



Engage to Change position statement in response to the Covid-19 crisis – 13 May 2020

The Engage to Change project partners have implemented new procedures to enable the project to continue whilst taking into account government guidelines, the safety of young people, their families, project staff and individual circumstances.

The Partnership Group is meeting online weekly to plan for the future and make sure opportunities are available post Covid-19.

Communicating with stakeholders and project participants

We are using a variety of virtual meeting platforms, emails, apps and phone calls to facilitate activity and maintain regular communication with project partners, colleagues from other organisations, young people, families and employers.

Current project activities include:

- Accepting expressions of interest and processing new referrals.
- Carrying out assessments and vocational profiles.
- Providing information to participants and their families to enable them to make informed choices.
- Supporting participants to set goals, complete accredited courses, develop CVs, practice interviews, search and apply for job vacancies etc if they wish to do so.
- Providing job coach support to existing participants who continue to be employed in key worker roles.
- Offering support and providing information to past and current participants who have been furloughed from their job, have become unemployed or are shielding.
- Remotely providing support and training to participants previously furloughed for their return to work. For example, ensuring they fully understand any new working conditions they are returning to and how to adhere to government guidelines.
- Carrying out risk assessments for participants to continue in their current workplace or for those entering employment.

- Providing welfare benefit calculations and support to apply for benefits.
- Offering wellbeing support and mindfulness activities to help participants cope with isolation and promote positive mental health.
- Engaging with new employers and providing information and support to existing employers, for example on furloughing staff.
- Working with partners at our supported internship sites to support interns, provide suitable activities, seek/secure job opportunities, and engage new learners for the internship programmes planned to start in the next academic year.

What else are we doing?

- Working with others to research the impact of COVID-19 and gather the experiences of people with learning disabilities and/or autistic people.
- Involving people with learning disabilities in the development of accessible research questionnaires.
- Ensuring that COVID-19 information is available in accessible format, for example in easy read.
- Engaging with Welsh Government and key stakeholders to influence policy and the future of disability employment across Wales. This includes advocating for supported internships, inclusive apprenticeships, supported employment and job coaching to become a funded, national provision across Wales.
- Continuing with the evaluation of project activity, producing and circulating evaluation reports and briefing articles.

Making a referral to Engage to Change during the Covid-19 crisis

We are still accepting referrals to the project so please contact us if you are a young person interested in joining the project or the parent/carer of a young person who is interested in joining.

The eligibility criteria for the project remain the same. Young people referred to Engage to Change must:

- Have a learning disability and/or an autistic spectrum condition
- Be aged between 16 and 25 years old
- Have support from family or support network
- Want to work
- Be prepared to undertake training to develop skills
- Either **not** be in education, employment or training (NEET) or be at risk of becoming NEET.

To make a referral for a young person living in **North Wales, north Ceredigion or north Powys** please contact **Agoriad Cyf** via email e2c@agoriad.org.uk or phone 01248 361392.

To refer a young person living in **South Wales, south Ceredigion or south Powys** please contact **Elite Supported Employment** via email tmoore@elitesea.co.uk or phone 07943 866 246.

For more information about Engage to Change please visit our website www.engagetochange.org.uk. You can also follow us on social media:



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YouTube [Engage to Change](https://www.youtube.com/EngageToChange).

The Engage to Change project is delivered in partnership between Learning Disability Wales, Agoriad Cyf, All Wales People First, Cardiff University, Elite Supported Employment and in collaboration with DFN Project SEARCH. The project is funded by the National Lottery Community Fund in partnership with Welsh Government via the Getting Ahead 2 programme.

