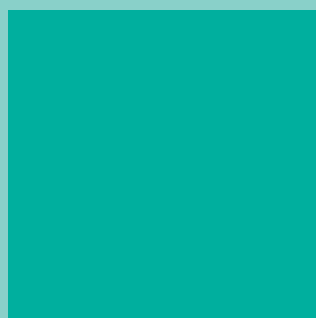
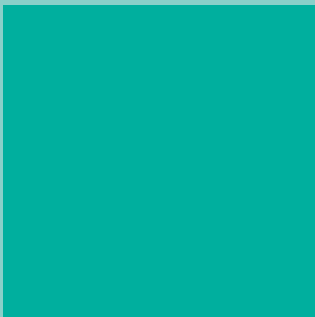


# Valuing Employment Now: real jobs for people with learning disabilities



**DH INFORMATION READER BOX**

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<b>Description</b>	Valuing Employment Now sets out the cross-government strategy and action plan needed to increase the number of people with learning disabilities in employment. It sets an ambitious goal to radically increase the number of people with learning disabilities in employment by 2025
<b>Cross reference</b>	Valuing People (2001); Valuing People Now: From Progress to Transformation (2007); Valuing People Now: A new three-year strategy for people with learning disabilities (2009); Valuing Employment Now: The Delivery Plan (2009)
<b>Superseded documents</b>	
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# Executive summary





- This strategy focuses on people with moderate and severe learning disabilities, because they have benefited least from previous initiatives.
- If real disability equality is to be achieved, work needs no longer to be seen as optional for most people with moderate and severe learning disabilities. The default must be that everyone will have the chance to get a job. But there should be choice about what work people do, just as for non-disabled people.
- By 'work', we mean real jobs in the open labour market that are paid the prevailing wage, or self-employment. We do not mean volunteering or work experience, unless this is part of a genuine pathway to real work. This is about doing a good job that the employer and the employee value.
- Our aspiration is for as many people with learning disabilities as possible to work at least 16 hours a week, because this is the point at which most will be financially better off and achieve greater inclusion. We know from some places where this already happens that this is a reasonable ambition.
- People with profound and complex disabilities should not be excluded from the world of work. We know from international evidence that it is possible for everyone to make an economic contribution. This strategy is also relevant to those who aspire to employment but, for example for health reasons, may genuinely not be able to work full time.
- Delivering real change will need leadership at all levels.

- 3 The strategy needs to be seen in the context of the forthcoming government gender employment strategy to be published in the autumn, which will complement the Equality Bill.

## The economic situation

- 4 The current recession makes this strategy all the more urgent, as people with learning disabilities are at risk of moving even further from the labour market.
- 5 The economic climate also means that there will be little opportunity for new investment. The strategy focuses on more effective use of existing resources, including education, adult learning and employment support. Local authorities will also be encouraged to refocus some of their current

spend on adult day services onto supported employment, and to use their new responsibility for funding 16–19 learning (16–25 for those subject to a learning difficulty assessment) to review and align provision.

## The goal

- 6 The Government believes that all people with learning disabilities should share equally in the aspiration set out in the ‘Life Chances’ report<sup>4</sup> that, by 2025: *‘any disabled person who wants a job, and needs support to get a job, should be able to do so’*.
- 7 In order to achieve this, we know that we have to significantly increase the aspiration of real work for people with learning disabilities, especially people with moderate and severe learning disabilities. This is a long-term project.
- 8 In line with this wider Government commitment, the goal for this strategy is therefore to increase radically the number of people with moderate and severe learning disabilities in employment by 2025. The Government wants as many as possible of these jobs to be at least 16 hours a week. We aspire to close the gap between the employment rate of people with moderate and severe learning disabilities and that of the disabled population as a whole. The current employment rate for disabled people as a whole is 48%.<sup>5</sup> Closing this gap in today’s terms would mean 48% of people with moderate and severe learning disabilities in real jobs – or, in England, around 45,000 more people with moderate and severe learning disabilities in employment than we believe is currently the case.

## How this goal will be achieved

- 9 To achieve this goal, change is needed in a number of key areas:
  - i. *Growing the presumption of employability*  
It is crucial to promote the fact that people with learning disabilities can work and have careers. The single most important thing is to change, from an early age, expectations about work. Government will encourage this culture change through campaigns with parents, workforce training, demonstration sites including Project Search, and through building on existing good practice.

4 *Improving the Life Chances of Disabled People*, Prime Minister’s Strategy Unit (2005)

5 Labour Force Survey, Office for National Statistics (2008)

- ii. *Joint working to create employment paths for individuals*

Where people with moderate and severe learning disabilities have jobs, it is achieved through very close partnership working between statutory, voluntary and private agencies, with funding streams brought together. Starting from a person centred approach, this joint working needs to map out a clear employment pathway for people with learning disabilities.
- iii. *Better work preparation at school, college and adult learning*

Work aspirations need to be reinforced through good career and skills preparation at school and college. The Government will promote better work experience, the new Foundation Learning Tier (FLT) will allow job coaching, and new skills accounts and the adult advancement and careers service will be made fully accessible for people with learning disabilities.
- iv. *The role of personal budgets and social care*

The move to personal budgets<sup>6</sup> (which can be taken as direct payments) provides an important opportunity to support adults with learning disabilities into work. Personal budgets can and should be used for this. Learning Disability Partnership Boards will be encouraged to review day service modernisation plans, to ensure that they have employment at their heart.
- v. *Increasing high quality job coaching*

Job coaches help people to discover what work would suit their skills and interests, negotiate real jobs, and support individuals at work. But there is a shortage of skilled job coaches and quality varies. The Government will publish and consider how to accredit quality standards. There is also a funding gap, yet the taxpayer spends significant sums on people with learning disabilities through social care and education. The Government will encourage local authorities to refocus some of this on supported employment. The Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) is also changing the Access to Work fund so that it better supports job coaching.

6 An explanation of personal budgets is given in the glossary at the back of this document (Annex B)

vi. *Clearing up confusion about the benefits system*

The Government continues to simplify the benefits system and reverse work disincentives in it. But these changes are not always well explained or understood on the ground. Supported employment providers are encouraged to build good benefits advice into their services, and the Government will promote accessible information on benefits to people with learning disabilities, their families and social care staff.

vii. *Promoting self-employment*

One in ten people in England are self-employed, but people with learning disabilities are almost totally unrepresented. Evidence<sup>7</sup> suggests that this route can be particularly suitable for people with more complex disabilities. The Government will encourage more accessible business advice.

viii. *Encouraging employers to see the business case*

Employers need to understand the genuine business benefits of employing people with learning disabilities, and the public sector needs to lead by example. The Civil Service will make its workforce more representative of people with learning disabilities and the Department of Health (DH) is supporting the NHS to achieve the same. The Cabinet Office will also work with partners on tools to support this throughout the public sector, including local authorities.

ix. *Transport to get to work*

Public transport is not generally accessible for many people with learning disabilities. Many rely on expensive taxi journeys, but travel training can provide a more cost-effective alternative. Learning Disability Partnership Boards are also encouraged to work with local schools, police and transport providers to tackle harassment of people with learning disabilities on public transport.

x. *Addressing barriers with where people live*

Despite recent welfare reforms, there remain some barriers to work for people with learning disabilities relating to where they live. The Government will encourage local authorities to make links between homes and jobs at local and regional level so that, for example, strategies to reduce residential care use include employment options. DWP will be launching a consultation on Housing Benefit in July 2009.

- xi. *Better support for the most excluded adults with learning disabilities*  
The Government will ensure that employment demonstration sites, their evaluation and future research include people from the most excluded groups as far as possible. The new Employability Hub will focus specifically on people with complex needs. The Government will also promote information from the voluntary and private sector about successful approaches.
- xii. *People with learning disabilities and their families leading the way*  
This strategy is most likely to succeed if people with learning disabilities themselves and their families are empowered to expect and campaign for change so that services make it a priority. The National Delivery Team will include a family carer and a self-advocate.
- xiii. *Better data and performance management*  
There is currently little reliable national data about the employment situation of people with moderate and severe learning disabilities, which is why the Government is collecting this through PSA 16. The Government will use this data, supplemented by further research – including on ethnicity, age and gender – to set targets in 2010.

## Reporting on progress

- 10** This strategy is a major milestone on the journey towards full employment equality for people with learning disabilities. But it will need to adapt to the changing economic situation and in view of what is learned from local areas and demonstration sites. The Government will therefore report on progress annually, and in three years' time will revisit and update the entire strategy.

## The delivery plan

- 11** The separate delivery plan sets out how this strategy will be delivered and the key priorities for 2010 and 2011. It also gives a grid of all the actions.
- 12** At local level, Learning Disability Partnership Boards will include employment as a key part of *Valuing People Now*, and their annual reports to Regional Boards will include progress on this strategy.
- 13** At regional level, Deputy Regional Directors for Social Care and regional Valuing People Leads will coordinate delivery and support local areas. DH will also encourage Regional Learning Disability Programme Boards

in 2010 to set regional targets for this strategy, based on those that local Boards set themselves.

- 14 At national level, a Cross-Government Delivery Team will report to the Minister for Care Services and the Minister for Disabled People, as well as the national cross-government Learning Disability Programme Board, which oversees delivery of the whole of *Valuing People Now*.



