

THEME **Working With Employers**

Cheshire East Cluster

NORTH WEST REGION

A 'Myth Busting' case study prepared by East Cheshire Supported Employment

Work is an important part of anyone's life. It can:

- Define who you are – give you a status within society
- Define your worth – how you and other people see you in the community
- Give you independence - enable you to have some control/choice over your life
- Improve your health – structure & wellbeing, positive image

10% of the population have a disability or serious health condition; 90% of which were not born with a disability.

Why choose to employ a disabled person:

- **Reliability** – disabled people know they do not get many opportunities
- **Diverse workforce** – reflects the wider community
- **Work is good** for individuals and the community
- **Exercises humanity** – this can have a positive effect on the wider workforce
- **Helping and accommodating others** who are different or are less able to help themselves is a sign of the growth of man from the hunter forager.
- Some disabilities can be turned into **an advantage**

Cheshire East Council's Supported Employment Service offers a wide range of programmes such as the Work Choice programme that supports the Employer and Cheshire East Jobseeker. Your support worker can give advice, guidance and direct support all of which are ongoing even after a successful employment. Supported Employment has been supporting employers since 1988.

Why choose Supported Employment?

- Free advice
- An understanding of everyone's needs
- Ongoing support
- A variety of programmes – choice
- Job matching - reduced recruitment costs

- Work trials – ensures you have the right person
- Work experience – widens opportunities
- Experience – help to see how it can work; see the person
- Network – we have relationships with lots of other organisations
- Free service
- Local people – local solutions

Frequently Asked Questions and Answersand myths

Disabled people cannot work – each person is an individual and therefore their skills and capacity will vary. Your support worker will identify a suitable person and likely parameters and solutions.

Disabled people can't learn – it is rare that the routines are the cause of placement failure due to job matching prior to placement. Adversely it is true that support workers often underestimate a client capabilities.

The Unions will not allow us to employ a disabled person – The TUC campaigns against discrimination at work and in wider society. Unions have always been at the forefront of the drive for equality at work, whether through the struggle for equal pay, through tackling racism or working for equal access to learning and skills.

Business Insurance will not allow – Disabled people cannot be discriminated against on the grounds of their disability.

Employers have to have a quota of disabled people – quota/green cards went with the advent of the DDA in 1995. Employers who want to have a reflective workforce need to be aiming for 10% plus employees.

We are an “equal opportunities employer” therefore we treat everyone the same! – this generally means that there will be no change in an employment status unless a disability does not have a significant impact or that the jobseeker has appropriate experience and qualifications or the field is weak.

Affirmative action is unlawful or unfair – good employers will recognise that we are not all the same and that the life experiences of disabled people is different due to reduced opportunities and that giving due regard based on an individual's support needs can even out the playing field.

Job carving is not possible – taking out or delaying requirements of a role in respect of responsibilities, routines and capacity by means of “due regard” does not break employment law and generally falls within most employers equality statements.

Disabled people are disruptive – No more so than anyone else. The role of the support worker is to support the client's integration in a smooth and seamless fashion. Continuously meeting disabled people enables people to be seen for what they are and not judged by their disability.

The cost of adaptations is too great – The DWP's Access to Work scheme could mean a zero cost to most employers. Access to Work can pay towards or in full for adaptations, access, interrupters', job coaches, personal support needs.

Training someone new is too much commitment – giving anyone an opportunity requires some training for the role. Anything over and above the standard can be picked up by the Job Coach/Support Worker.