

Useful Publications

Making It Work – A Guide To Employing People With A Learning Disability (Mencap)
Free Download at www.mencap.org.uk

Employing People With Learning Disabilities – A Handbook For Employers
(Joseph Rowntree Foundation)
Free Download at www.jrf.org.uk

Useful Organisations

Down's Syndrome Association

We can help with all aspects of your query, from finding you the right person through to trouble shooting once they are in your employment. Information officers are available from 10am to 4pm, Monday to Friday.

Down's Syndrome Association
Langdon Down Centre
2A Langdon Park
Teddington
Middlesex TW11 9PS
Tel. 0845 230 0372
Fax. 0845 230 0373
Email: info@downs-syndrome.org.uk
www.downs-syndrome.org.uk

Employers Forum On Disability

The Employers' Forum on Disability is the world's leading employers' organisation focused on disability as it affects business. Funded and managed by nearly 400 members, they make it easier to recruit and retain disabled employees and to serve disabled customers.

Employers Forum On Disability
Nutmeg House
60 Gainsford Street
London SE1 2NY
Tel: 020 7403 3020
Email: info@employers-forum.co.uk

Job Centre Plus

Jobcentre Plus, the Government's job agency, can provide you with a wide range of applicants across all sectors.

They have a designated disability worker in each job centre.

Go to www.jobcentreplus.gov.uk to access details of your local job centre.

Supported Employment Agencies

British Association For Supported Employment (BASE)

24 Ribchester Drive
Bury BL9 9JT
Tel: 07946 537286
Email: admin@base-uk.org
www.base-uk.org

Employment Opportunities For People With Disabilities

Employment Opportunities has 20 centres throughout England, Scotland and Wales.

53 New Broad Street
London EC2M 1SL
Tel: 020 7448 5420
Email: info@eopps.org
www.opportunities.org.uk

Home Farm Trust

Home Farm Trust runs a supported employment scheme operating in approximately 18 counties across England.

HFT Ltd
Merchants House
Wapping Road
Bristol BS1 4RW
Tel: 0117 9302600
Email: info@hft.org.uk
Website: www.hft.org.uk

Mencap Pathway

6 Nightingale Court
Nightingale Close
Rotherham
South Yorkshire S60 2AB
Tel: 01709 830 956
www.mencap.org.uk

Papworth Trust

Papworth Everard
Cambridge CB3 8RG
Tel: 01480 83034
Email: info@papworth.org.uk
www.papworth.org.uk

Remploy Ltd

Stonecourt
Siskin Drive
Coventry CV3 4FJ
Tel: 0800 138 7656
Email: info@remploy.co.uk
www.remploy.co.uk

Shaw Trust

Shaw Trust Head Office
Fox Talbot House
Greenways Business Park
Malmesbury Road
Chippenham
Wiltshire SN15 1BN
Tel: 0800 085 1001
www.shaw-trust.org.uk

Ulster Supported Employment Ltd

(Northern Ireland only)
182-188 Cambrai Street
Belfast BT13 3JH
Tel: 028 9035 6600
www.usel.co.uk

United Response

United Response Head Office
113-123 Upper Richmond Road
London SW15 2TL
Tel: 020 8246 5200
Email: info@unitedresponse.org.uk
www.unitedresponse.org.uk

Down's Syndrome



information for employers



Information for employers

Introduction

Down's syndrome is a genetic condition. All people with Down's syndrome have some degree of learning disability. If someone has a learning disability it means that they may not learn things as quickly as other people and they may need more help and support to learn.

Learning disability is not an illness. It is not the same as mental illness. Having Down's syndrome does not mean that you cannot learn but it does mean that you might need extra support in the workplace to do so.

With appropriate training and support, people with Down's syndrome can and do make a huge contribution to their workplace.

In the past it was believed that there were many things that people with Down's syndrome could not do when in fact they had never been given the opportunity to try.

People with Down's syndrome are now leaving home, forming relationships, gaining employment and leading independent and active lives with differing levels of support.

Over 80% of people with a learning disability of working age are out of work. Research has shown that 81% of people with a learning disability of working age want to work.

Some advantages of employing people with Down's syndrome

People with Down's syndrome want to work so that they can be independent, earn their own money, learn new skills, meet new people and develop a sense of worth and good self-esteem.

The Down's Syndrome Association wants to give people with Down's syndrome the same choices and chances as the rest of the population. We would like you to help us make this a reality.

In giving a person with Down's syndrome a chance, you will gain keen, reliable, flexible workers who are ready to start at short notice.

Employers who have risen to our challenge have told us of the particular benefits that people with Down's syndrome bring to the workplace:

- improved staff morale
- good business practice
- reduced staff turnover
- improved staff attendance
- access to an untapped pool of labour
- a positive corporate image, promoting social inclusion and adherence to equal opportunities requirements.



Paul goes to college, enjoys meeting his mates and he is an avid Chelsea supporter. He is learning to live independently and he makes a great pizza. Paul volunteers one day a week in a busy office helping with mailouts and photocopying. Paul is punctual, enthusiastic and reliable. It's difficult to persuade him to take a break! Paul really wants to work in an office like his Dad when he leaves college.

Research by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation has shown that employees with disabilities generally stay in the job for longer than their non-disabled counterparts. They have a strong commitment to work, as well as good punctuality records and low absentee rates. Employers recognise that having a workforce that reflects the diversity of the community they serve makes for good public relations. Having a person with a learning disability in your workforce will enhance your company's image!

Tips for employing people with Down's syndrome

People with Down's syndrome have a range of abilities. They all share the experience of finding it harder to learn things than most people without learning disabilities. They may find it harder to read, for example, or to use public transport. Or they may find social situations more difficult to read. This means that someone with a learning disability may need additional support and training in order to do a job. However, it's important not to make assumptions about what someone can or cannot do. We all have varying skills and abilities, and people with Down's syndrome are no different.

People with Down's syndrome can and do go on learning throughout their lives. However, they may need more time to learn and you may have to make adjustments to your usual methods of training or induction. All of us need support to enable us to do our jobs in the best possible way. People with Down's syndrome are no different, except that the type of support they need is sometimes more obvious. Having said that, they also rely on the natural day-to-day support of work colleagues that we all often take for granted.

Seek information from the employee with Down's syndrome and their support worker or Disability Employment Adviser about what

adjustments may be required to enable them to do their job.

People with Down's syndrome are strong visual learners and poor auditory ones. People with Down's syndrome usually have poor short term auditory memory along with problems with the consolidation and retention of information. Many people with Down's syndrome will have shorter attention and concentration spans than their typically developed peers.

People with Down's syndrome generally find life changes difficult. People with Down's syndrome usually need consistency, repetition and order in their lives. Repetition can help the person manage and cope with the stress and strain of daily life. This need for routine and order can be to your benefit as an employer. Once a person with Down's syndrome has learnt a task they will generally carry out the task meticulously! Bear in mind that not everyone with Down's syndrome will pick up on the social and unwritten rules of the workplace. What is acceptable and what is not? Don't assume that someone knows for example that they can take a lunch break or that they need to tell colleagues that they need to visit the bathroom!

What you can do:

- Look at your procedures to see whether they are difficult for an employee with learning disabilities to comply with.

- Recognise that changes to the job or hours of work may be required as part of making 'reasonable adjustments'.

- Recognise the 'natural' support provided by work colleagues and nurture this. Provide shadowing or support from a more experienced worker

- Consider whether your methods of communication, and language used, could be made simpler and easier to understand. speak clearly, avoid jargon, use short words, use short sentences, avoid metaphors, if someone doesn't understand, try asking the question in another way!

- Check that the person has understood and, if necessary, repeat instructions.

- Break the job down into separate tasks.

- Whilst giving information about the job, show the person how to do it!

- Invite the person to perform the task and, if necessary, show them again.

- Ability to learn can fluctuate from day to day. Once a task has been learnt, it will be retained but just revisit a task over a period of time to make sure!

- Some people may learn a task but develop their own individual way of accomplishing the task. If it gets the job done, allow the person room for development and creativity!