

Easy Read



## Engage to Change update

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What we need to do to support people with a learning disability or ASD into work



This document was written by Dr Steve Beyer, from the Engage to Change Evaluation Team at Cardiff University.

This is an easy read version of '**Engage to Change briefing: What policy changes are required to provide people with a learning disability or ASD equal access to the labour market in Wales?**'.

July 2020

# How to use this document



This is an easy read version. The words and their meaning are easy to read and understand.



You may need support to read and understand this document. Ask someone you know to help you.



Words in **bold blue writing** may be hard to understand. They have been explained in a box below the word.



If the hard word is used again it is in **normal blue writing**. You can check what the words in blue mean on **page 19**.



Where the document says **we**, this means **Engage to Change**. For more information contact:



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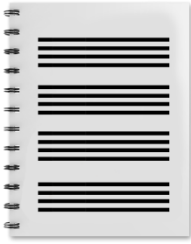
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This document was made into easy read by **Easy Read Wales** using **Photosymbols**.

# What this document is about



This document is about what we should do to support people with a learning disability and **ASD** to:



- find and get a job
- learn and keep a job.



**ASD** stands for **Autistic Spectrum Disorders**. It is also called **autism**. People with **ASD** may find some things difficult. Like communication and being with other people.



People with learning disabilities and **ASD** face many challenges when trying to find and keep paid work. And they can have lots of different needs.



The number of people with a learning disability or **ASD** who have paid jobs is very low. To change this we must offer support that is right for each person.



We are trying to show what this support looks like through the **Engage to Change project**.

# Engage to Change



Engage to Change is a project that supports young people with a learning disability or **ASD** to get paid jobs.



Through our work we have learnt that using a job coach is one of the best ways to support people with a learning disability or **ASD**.



And we have learnt that people with high support needs **can** get and keep a job when:



- We take time to find out more about the person. For example, what they like and what they are good at.



- They can try out jobs to help them decide what they like.



- We find the right job for their needs and their skills.





- We give advice and support to employers on what they need to do.



- People and their families are supported to understand how work might change any benefits they get. And to make sure they will be better off in work.



The Engage to Change project is doing really well. So far over 600 people have been referred to the project, and:



- 388 young people have had paid work placements
- 224 young people have found paid jobs
- we have supported 454 employers.



Only a very small number of young people had **no** work experience before joining Engage to Change.



They were **not** struggling to find a job because they had no experience. They were struggling because they did not have the right support.

## Supporting employers



We have worked with lots of employers to offer paid work placements.



The employers get money for up to 6 months when someone from our project works for them. This can pay for the young person's wages.



This gives employers time to work with the young person and get used to their needs.



This has made a big difference to employers. It has helped them feel more confident to give someone with a learning disability or [ASD](#) a job.

# Coronavirus



Coronavirus is going to mean that there will be a lot less money in Wales. This means there probably will not be as many jobs. And lots of people will find it harder to get a job.



This means more people will need support to get paid jobs. It will be difficult for support services. And disabled people might find it even harder to get paid work than before.



Even before coronavirus, support services were finding it difficult to meet the needs of disabled people.



To support people with a learning disability or [ASD](#), the government and support services must work together to:

- give people good supported employment services that include job coaching
- pay for a **National Job Coaching Service**.



Because of coronavirus more people will need benefits too. We must make sure they have the support they need to get benefits when they need them.

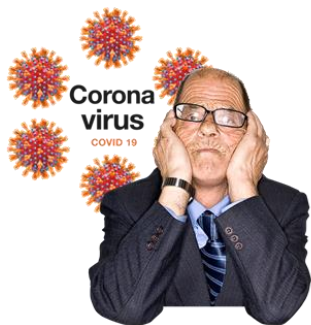


And we must have support ready to help people get back into work after coronavirus.

## Supporting employers during coronavirus



We must work with employers to support them to give disabled people jobs. And to teach them about all the good reasons to work with disabled people.



At this difficult time, employers are not going to want to take any risks with who they give jobs to. And they are less likely to take a chance on a disabled person.



Job coaching is important for disabled people at this time. It can help:

- match people with the right jobs





- give free support when starting a new job and training for a job



- give extra support like disability awareness training.



The employers we have worked with have been really happy with the person they have given a job to. And would be happy to give a job to another disabled person if they had the same level of support again.



We think Welsh Government should offer employers money to work with disabled people to help pay their wages when they first start a new work.



The UK government has said it will give money to employers if they give jobs to young people. And we are worried this might make it harder for people with a learning disability or [ASD](#) to get jobs.



Giving money to employers for working with disabled people will give disabled people the same chances of getting a job.

## The role of Engage to Change



Engage to Change has been very important over the last 3 years in finding out how best to support people with a learning disability or [ASD](#) into work.



We have learnt a lot and we believe we can:



- support people to get back into work after coronavirus
- tell people what they need to do to help support people with a learning disability or [ASD](#) to work
- make sure people with a learning disability or [ASD](#) have the right support to find and keep a job after coronavirus.

# What we have learnt

## Apprenticeships



Welsh Government wants more people to get an **apprenticeship**.



An **apprenticeship** is when a person learns the skills of a job while they are working. They are usually paid less because they are still learning.



Welsh Government has said that job coaches will be needed for people with a learning disability or **ASD** to make this happen.



A **National Job Coaching Service** would support this.

## Internships



Engage to Change has shown that people with learning disabilities or **ASD** do well in 1 year **internships** too.



An **internship** is when a student works for an organisation to get training.



**Internships** give young people who might find it difficult to get a job more time to learn the skills they need.

This also gives employers more time to help the young people get used to the job.



We want Welsh Government to pay for a **National Internship Programme** that uses support from the **National Job Coaching Service**.



This would give better support to people when they leave school or college. At the moment there is not much support for people with a learning disability or **ASD** when they leave school or college.



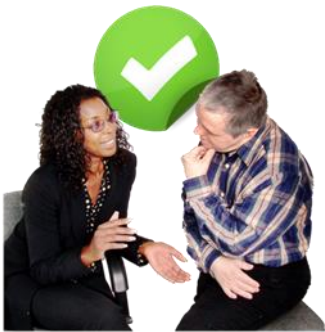
## Access to Work



**Access to Work** is money from the **Department of Work and Pensions (DWP)**. It is to support disabled people to get a paid job.



Access To Work has really helped Engage to Change support more people.



We have a good way of working with the DWP on this. We work with a team of people who know all about our project and what we are doing.'

This is a good way of working and we think any new employment support projects should work this way too.



To make [internships](#) work the **DWP** needs to change the way **Access to Work** money can be used.

They need to make it work with money for job coaching. And they need to make it easier for people to use Access to Work money.



We need Welsh Government to work with the DWP and Access to Work to fix this.

## Welsh Government



Welsh Government has a lot of policies and plans to make the lives of disabled people in Wales better.



Many of the plans talk about how important employment is for disabled people. Employment is really important for well-being.



We think there should be:

- a national job coaching plan
- and a paid work placement programme,

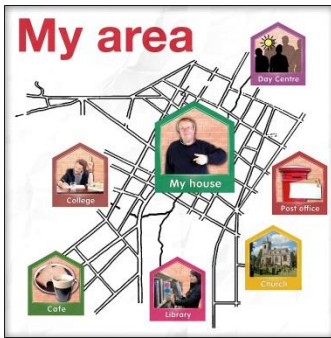


This will help Welsh Government reach their goals for supporting disabled people to get paid work. And it fits well with all their plans.



Offering this kind of support will be cheaper for the government and better for people in the long term.

## Local support



We have learnt that it is better to have job coaches from the same local area as employers.



Local job coaches understand the needs of local employers better. And they can work better with employers.



We need to do this in Wales. The **National Job Coaching Service** should make sure **local** support services work with **local** employers.



It is also really important that local authorities are involved in supported employment.



It is likely that Welsh Government will support businesses to keep jobs and make new jobs at this difficult time.



They should make sure they only give support to employers who work with all different types of people, including disabled people.



The **National Job Coaching Service** can be used to support employers with this. They will get extra support so that they feel more confident about working with disabled people.



# What next?



We need to make sure disabled people are not forgotten about. Especially after coronavirus. We need to:



- Only pay for and use services that give supported employment in a way we know works best for people.



- Make sure there are clear plans for supported employment. And make sure there is enough money to run them.



- Pay for a **National Job Coaching Service**.



- Start a **National Supported Internship** service.



- Make sure plans for **apprenticeships** happen, and that they include job coaching.



- Change the way **Access to Work** money works.



- Start a new service called **Job Support Wales** and make sure it supports people with learning disabilities or **ASD**.



- Look into starting a new grant that gives employers money to help with wages for disabled people.



- Only use services that are local and work with disabled people.

# Hard words

## Apprenticeship

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## ASD

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## Internship

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