

Barriers and solutions in the workplace



Remploy

Putting ability first



**Raising employment rates for people with
learning disabilities and mental health problems**

RADAR/Remploy Taskforce Report
Easy-read Summary

July 2006

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What this report is about

The RADAR/Remploy Taskforce was set up to look in to why so few people with a learning disability or mental health problems have a job.



The Taskforce started work in 2005. We spent 6 months looking at the difficulties people can have in getting in to or keeping employment.

To do this we had discussions, used reports and looked at 97 case studies (stories about individual people).

This report is in 3 parts.

Part 1

What we found out and what our suggestions are for making getting in to or keeping employment easier for people with learning disabilities or mental health problems.



Part 2

People with learning disabilities and work.



Part 3

People with mental health problems and work.





What we want

We want people in the Government and involved in employment to work with members of the Taskforce.



We want new strategies (plans) that make a real difference to the numbers of people with learning disabilities or mental health problems in employment.

More about the Taskforce

Members of the Taskforce come from these organisations

- RADAR
- Remploy
- Disability Rights Commission (DRC)
- Employment Opportunities
- Mencap
- Mind
- Papworth Trust
- Sainsbury Centre for Mental Health
- WorkDirections

All these organisations provide advice and support for disabled people to get in to or keep employment.

In this report, what do we mean by learning disability and mental health problems?



Learning disability

We use learning disability to mean people who

- have difficulties in understanding new or complicated information or learning new skills
- need support to be independent
- have had these difficulties from the start of their lives

People may also have physical or sensory (visual or hearing) disabilities.



Mental health problems

People who have mental health difficulties

- That could be just for a period of time like depression
- Problems like anxiety or phobias (being scared of something in particular like spiders)
- People who are diagnosed with a condition like schizophrenia or bipolar disorder

What we did

We discussed 5 main points



- What are the different barriers (difficulties) to employment experienced by people with learning disabilities or mental health problems?



- What can we learn from things that are working well now?



- How can we reduce the difficulties that stop people getting in to or keeping employment?



- What can employers and other people who provide work do to make sure people get the chance to work and develop like everyone else



- What is a good mixture of work, training and life skills for people with more severe learning disabilities?



Some of the barriers to getting in to employment

Here is a summary of some of the main difficulties that people face in getting and keeping a job.



Some of these barriers can affect anyone with a disability

- Few qualifications or skills
- Not much experience of work
- The way the benefits system works
- Lack of confidence and not feeling good about yourself
- Transport
- Employers ideas about what work disabled people can do
- Discrimination
- Living in an area with few jobs
- Poor education, support and health services
- Not enough employment services
- Employers not understanding that someone needs extra support
- Individuals not feeling comfortable to say that they have a disability or mental health problem
- Not being offered the kind of job that suits your needs and skills
- Not having the support you need for as long as you need when you do get a job



We looked at

- what works and what does not
- what happens to the person, their lives, their access to social services and what influence Government has or could have
- what new things could be done to make a difference



What the Taskforce recommends

These are the changes and ways of doing things that we think will make a big difference to people with learning disabilities or mental health problems getting and keeping a job.



Support to get in to work

- Job coaching
- Training
- Making jobs fit around the person
- Help to feel motivated and good about yourself



Support when you are in work

- For the person and their employer
- When it is needed, not just at the start
- For as long as it is needed

What we recommend for people with learning disabilities



For many people, support needs to be given not just for work but with other everyday tasks and activities.



Individual budgets – when a person can use the money given for their care to buy the services and support they want.



Individual budgets may help people to get the support that really works for them.



From the people who shared their stories with us, we think that many more people with learning disabilities could be in work.

A lot of people worked in the service sector. Places like restaurants, hotels and shops.



We want a campaign that shows the big employers the benefits of employing people with learning disabilities and the employment support that is available.



- Support for people can be expensive and go on for a long time.



- People with learning disabilities have the right to expect society to enable them to have a job and lead an ordinary life.



- We do not think that employers should get money just because they are giving people with disabilities work.



We think individual budgets should cover not just care and support with daily tasks but also support in to employment.

This could work much better than the employment programmes that are available now and can not really meet the needs of each individual.



What we recommend for people with mental health problems



The right training and support for employment advisors so that they feel confident to support someone with mental health problems.

This would also help the individual and the employer to feel confident in the support they were getting from the advisor.

We think this training needs to be done in more detail and more consistently for all advisors.



Advisors need the right skills when they are interviewing someone with mental health problems so they can work out what support the person needs.



We think the proposals for mental health support teams from the local mental health trusts to get more involved in supporting people in to work are a good idea.



More about what we recommend for people with mental health problems



We also think that voluntary associations (groups) like Mind can help in making contact with people who are looking for work and for giving support and advice to employment advisors.



We think that individual budgets for people with mental health problems could be a good way for people to get the support they need.



We believe that we can encourage more employers to give people with mental health problems a chance to work.

- To support this, the advisor, the individual and the employer need to be working together for some time.
- We are going to test out how this could happen.

What some of the Taskforce members are going to do

From our discussions and looking at people's stories we think we are doing many things well to support people in to work.

We can do even better by working together more and by doing some extra things.



The organisations on the Taskforce that give support to people to get in to employment have agreed to do more work on this.

These organisations are

- Employment Opportunities
- Mencap
- Papworth Trust
- Remploy
- WorkDirections



They will

Make a plan to follow about all the things that work well for people. This is called a best practice framework.



Work more closely with local mental health teams and Mind associations (groups) to give support to individuals and advisors.

More about what we are going to do



Increase the skills of our advisors in

- mental health issues
- interviews
- how to handle people with mental health problems

We will also give them more information about where to get support.

We want to have advisors with specialist skills in mental health in all our employment advisor teams.

We are going to test out



- having the specialist advisor keep in contact with the individual and the employer for longer than the 26 weeks that happens now
- extra support for the advisor, probably from the local mental health team



We will see if this extra support means that more employers feel confident to employ and keep more people with mental health problems.



Get support from Mencap and the Employers Forum on Disability to plan a campaign with members of the Taskforce for people who are looking for jobs and have learning disabilities.



What we want the Government to do

We want the Department of Work and Pensions to



- support the campaign about people with learning disabilities and work



- look in to a support programme for people with learning disabilities or mental health problems and work

This might be based around individual budgets being used for moving in to a job and not just for support needs



We think it is important that people with mental health problems are supported to keep the job they have.



We want the Government to support the idea of getting **all** the different employment support services to work in a similar way to support employers.



People with a learning disability

Barriers to getting and keeping work

Here are some of the things that can make it difficult for people with a learning disability to find and keep a job



- Lack of confidence
- Difficulties with reading, writing and remembering
- Finding following lots of instructions difficult
- People like your family or support workers not really believing that you can work
- Being bullied or worrying about being bullied



- Not getting the chance at school to go on work experience
- Being sent on training courses at college that do not help you get a job



- Not being able to work because of losing out on benefits
- People who support you not really understanding the benefits system
- Losing out on support from Workstep or Access to Work because you have to work more than 16 hours each week



- Difficulty getting to work or using public transport
- Employers not really understanding learning disability and not giving people a chance to show what they can do
- Employers not understanding the changes they can make to help you fill in job applications or take part in interviews



People with a learning disability that are working

- may not get paid
- be paid less than £100 a week
- have their wages paid to someone else because they do not have a bank or post office account

What can be done so more people can find and keep a job

Here are some of the things that can support people to find and keep a job



- Day services that are about helping people get ready to work and support people in to jobs



- Direct payments that put you in control of what you want to do



- Having your support needs met in a way that does not set you apart from other people



- Having the same chances to get training and develop in your job as everyone else

More about what can be done so more people can find and keep a job



- Good support from employers with regular meetings to see how you are doing



- When you are doing a good job, being told that you are
- Work placements that help you get experience and learn about what it is like to work

Work trial



A work trial is a bit like a long interview.

Your employer agrees to a period of up to 8 weeks for you to try out the job.

If the work trial goes well there is a real, paid job at the end of it.

Here are some of the things that worked well for the people who shared their stories with us



- 1 to 1 support from an advisor before and after the person got a job
- Regular talks and meetings about how they were doing in their job, including things they needed to get better at



- Practical help with things like finding a job and practice interviews



- Being able to go on training to develop their skills



- Employers getting support



- Some help towards the costs of employing a person with a learning disability like Access to Work and Workstep

People with mental health problems

Barriers to getting and keeping work

Here are some of the things that can make it difficult for people with mental health problems to find and keep a job



- Other people being worried or frightened about people with mental health problems
- Feeling that you are not good enough and worrying about failing
- Finding it hard with meeting new people or being in new places
- Not feeling able to look for a job or to keep going to work
- Having problems with managing money
- Finding it hard to be on time
- Feeling under pressure to work can make your mental health worse
- Being in a job that has lots of stress like sales, call centres or teaching



- Your family and the people who support you not thinking that you can work
- Going on training courses that do not lead to real jobs
- Not getting support and advice to find and keep a job
- Jobcentre Plus and other advisors not being confident about how to support someone with mental health problems
- Advisors thinking that because your mental health may change from time to time that you can not commit to a training course
- Not enough employment or rehabilitation services





- Worries about coming off benefits and being able to go back on if you need to
- Support services not understanding enough about the benefits system



- Being discriminated against at work because you have mental health problems
- Not getting a job because of difficulties with your mental health in the past
- Employers being worried about employing someone with mental health problems
- Employers not understanding about mental health problems like clinical depression or schizophrenia
- Managers feeling that they do not have the information they need to manage staff with mental health problems



What can be done so more people can find and keep a job

3 of the main things that seem to help people with mental health problems work are



1. a job that really fits with what you want to do
2. starting the job quickly and having training at work
3. support that carries on when you have got a job



Other things that can help

Services that are about finding you a job working alongside everyone else



Understanding what you want from a job



Support to find a job quickly with most of the training when you are in the job, not before



Support that is not for a fixed time and that is based on what you need



More support and information about benefits



You and your advisor believing that you can work

- Advisors who support you to want to work and to believe in yourself
- Advisors who can support you to get good information about money and your rights

Here are some of the things that worked well for the people who shared their stories with us



- 1 to 1 support before and after the person got a job
- The advisor supporting the person to feel confident, learn new skills and meet and get to know new people



- Advice about benefits and tax credits



- Support in practical ways like how to set up their own business



- Being open with employers about having mental health problems



- Support for employer and the employee, including when things are difficult

Contact:

Lynne Myall
Remploy Ltd
Stonecourt
Siskin Drive
Coventry
West Midlands
CV3 4FJ

Tel: 02476 515 836

Minicom: 02476 515 869

Email: lynne.myall@remploy.co.uk

www.remploy.co.uk

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Mencap helped to make this document
Thanks to Photosymbols for the pictures