his Employment Consultant to carry out job search on the internet and trips down to the Job Centre to use the Job Points. However it was the Jobmatch Job Carving Scheme that secured an 18 hours per week job for Tom.

Job carving involves the carving out of tasks from one or more vacancies to create a suitable job for a person with a learning disability.

As a Job coach one of my main aims was to show Tom the skills required for the job, but equally important was the support I gave him when working in a male dominated environment. There was plenty of banter and Tom needed to be introduced to this slowly. Helping him to be accepted in the group and to form relationships with them was a priority.

Recently Tom has been given more responsibility and his tasks have been added to. This has given him more confidence. As his Job Coach I went in again to help him get into the new routine and to introduce him to other new, team mates. He made great progress and is now 'one of the lads'.
The employers are extremely happy with the role Tom has undertaken and Tom himself is feeling more confident and happy with life.

Bromley Mencap Job Match

The Importance Of A Support Plan And Strategy

Support Plan

For job coaching to be effective it is essential to have a support plan agreed between the employee, the learner and the job coach. Tri UK shared a support plan model with providers delivering London West Works phase 2. The key elements of the support plan begin with a clear idea of the employees capabilities and strengths, the level of intervention over a specific time period (this time period may be subject to change depending on the employees progress and continuing need) which should be monitored and reviewed. Thorough planning of the support plan will help to ensure that the process is effective and secures the continued employment of the individual unless unusual factors affect the plan e.g. health problems or any other major trauma in the individuals life or major changes within the organisation for whom they are working.

The Tri UK Support Plan Model is included at the end of the Protocol Document

Action Plan for implementing Job Coaching

- Do you understand the role of job coach?
- Who has this responsibility?
- Consider the skills sets that are in place in your team.
- Is anything missing?
- How do you currently support your learners/clients in the work place either during work experience or once they achieve a sustainable paid job?
- What can you do to improve the service?
- Review the roles of the team and the effectiveness of this role in supporting people into employment.
- Would another organisation as a partner help to make this a more effective area of your service?

Review	Activity	Milestones	Evaluate
<p>How do you currently deliver job coaching or in work support?</p> <p>Establish the practicalities of a job coaching service within your organisation As part of your overall service is this an area you can develop to improve the outcome for the learner/ client? Set goals for introducing job coaching within your organisation Investigate what partnership opportunities might be developed to deliver a job coaching service Would job coaching be a key element of your support offer to employers</p>	<p>Do you support learners/clients during work experience?</p> <p>How effective is it?</p> <p>If not, What are the benefits of introducing job coaching within your organisation? What impact will this have on your budget or your outcomes for programme delivery What benefit or impact will this have on your clients and their ability to secure sustainable paid employment?</p>	<p>Agree steps to improve the current service. Set the tasks and strategies Appoint relevant team members to carry out the tasks</p>	<p>Having established the goals consider the milestones. The role Recruitment The appropriate partner engaged Service agreed and promoted to learners, parents and carers and employers</p>

<p>How will this service work in your organisation? Would job coaching for your learners during work experience lead to greater success for them when they move towards permanent paid employment? Would this additional support help them to achieve their goals How would the job coach interact with other members of the team</p>	<p>At what stage will you introduce job coaching? How will it be delivered? What will be the involvement and process for other staff working with the job coach? Who will take on the role(s) of job coach?</p>	<p>Agree stage for introducing the role of job coach for the client/learner Discuss the job coach with the learner/client so that they understand how it will work Share this information with parents/carers for improved understanding and partnership</p>	<p>Evaluate the benefit to the learner/client Evaluate the response and involvement of parents Evaluate the progress of the learner/client Measure the distance travelled</p>
<p>What impact will job coaching have on your learners/clients</p>	<p>Would they feel more confident in moving into employment? Would the services of a job coach lead to greater success in sustaining a job Would job coaching during work experience have a positive impact?</p>	<p>Improved learner assessment and confidence in employment Greater progress and benefit from work experience placements. Improved offer to employers with more confident learners/clients Improved service to employers</p>	<p>Evaluate progress with the clients/learners who have access to the job coach Evaluate the response from employers</p>
<p>What impact will job coaching have on your employers</p>	<p>Would job coaching as part of a support package increase employer confidence in your service Would job coaching enable you to engage with a wider selection of employers to increase your success rates</p>	<p>Ensure that the service you offer is clearly thought out and planned Ensure that you have the right people to support your clients/learners</p>	<p>Evaluate the impact on employers by reviewing their response and experiences</p>

Partnership Working

Why work in partnership?

Increasingly, funded programmes will require a partnership approach as the government and other agencies look to integrate employment and skills. It is frequently recognised that one organisation can not deliver the full range of services that people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities will require in order to achieve sustainable employment and increased equality in the workplace. Equally it is unlikely that one organisation can meet the labour needs of the market most especially during an economic downturn. This will probably mean that providers will need to develop partnerships with a range of organisations to ensure that their learners/clients are fully supported on the pathway to work from identifying skills and abilities to being supported in the workplace. Further partnerships to meet the changing needs of employers will be an important element in these pathways.

Through London West Works we were able to establish areas of expertise which, when brought together helped organisations to deliver an improved service to both their clients/learners or to employers.

Hammersmith and Fulham Action on Disability formed a partnership with Tri UK and Access to Work in phase 1 of London West Works. Tri UK are a supported employment organisation who are able to offer support workers, develop support plans and job coaching. They are familiar with Access to Work and through the partnership which was formed HAFAD were able to support more of their learners into work. The case studies from Phase 1 are printed in the LWW Provider pack.

In phase 2 of London West Works HAFAD extended this partnership and notably included the employer and a public sector supported employment organisation in the partnership and achieved still further success.

Case study

HAFADs effective partnership approach to expand employment opportunities for LLDD. Partnership work is evident between an employer (Starbucks), supported employment organisation (Shaw Trust), disability organisation (HAFAD) and a private sector organisation (TRIUKLtd).

Joe has been employed in a full time job at Starbucks. He is working in a busy Central London store in a role that has been job carved for a person with a learning disability. HAFAD provided pre employment support to Joe to prepare him for the world of work, raising his aspirations and providing him with a choice of progression pathways to secure labour market entry. As part of providing wider choice and opportunity for learners, HAFAD fostered links with the Shaw Trust, to benefit from their traditional strengths in employer engagement and their capacity to deliver supported employment through WorkStep. The Shaw Trust negotiated a unique job carved Coffee Shop Assistant role with Starbucks that would enable candidates with a learning disability to gain a foothold in the company, with a view for development over time. The recruitment process was accessible and included considerations for people with a learning disability, recognising that applicants may be lacking in confidence and self – esteem. For example the interview process included a coffee tasting session, allowing applicants to become acclimatised and familiar with the brand, the personnel and the physical working environment. . HAFAD supported Joe through this process, preparing him for every stage of the recruitment process. Following their successful selection, HAFAD's specialist knowledge and connection with Joe was invaluable in terms of identifying disability related barriers to starting and sustaining the offer of employment. Joe for example, required travel training to his place of work and had experience of requiring a job coach

during early stages of employment. The Shaw Trust was able to use Joe's job coach of choice from TRI UK Ltd, funding this support through the WorkStep programme. Joe has now been in sustainable supported employment for 6 months and is progressing well. The Shaw Trusts flexible WS provision has enabled Joe to utilise job coaching services as issues have arisen, providing a rapid and responsive solutions to overcome impairment related barriers.

What the employer said:

"Joe has learned a lot in the last six months, together with his job coach has managed to find new ways to become more organised and efficient in a busy working environment. He gets on well with everyone in the team and is a real pleasure to work with. He is a real asset to our organisation"

Starbucks

The benefits of partnerships

A joint or partnership arrangement will enable providers to deliver a more complete service to their learners or clients by joining up different elements of the pathway to employability. This will include working in partnership with parents and carers to enable them to fully understand the importance of employment in their son/daughter or client and include them in discovering the skills and abilities of the individual. Where parents and carers are included in the partnership approach to the planning and process, they will be reassured about the level of support they can expect and reduce and remove some of the barriers to employment discussed in Session 1 of this workshop.

Employers will benefit from a seamless package of support with more than one provider delivering the service but one single point of contact. The 'wiring' is hidden but all aspects of support which make it easier for the employer to recruit and retain an employee are offered as a single package. Very clear and effective partnership approaches are necessary to achieve this level of service and potential for much improved outcomes for all concerned.

Case Study – Choices 4 All and Brent Connexions in Partnership

In phase 1 of London West Works, Choices 4 All worked in partnership with Brent Connexions to offer learners a combined service of referral to Choices 4 All and their job broker/job coach service whilst supplying a life coach who helped the clients with a variety of issues and obstacles which were affecting their ability to achieve employment. The two organisations agreed on a common set of data and a common process with a routeway broker acting as the link to the learner, Connexions and Choices 4 All. This proved an effective client management system with the learner developing a relationship with the life coach to build their confidence and help them to progress.

In phase 2 of London West Works this partnership was developed still further as the life coach then delivered training to 3 of Choices 4 All's clients who were working so that they could then mentor other students and help them to progress into work. This allowed the two organisations to offer a bespoke service to the clients/learners who would benefit the most. They saw an increase in the confidence of the clients and the self esteem of the mentors. This partnership will continue although it is no longer funded by London West Works. The two organisations were able to develop a working strategy which has proved enormously successful.

Key Elements of Good Partnerships

- Clear understanding of the purpose in establishing a partnership. What is each partner contributing and why?
- Openness and trust
- Good communication. It is important to develop effective communication channels and include a regular review of customer, employer and partner needs
- Action planning. Clear goals and agreed actions will support a more effective delivery mechanism and seamless approach with both the client and the employer.
- Purpose – Improve the service to the client to find sustainable employment and to the employer to meet their recruitment and skills needs.

Case Study Supplied by Hammersmith and Fulham Action on Disability (HAFAD)

This case study demonstrates an effective partnership approach to expand employment opportunities for LLDD. Partnership work is evident between an employer (Starbucks), supported employment organisation (Shaw Trust), disability organisation (HAFAD) and a private sector organisation (TRIUKLtd).

Joe has been employed in a full time job at Starbucks. He is working in a busy Central London store in a role that has been job carved for a person with a learning disability. HAFAD provided pre employment support to Joe to prepare him for the world of work, raising his aspirations and providing him with a choice of progression pathways to secure labour market entry. As part of providing wider choice and opportunity for learners, HAFAD fostered links with the Shaw Trust, to benefit from their traditional strengths in employer engagement and their capacity to deliver supported employment through WorkStep. The Shaw Trust negotiated a unique job carved Coffee Shop Assistant role with Starbucks that would enable candidates with a learning disability to gain a foothold in the company, with a view for development over time. The recruitment process was accessible and included considerations for people with a learning disability, recognising that applicants may be lacking in confidence and self – esteem. For example the interview process included a coffee tasting session, allowing applicants to become acclimatised and familiar with the brand, the personnel and the physical working environment. . HAFAD supported Joe through this process, preparing him for every stage of the recruitment process. Following their successful selection, HAFAD’s specialist knowledge and connection with Joe was invaluable in terms of identifying disability related barriers to starting and sustaining the offer of employment. Joe for example, required travel training to his place of work and had experience of requiring a job coach during early stages of employment. The Shaw Trust was able to use Joe’s job coach of choice from TRI UK Ltd, funding this support through the WorkStep programme. Joe has now been in sustainable supported employment for 6 months and is progressing well. The Shaw Trusts flexible WS provision has enabled Joe to utilise job coaching services as issues have arisen, providing a rapid and responsive solutions to overcome impairment related barriers.

“Joe has learned a lot in the last six months, together with his job coach has managed to find new ways to become more organised and efficient in a busy working environment. He gets on well with everyone in the team and is a real pleasure to work with. He is a real asset to our organisation”

Starbucks

The Partnership Approach to working with employers, parents/carers

It is often helpful when looking at improving the progression to sustainable employment for people with learning disabilities to review the approach of your organisation to parents/carers and employers. Working together with parents/carers and with employers and having a customer management approach can effect a more beneficial relationship with improved outcomes for the learner or client.

If parents are seen as a barrier or interference, difficult situations and negative responses could be made more difficult. If the policy is established to work together with parents in order to achieve a positive outcome then there should be an improvement in results. Careful relationship management is important.

Partnership with Employers

Change the engagement with employers to an employer management strategy. The employer is a customer so be sure that you have the range of services to meet the skills and employment needs of the market place. Understand your skills and services and fill the gaps with an effective partnership. For example, if you deliver skills and training; work with another organisation to deliver Information, advice and guidance to the client, Job Centre Plus to identify a job opportunity and another organisation to support the client once they are in work if that is appropriate. The employer only needs to know that you are supplying the employee with the skills they need. Please see the Action Plan for Engaging with Employers

Partnership with Parents

Many organisations agree formal partnership arrangements with parents e.g secondary schools. It might be useful to consider setting up a partnership agreement with parents so that you are both clear on expectations and processes. It is more beneficial to work with parents to achieve more success in moving people with learning disabilities into employment.

Other Sources of Potential Partners

There may be some work involved in investigating who the most appropriate partners might be and why. It is up to the provider to make the effort to source the providers who might be the best partners but here are some suggestions to help the search.

West London Working is a City Strategy Pathfinder. The website has a directory of support which could help you to identify potential partners. <http://directory.westlondonworking.org.uk/>

The Employability Manifesto is available from the Live Learn Work website and outlines 22 providers delivering effective support to people with a variety of learning difficulties and /or disabilities. Email addresses for the organisations are included in the document <http://www.livelearnwork.org/files/LLWL%20Employability%20Manifesto%20Draft%20Report%20-%20final%2014%2009%2008.pdf>

Partnerships with Voluntary Organisations can help you to identify voluntary opportunities for your clients to enable them to build on work experience and skills which will increase their



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employability and help them to prepare effectively for work. Some voluntary organisations can also provide additional support to clients depending on their needs.

Partnerships with Supported Employment Organisation: Identify job coaching or supported employment organisations who can support your clients into work. Talk to the Learning and Skills Council, Local Authority, London Development Agency and Job Centre Plus to find organisations delivering supported employment.

Action Plan

- Which elements of the pathway to employment do you deliver?
- What purpose or goal do you have in forming a partnership? What are the potential benefits to your learners/clients?
- What elements and stages of the employability pathway can be improved through working in partnership?
- Who is the best organisation to deliver the elements of service?
- Agree your targets and expectations from the partnership. (There may be more than 2 partners involved)

Partnership Approach to achieving sustainable employment for people with learning disabilities		
Area For Action	Actions	Next Steps
<p>Review Raising Expectations, Employer Engagement and Job Coaching for your organisation?</p> <p>Have you completed action plans for these elements of your service?</p> <p>Review the Employability Pathway</p> <p>Which elements of the pathway do you deliver</p> <p>How effectively do you deliver these elements</p> <p>What benefit would there be in working with another organisation to deliver this element?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider any other action plans and their outcome. • What have you agreed about the way you are working and next steps • Have you developed an employability plan for your clients/learners? • What can you deliver? • What can't you deliver? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agree your service, identify any gaps • Agree on how a partnership approach would help to implement the employability plan and support the pathway to employment • Agree which elements can be delivered by partners • Take steps to find the partners
<p>Finding Potential Partners?</p> <p>Do you have current relationships or partnerships with other organisations which could be developed?</p>	<p>Provider networks, contacts, West London Working website, funding agency contacts</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How would you evaluate the quality of their service in order to develop a partnership • Agree the roles and responsibilities of each partner 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agree the purpose (goal) for working in partnership • Appoint a team member to develop potential partnerships • Decide on the protocol for working with partners • Develop a communication strategy

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are your specialist areas? What do you have to bring to the partnership? • Agree on and arrange regular partner meetings to monitor performance and address issues or refocus aims and goals. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How will you manage the partnership to deliver a seamless service to your learners/clients • Write the processes and procedures • Inform the key members of the team • Agree on the approach
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Forming the Partnership • Do you need more than one partner for a particular element of the service which allows you to tailor the service to meet your client or employer needs? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agree the roles and responsibilities of each partner • Introduce a system of internal partner communication which allows cascading of information, changes, updates and achievement. • Agree on and arrange regular partner meetings to monitor performance and address issues or refocus aims and goals. • Appoint a single point of contact in order to minimise the risk of misinformation and promote efficient employer and/or client management • Share feedback and information regarding all aspects of the partnership including that of employers and clients. Use the information to introduce improved processes and services. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Risk Assessment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review the steps of the action plan and assess the risks for the partnership not being successful 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evaluation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How will you measure the impact/benefit of the partnership? 	

London West Works Sample Employability Plan

Client Details	
Name	
Address	
Contact Details	
Skills and Training	
Provider 1	
Dates	
School Training Provider Attended	
Date of Attendance	
Skills and Qualifications	
Provider 2	
Dates	
School Training Provider Attended	
Date of Attendance	
Skills and Qualifications	
Disability	
Disability Type	
Additional information about the disability	
Support Needs	
Work Experience/History	
Company Name	Dates Employed
Job Title	
Type of work (Paid, full time, part time, work experience)	
Skills and tasks	
Company Name	Dates Employed
Job Title	
Type of work (Paid, full time, part time, work experience)	
Skills and tasks	
Interests and Activities Assessed	(Who should do this?)

<p>Use the Focus on Ability assessment guides to help the person to think about what they can do and what they like or don't like to do</p> <p>Include parents/carers and other key stakeholders in this process. Put your learner/client at the heart of this process</p>	<p>Find out about the activities and interests of the learner/client</p> <p>What do they like to do?</p> <p>Who do they do it with?</p> <p>Where do they go?</p> <p>What do they like?</p> <p>What don't they like?</p> <p>What do they do by themselves what do they do with somebody else or with help?</p>
<p>Agree a full assessment using the discovery model which will include all of the key stakeholders in the person's life</p>	<p>Discovery process planned dates and locations agreed</p>
<p>Employment as a goal</p>	
<p>(Who should do this?)</p>	
<p>If the person has had work experience</p>	<p>Did they like the work?</p> <p>What did they like the most?</p> <p>What did they not like?</p> <p>What would they most like to do?</p> <p>What jobs do they know about?</p> <p>Would they like to try a different job?</p> <p>Would they like to try a different work area e.g. business not retail, catering not retail?</p>
<p>If the person does not have work experience</p>	<p>Do they know about working?</p> <p>What is a job?</p> <p>Would they like to work?</p> <p>If not, why not?</p> <p>Would they like to know more about different jobs?</p> <p>Who do they know who has a job?</p> <p>Would they like to do something similar?</p>
<p>Employment Plan</p>	
<p>What skills does the person have which will help them towards employment?</p>	
<p>What additional skills will they need to help them towards employment?</p>	
<p>How will these skills be delivered?</p>	
<p>Who will undertake the skills training?</p>	
<p>Timetable for employability skills training and employment activities agreed</p>	<p>Dates:</p>
<p>Milestones Agreed</p>	
<p>What will they do?</p> <p>When will they do it?</p> <p>Why will they do it?</p> <p>How will the milestones be assessed/evaluated?</p>	
<p>Work Experience</p>	
<p>What kind of work experience would be beneficial to enable this person to gain the skills they need?</p>	
<p>What support will be needed?</p>	
<p>Who will deliver the support?</p>	
<p>What skills will they gain from it?</p>	
<p>Where will the work experience take place?</p>	



place?	
How will it be evaluated?	
What purpose will the work experience serve? What is the next planned work experience assignment?	
Job Search	
If the client is ready to move into employment	
Job Search	
Job Search support in place	
CV Writing training agreed	
Interview skills, techniques and practice arranged	
Support in place for job applications and interviews	
Evaluation of job seeking experience	
Support Plan designed and written	
Employment	
Support worker/job coach assigned	
Support Plan agreed with learner/client, job coach and employer	
Date Employment commences	
Progress and Assessment Recorded	
Further skills and training planned for progression	