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Engage to Change

The first four years

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This document was written by the **Engage to Change** evaluation team at **Cardiff University**. It is an easy read version of 'Engage to Change: the first four years.'

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How to use this document



This is an easy read document. But you may still need support to read it. Ask someone you know to help you.



Words in **bold blue writing** may be hard to understand. You can check what all the words in blue mean on **page 28**.



Where the document says **we**, this means **Engage to Change**. If you want more information you can contact:

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About the Engage to Change project



Engage to Change is a 5 year project funded by the National Lottery Community Fund in partnership with Welsh Government through the Getting Ahead 2 programme.



Learning Disability Wales works with **ELITE Supported Employment, Agoriad Cyf, All Wales People First and DFN Project SEARCH** to deliver this project.



The **National Centre for Mental Health at Cardiff University** tells us how well the project is working.



The aim of the project is to support young people with a learning disability or **autism** to:

- find and get a job
- learn and keep a job.
- have help from a job coach to do this.



People with **autism** may find some things difficult. Like communication and being with other people.



Engage to Change also provide **supported internships** and training.



A **supported internship** is when a student works for an organisation to get training and experience with job coach support.



The project began in June 2016 and is finishing in November 2022.



This report is about the work we have been doing before coronavirus.

Why is Engage to Change important for Wales



The number of young people with a learning disability or **autism** who have paid jobs is still very low in Wales.



Young people with learning disabilities and **autism** face many challenges when trying to find and keep paid work.



Young people may need different support depending on their needs. For example, some people may:



- have problems with reading, writing or remembering tasks



- find it difficult to focus on information



- find it difficult to cope with changes and doing things on time.



But this does not mean people cannot work. It means they need the right support.



We are trying to offer the right support for each person. This will help us to get more young people into work in Wales.

What we know works well



We have learnt that using a job coach is one of the best ways to support young people with a learning disability or **autism**.



A job coach is someone who will help you to learn what to do in work.

Job coach support can help young people with a learning disability or autism find a job by:



- Taking time to find out more about them. For example, what they like and what they are good at.



- Helping them try out jobs to decide what they like.



- Finding the right job for their needs and their skills.



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



- Talking to young people and their families to understand how work might change any benefits they get. This is to make sure they will be better off in work.

Job coaching works well to support young people when they are learning a job. They may need:



- A job coach at their workplace to help them learn the job.



- To learn the job by breaking down tasks into small steps.



- To work on their own when they are confident.



- Help to get a certificate or qualification for the work they do.



- Help to get on well with colleagues and other people.

What we have learnt

Who took part



Up to the end of year 4, there were 771 young people aged 16 to 25 years old who had joined Engage to Change.



Young people from across all of Wales took part in the project.



Most young people who took part lived in Rhondda Cynon Taf and Cardiff.

There were also lots of young people from Neath Port Talbot, Gwynedd and Carmarthenshire who took part.



3 out of 4 young people told us they are male. 1 out of 4 told us they are female.



Almost all the young people on the project are single.



Only 6 are married or in a relationship.



Most of the young people were aged 20 to 21 years old. Young people who took part were between 16 to 25 years.

Past experience



Most young people had tried work experience before joining Engage to Change. Usually through school.



More than half of the young people had some experience doing volunteer work.



Some young people had done a work awareness course before joining the project.

What support needs did young people have



763 young people told us about themselves and their support needs.



207 young people told us they have a learning disability. Around 160 young people told us they are **autistic**.

Other young people also told us they had other support needs like: :



- Dyslexia
- Dyspraxia
- Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD)
- Mental health problems such as anxiety and depression.



Some people need a lot of support, some people need less support. It depends on the person.



Most young people on the project were receiving **benefits**.



Benefits are payments made by the government to support you to live.

Getting a job

In the first 4 years:

362 out of 771 young people had **paid work placements**.



A **paid work placement** is a placement which last 6 months and is paid by Engage to Change.



396 out of 771 young people had unpaid work placements.



194 out of 771 young people found paid jobs. 164 of those young people were able to keep their job for over 3 months. This means that Engage to Change helped 21 out of every 100 young people find a paid job.



This is good because we know that without support only 5 out of every 100 young people would get a paid job



We provided **supported internships** for 116 young people through courses like **DFN Project SEARCH** or a **supported internship**.



The **supported internships** helped 41 young people get paid jobs. 29 of those were able to keep the job for over 3 months.



Young people followed different work pathways to find a job with job coach support.

Here are some examples of the work pathway choices that young people had:



1. Many young people had a chance to try a short unpaid work placement before getting a paid job funded by Engage to Change. Then they moved to a paid job.



2. Others had unpaid work placements followed by a paid job.



3. Some young people went directly to a paid job



4. A small number of young people worked with DFN Project SEARCH or a **Supported Internship** and then got a paid job.

The type of support people may need



Young people told us that it is important to have an employment advisor and a job coach.

The hours they work should depend on each young person's needs. Job coaches support with:



- planning
- finding the right job for their needs and their skills.
- giving advice and support to employers on what they need to do.
- job training
- travel training
- anything identified by the young person.



Some work pathways may need more hours of support than others.



The support gets less over time when the young person is settled into work.



Some young people may still need support if they are learning a new task at work. Or if they need help to cope with a new situation.

Improving skills



Job Coaches helped young people think about the skills they had for work.

Young peoples skills were looked at through the project:

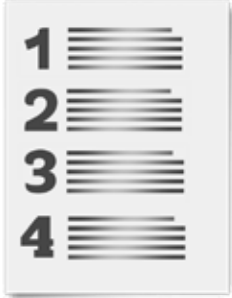


- at the beginning
- at the end of each placement
- after 3 months in a paid job.

We learnt that young peoples skills kept improving with support. After working for some time, young people were:



- working without making mistakes



- doing different tasks



- making decisions



- communicating better with others



- focussing and working without support.

What employers thought about Engage to Change



The employers who took part in the project have been happy with the young person they worked with.



The employers felt supported by the project.



Nearly all of the employers said that they would feel more confident to give someone with a learning disability or **autism** a job if they had support.

Employers were happy with how young people:



- follow safety rules
- were in time for work
- learnt new tasks
- did a good job
- followed instructions.

According to employers the 2 things that young people needed to improve were:



- increase the speed of work



- make decision for themselves.

Other important findings



Young people can work if they have the right job and good support.

Having the right support on the project means that:



- 1 in 4 young people got a paid job through the Engage to Change Project.



- Nearly 4 out of every 10 young people got a paid job through **supported internships**.



- Nearly 5 out of every 10 young people got a paid job through the Engage to Change DFN Project SEARCH internship sites.



We have learnt that workplaces can be better if we help employers to understand the support needs of young people with learning disabilities and **autism**.



Young people are more successful if they have the support to learn the job correctly.



Employers agree that it is important to have a job coach.



Employers want to give more time to train and support disabled people.



Employers know that it is important to work with all different types of people, including disabled people.



We need job coaches to work with employers to support them to move young people from paid placements to paid jobs.

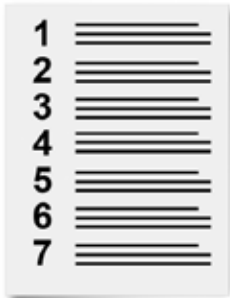
Things we need to work on:



- some young people needed to try more than one job before they find the right job



- travel issues can stop young people from taking up a job



- waiting lists were long in some areas



- some people lost interest when waiting for a work placement



- some employers may need disability awareness training.

What happens next



We want the Welsh Government to understand the type of support young people need and how much money it would cost.



We want the Welsh Government to understand that job coaching helps young people with learning disability and autism to find and keep paid jobs.



We want there to be clear plans for supported employment and make sure there is enough money to pay for this.



The Welsh Government should give support to employers who use supported employment and **supported internships**.



They should support employers who work with all different types of people, including disabled people.



The Welsh Government should stop giving money to services that haven't done so well with supported employment.



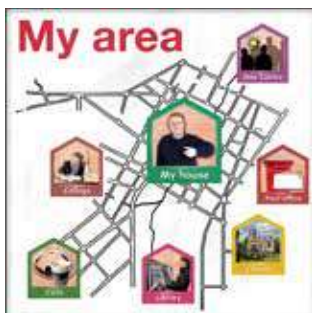
They need to make it easier for people to use **Access to Work** money. **Access to Work** could be used for things like transport or buying equipment.



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



There should be more opportunities for young people to get a **supported internship** or support from job coaches when they are in school or college.



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



Department of Work and Pensions is planning to start a **Local Supported Employment** funding programme across Britain to have more Job Coaching.



If local authorities want to use the **Department of Work and Pensions Job Coach funding plan**, it is really important that local authorities are involved in supported employment.



We must make sure people can easily use services like supported employment and job coaching. This will help make Wales a better place to work and live for people.

It will help the Welsh Government meet the aims of their laws:



- the Well-being Act
- the Future Generations Act
- and the Youth Guarantee in Wales

Hard words

Autism

People with autism may find some things difficult. Like communication and being with other people.

Benefits

Benefits are payments made by the government to support you to live.

Paid work placement

A paid work placement is a placement which last 6 months and is paid by Engage to Change.

Supported internship

A supported internship is when a student works for an organisation to get training and experience with job coach support.

