

**KING'S
FUND
CENTRE**

***MAKING IT
HAPPEN***

**Employment
Opportunities
for People
with Severe
Learning
Difficulties**

Edited by
Alison Wertheimer

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EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES FOR PEOPLE WITH SEVERE LEARNING DIFFICULTIES

Report of two conferences
held at the King's Fund Centre
19 February and 19 March 1991



Alison Wertheimer

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The King's Fund Centre is a health services development agency which promotes improvements in health and social care. We do this by working with people in health services, in social services, in voluntary agencies, and with the users of their services. We encourage people to try out new ideas, provide financial or practical support to new developments, and enable experiences to be shared through workshops, conferences and publications. Our aim is to ensure that good developments in health and social care are widely taken up.



The King's Fund Centre is a part of the
King Edward's Hospital Fund for London.

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FOREWORD

Since 1980, when we published *An Ordinary Life*, the King's Fund Centre has produced a series of Project Papers which has drawn on the best of current ideas and practices in the development of services for people with learning difficulties. These papers have looked at where people live, how staff are trained and supported, and how people with learning difficulties become part of ordinary communities.

In 1985 we produced *An Ordinary Working Life*, and in 1986 *The Employment of People with Mental Handicap*. Following on from that work we were fortunate in receiving financial support from the Department of Health, to bring people together to describe current initiatives in supported employment, and to share ways of making progress through a range of agencies in the UK, both statutory and voluntary.

We hope that this report of these conferences will not only help people to develop a vision of desirable futures for people with learning difficulties, but will also provide practical examples of some of the ways in which we can make progress in supported employment.

Joan Rush
Community Living Development Team
The King's Fund Centre

INTRODUCTION TO THE DAY

Joan Rush, Senior Project Officer, Community Living Development Team, King's Fund Centre

The main aims of the day were to enable participants to learn about supported employment initiatives for people with severe learning difficulties and to exchange information with one another. There would be opportunities to meet new people with similar concerns and to develop networks for continuing contact. Although the day would begin and end with plenaries, the emphasis would be on working in small groups where, as well as listening to presentations, there would be opportunities for questions and discussion.

WHAT IS SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT?

Anne O'Bryan, Employment Consultant –
Member of Real Jobs Initiative

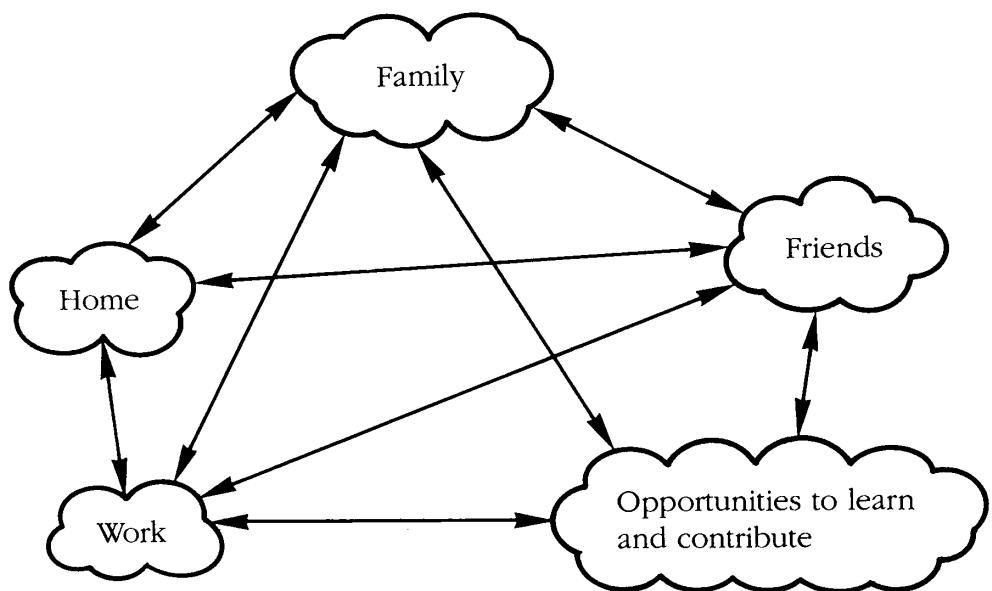
Why employment matters

Work is an important part of an ordinary life. It offers people:

- dignity;
- a sense of identity;
- income;
- the power of choice;
- the chance to contribute;
- connections with other people.

Not being in work, on the other hand, can result in poverty, dependence, powerlessness, and a devalued sense of self.

Work is an integral part of an ordinary life:



WHAT IS SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT?

Judith Snow, an American woman whose disabilities mean that she requires round-the-clock care but who also holds a teaching post at a Canadian University, has this to say:

People must see that disability does not have to be fixed or cured, but accepted and challenged. The individual must be welcomed, celebrated and listened to, challenged and supported in every environment to develop every talent that he or she potentially has just as ordinary people are. His or her contributions must be facilitated and used for the betterment of the wider group. In short, every citizen must be an ordinary citizen.

In the UK some efforts have been made to develop supported employment for people with learning difficulties. Organisations like Pathway and the Shaw Trust have found jobs for people, the Department of Employment has set up various schemes (see David Lillistone's presentation) to assist employers and disabled employees, and employment placement services such as Blake's Wharf, Excel, and WISE have begun to use Systematic Instruction methods to train people with severe disabilities (see below).

However, although there have been some encouraging developments, the fact is that relatively few people with *severe* learning difficulties have been successfully placed in open employment. The emphasis is still on 'the most talented'. We need to be aiming for a 'zero reject' policy where everyone is considered capable of employment no matter how severe their level of disability – described by Michael Callahan as 'the presumption of employability' in the book *Getting Employed, Staying Employed*. (McLoughan, Garner, Callahan. Paul H. Brookes Publishing Company, Baltimore, 1987.)

Defining supported employment

In brief, supported employment is about 'being able to get whatever support you need to do a job, for however long you need it.'

In 1987, the US government published a formal definition of supported employment which said that it was about:

- paid work (and in line with the minimum wage laws);
- not less than 20 hours a week;
- for one person or a small group of individuals previously considered unemployable;
- in the community;
- with continuing support.

But the way this has been defined has not always served the best

WHAT IS SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT?

interests of people with severe learning difficulties because:

- 20 hours has usually been seen as a maximum rather than a minimum;
- 'small groups' have usually been eight people;
- programmes have tended to work with people who need the least support.

So how should we define supported employment?

- **An individual focus:** not a 'group' approach; think of the person first, find out what they want to do and then think of a job.
- **Community employers:** not sheltered workshops or similar protected settings.
- **Varied and flexible:** in terms of jobs and supports; avoiding the traditional emphasis of placing people in catering and cleaning – ie the 'food and filth industry'; being creative – eg use of a light machine for checking whether envelopes have been emptied which can be operated by a person who only has the use of one hand.
- **Training on the job:** moving away from perpetual studentship and the traditional 'readiness model'.
- **Worthwhile:** work which would form a paid job if someone other than the person with disabilities was doing it; and work which gives the person the chance to learn and grow.
- **Social opportunities:** a job which offers the person the chance to meet and mix with others, for example at break times and at social functions like Christmas parties.
- **Paid and regular:** equal pay for equal work and the same conditions of employment as other workers.
- **Full participation:** making sure that the job coach or trainer does not become a 'barrier' between the disabled person and the rest of the workforce; avoid screening out people who need more support than others.

The focus today is on employment opportunities for people with more severe disabilities – the people who challenge us. What do we need to do to develop employment opportunities for them?

- **Listen more carefully:** find out about the person's interests, values and lifestyle; talk with the person, with their family, and with the staff who work with them.
- **Think more creatively:** develop community contacts and opportunities. For example: if someone likes smashing glass, how about a job in bottle recycling plant?
- **Commit ourselves fully:** to the individual; to reflection; to flexibility; to action.

WHAT IS SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT?

So...

- start where you are;
- use what you have;
- do what you can
- change yourself first.

How can we make supported employment happen?

- Get clear on the definition of supported employment and define your goals.
- Know what you have and what you need. What are your strengths and your deficits?
- Get help, training and advice.
- Find your allies – locally and nationally.
- Expand your network – get to know your community employers, for example.
- Start small but keep going. Thinking about just one person can feel manageable!
- Celebrate your successes – it's very American but worth doing!
- Plan ahead – short and long range. Have clear goals. Where do you want to be in one, two, five years' time?
- Make specific commitments to critical activities.
- Re-evaluate as you go – you could use PASS, or PASSING.
- Just do it!

And remember: unless you change direction, you're going to end up exactly where you started! (Old Chinese proverb).

WHAT IS SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT?

People Who Challenge Us Need Us To:



LISTEN MORE CAREFULLY

- INTERESTS, VALUES, LIFESTYLES
- INDIVIDUALS, FAMILIES, STAFF



THINK MORE CREATIVELY

- COMMUNITY CONTACTS & OPPORTUNITIES



COMMIT OURSELVES FULLY

- TO THE INDIVIDUAL PERSON
- TO REFLECTION
- TO FLEXIBILITY
- TO ACTION



START WHERE YOU ARE
USE WHAT YOU HAVE
DO WHAT YOU CAN
CHANGE YOURSELF FIRST

WHAT IS SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT?

Making Supported Employment Happen

- ➡ GET CLEAR ON THE DEFINITION & DEFINE YOUR GOALS.
- ➡ KNOW WHAT YOU HAVE & WHAT YOU NEED.
- ➡ GET HELP/TRAINING/ADVICE/...
- ➡ FIND YOUR ALLIES.
- ➡ EXPAND YOUR NETWORK.
- ➡ START SMALL BUT KEEP GOING.
- ➡ CELEBRATE YOUR SUCCESSES.
- ➡ PLAN AHEAD (SHORT & LONG RANGE).
- ➡ MAKE SPECIFIC COMMITMENTS TO CRITICAL ACTIVITIES.
- ➡ RE-EVALUATE AS YOU GO.
- ➡ JUST DO IT!

WHAT IS SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT?

How Should We Define Supported Employment?

- ★ INDIVIDUAL FOCUS
- ★ COMMUNITY EMPLOYERS
- ★ VARIED AND FLEXIBLE
- ★ TRAINING ON THE JOB
- ★ WORTHWHILE
- ★ SOCIAL OPPORTUNITIES
- ★ PAID
- ★ REGULAR
- ★ FULL PARTICIPATION

THE SHELTERED EMPLOYMENT PROGRAMME

David Lillistone, Employment Service
(Sheltered Employment Branch)

Introduction

The Sheltered Employment Programme caters for people whose disabilities are such that they are currently unable to achieve the same productive performance as their non-disabled colleagues. Historically, their needs have been met in sheltered working environments – notably Remploy factories, and sheltered workshops run by local authorities or voluntary organisations. In recent years, though, there have been moves to offer people a choice of jobs in open employment through the Sheltered Placement Scheme (SPS). This trend towards greater integration mirrors changes in other areas, notably education. Approximately 14,500 people now work in Remploy factories and sheltered workshops and around 6,700 are participating in the Sheltered Placement Scheme.

What is the the SPS?

SPS is a wage subsidy scheme for supporting people with severe disabilities in open employment. It involves a *host company* on whose premises the person works, a *sponsor* (local authority or voluntary organisation) who employs the SPS worker, pays the wages and receives a contribution from the host company to the value of the work done by the SPS employee, and the *Employment Service* which contributes financially towards the sponsor's loss up to an agreed maximum per place.

THE SHELTERED EMPLOYMENT PROGRAMME

The role of the host company

The host company:

- provides the work, workplace, tools and training;
- selects the worker(s) from candidates put forward by the Employment Service's Disablement Resettlement Officer (DRO), or the sponsor;
- is responsible for day-to-day supervision;
- pays the sponsor for the work done by the SPS worker(s). For example: if the SPS worker's output is assessed as being around 60 per cent of the output from a non-the host pays the sponsor 60 per cent of the employment costs.

The role of the sponsor

The sponsor, who is a local authority or a voluntary organisation:

- is the employer of the SPS worker;
- is responsible for paying wages and NI contributions, making tax deductions and meeting the requirements of employment legislation;
- receives payment from the host for the work done by the SPS worker and a contribution from the Employment Service towards the net costs.

The role of the Employment Service

- Approves the SPS arrangements;
- shares with the sponsor the agreed costs up to a maximum level of £3,800 for voluntary organisations and £3,000 for local authorities (1991-2 levels).

The advantage of SPS for people with disabilities

- The chance of a wider choice of employment opportunities;
- integration with non-disabled colleagues at work;
- the same wage as that paid to non-disabled colleagues doing the same or similar work;
- the opportunity for independence and self-esteem, and reward for their abilities;

THE SHELTERED EMPLOYMENT PROGRAMME

- they may be able to find an SPS placement locally whereas there may be no local Remploy factory or sheltered workshop.

The advantages of SPS for host companies

- Host companies have the satisfaction of making a practical contribution in enabling people with severe disabilities to do a useful job of work in the labour market;
- full control over the selection of the worker and full responsibility for day-to-day supervision;
- no employment legislation responsibilities (except where an employee becomes disabled but remains in the same job as an SPS worker);
- financial responsibility is only for the output the worker is able to achieve;
- receives day-to-day support from the sponsor who is experienced in meeting the employment needs of disabled workers.

The advantages of SPS for sponsors

- It is an attractive and cost-effective way of accessing job opportunities for people with severe disabilities;
- there is financial support from the Employment Service which can meet some or all of the costs involved;
- there are no capital costs involved.

Who are the SPS workers and who are their employers?

People using the SPS scheme have a range of disabilities but the single largest group of SPS workers is people with learning difficulties (42 per cent of the total).

Although people of all ages are represented, over 60 per cent are under the age of 30.

There are SPS workers in small businesses, multi-nationals, high street stores, major banks, and in central and local government. Workers are to be found in manufacturing, retailing, catering, tourism, and many other areas of employment.

The scheme has helped me to keep a job without any hassle. I enjoy the job and get on with the people I work with. I get job satisfaction

THE SHELTERED EMPLOYMENT PROGRAMME

and I feel secure. Without the scheme I wouldn't be in a job or I would have a lot of hassle. Here they have been very helpful and if they see I'm having trouble with something they find me another job to do.

(Jackie, Stores Assistant)

What can SPS offer people with severe disabilities

- V** *Variety*: from project engineer to plaster's mate, kitchen porter to lab technician.
- I** *Integration*: with non-disabled colleagues.
- S** *Support*: for the worker and for the host company.
- A** *Access*: wide geographical coverage – a job wherever there is a willing employer.

Other services from the Employment Service

- The Disablement Advisory Service;
- Disablement Resettlement Officers;
- Special Aids to Employment;
- Travel to Work Grants;
- Personal Reader Service;
- Adaptations to Premises and Equipment;
- Job Introduction Scheme;
- Work at Home with Technology Scheme.

CO-OPTIONS LTD: A COMMUNITY BUSINESS BUILDING EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES

Andie Lowe, Work Opportunities Manager

Background

Co-Options Ltd. is based in an area of Rhyl, North Wales which is in the top 2 per cent of the most deprived areas in the UK. In some districts, more than 40 per cent of males are unemployed and the female unemployment rate is 25 per cent.

Until recently, the local culture among service workers, service users and their families was very oriented towards traditional services. Consequently, Co-Options was set up to help get work and work opportunities on to the agenda and as a means of exploring the culture of the business world in a more serious way.

The deeper vision is for small businesses to be successful, to establish themselves firmly in the business network, and to influence other small business providers in terms of offering more equal employment opportunities for people with disabilities.

We need to move from existing service settings and reinvest the resources currently tied up in those services in order to develop new opportunities for people with learning difficulties. This involves:

- vision – thinking about desirable futures for individuals;
- identifying individual's gifts, interests and needs;
- developing appropriate supports and safeguards;
- making new connections in the community.

Co-Options Limited

Co-Options Ltd. was established by Andie Lowe and Gill Pope, together with several parents who were interested in action rather than 'talking'. It

CO-OPTIONS LTD

is a community co-operative limited by guarantee (and is not a charity). Co-Options has its own managing director and employs all its own staff; in other words, no one is employed by health or social services both of which are part of the 'service culture' rather than the world of work.

Co-Options has seeded a number of small businesses: The Magic Toy Box Nurseries Group, Essential Celtic, and Home Run. Although in all these businesses, their income depends on their ability to sell their products or services, and this is their primary objective, specific mention is made in their legal documents such as contracts of employment that company employees must work alongside people with learning difficulties or other disabilities.

The Magic Toy Box Nurseries Group is now a limited company in its own right, providing workplace nurseries – its third is due to open in August 1991. It is financed solely from the services it offers and receives no subsidies. Each nursery employs two or two and a half people with learning difficulties alongside between seven and twelve staff (depending on the number of children). The employees with learning difficulties either receive real wages or, if family members are unwilling for them to take up paid employment, the company ensures that their benefits are protected.

Essentially Celtic markets a range of aromatherapy oils and associated products (books, candles, burners, etc.), runs workshops and courses on aromatherapy and other topics, and has a part-time aromatherapist available for consultation on site. It is about to be floated off as a separate company and currently employs ten people, three of whom have learning difficulties. One of the people with learning difficulties, Julie, has been labelled as profoundly physically and multiply disabled.

Julie is a young woman with severe learning difficulties who also has physical disabilities. After she left special school, it was felt that she should be somewhere which was local and was non-segregated. Her parents were very supportive of this idea and did not want her to attend the local special care unit. At present Julie is at Essentially Celtic. She is not yet engaged in any productive work but people there are trying to work out ways in which Julie can become involved. Julie has a support worker there and although Social Services are paying for Julie's transport to and from the business, Essentially Celtic is currently meeting the costs of her support.

CO-OPTIONS LTD

Home Run, which is still part of Co-Options, currently employs two people, one of whom has learning difficulties; a third person is on a work opportunity placement. The business undertakes jobs such as gardening at a reasonable cost and as Rhyl has a large population of elderly people there is certainly a market for this type of enterprise.

People Recruitment Employment Agency

This initiative (which is completely separate from Co-Options) is funded jointly by Clwyd Social Services Department and the All Wales Strategy. It provides the following services:

- support, assistance and training to individuals seeking open employment (training uses systematic instruction);
- jobs location and matching;
- career development;
- it aims to work with a wide range of people including those with more severe learning difficulties who are traditionally excluded from work opportunities;
- it can offer people employed in the small businesses seeded by Community Co-Options the opportunity to move on to other employment;
- in conjunction with Co-Options Ltd., it can offer a range of training in supported employment, the creation of business opportunities and issues related to values and attitudes around employment..

People Recruitment has placed people in a range of businesses including a French polishers, a workshop dismantling white (household) goods, and a MacDonalds.

Lessons from Clwyd

- Small businesses are very hard work and depend for their success on the personalities involved if they are going to be real businesses and not service-oriented, 'pretend' businesses.
- Unless you get into franchising (which Clwyd may do with the Magic Toy Box) the capacity for growth of small businesses is limited. This means that job opportunities are limited, but they are still a good learning tool.
- The creation of supported employment (as with People Recruitment) alongside small businesses is essential, therefore, if people are going

CO-OPTIONS LTD

to have the chance to move on rather than staying in the same job for long periods of time.

- If you are setting up small businesses you must do the market research first to see whether there is actually a market for your goods or services. You also need to work on marketing your products.
- You need to cultivate your local DSS office in order to work creatively around benefits issues.
- Family support is crucial to success.
- It can be hard to secure professional support for employment initiatives; staff in services can find such developments very threatening!
- Develop a supportive team culture where everyone has vision and commitment to what you are trying to achieve. People involved in this kind of work can feel very vulnerable so mutual support is crucial. Staff also need to have the right skills.
- We need to re-educate the school system so that it becomes more work-oriented in its approach.

ABBEY METAL AND FIBRE DRUMS: JOINT INITIATIVES OF OPTICAL FIBRES AND DELYN WORK OPPORTUNITIES, CLWYD COUNTY COUNCIL

Peter Carmichael, Delyn Work Opportunities

The excitement and enthusiasm shown by all these young people has been overwhelming. For the first time in their lives they have some dignity and self-respect. The change in the quality of their lives has been dramatic.

John Tansey, General Manager, Optical Fibres

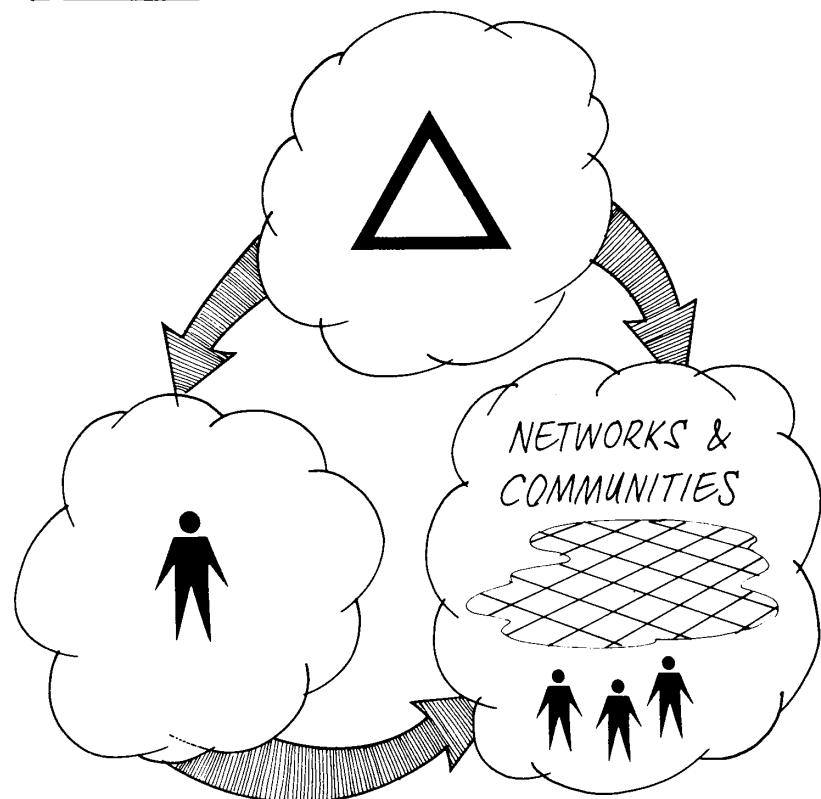
Peter Carmichael is employed by Clwyd County Council's Social Services Department to develop work opportunities for adults with learning difficulties through the Delyn Work Opportunities initiative. From a background of twenty years in human services, he had moved into the business world – in his own words, 'from jeans, and a pint down at the pub to suits and ties and drinks at the local Rotary club'.

In 1989, through social contacts, he met the managing director of Optical Fibres, a highly successful local company. Social services already had some contact with OF as the company had contracted out some refurbishing of spools to local day centres.

Presentation to Optical Fibre's management team

After meeting with OF's general manager (John Tansey), Peter Carmichael and Graham Harper (a senior officer in Social Services) met with the company's management team. They presented their mission statement for people with learning difficulties in the East division of Clwyd;

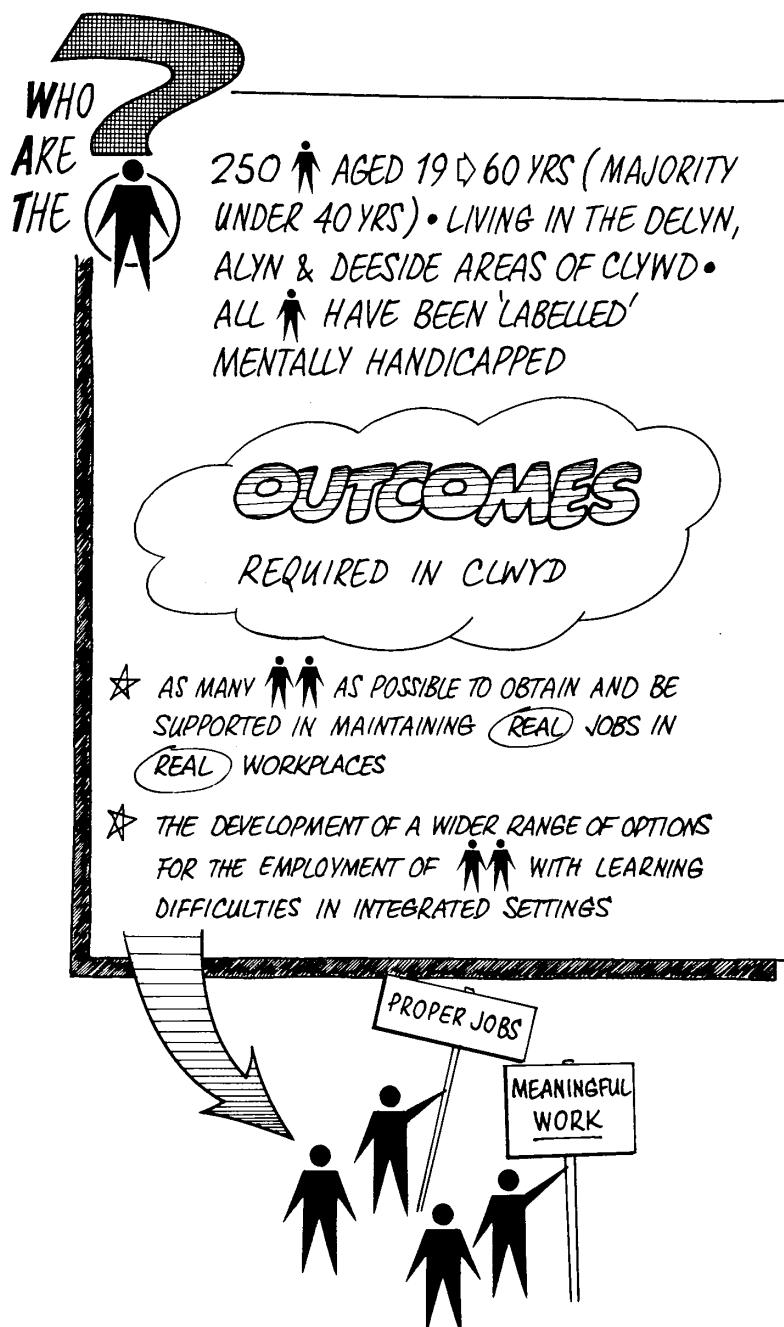
ABBEY METAL AND FIBRE DRUMS



TO SUPPORT INDIVIDUAL  WITH
LEARNING DIFFICULTIES TO
ACHIEVE VALUED LIFESTYLES THROUGH
BUILDING
STRONGER COMMUNITIES

ABBEY METAL AND FIBRE DRUMS

explained they were seeking to find meaningful work for as many people as possible;

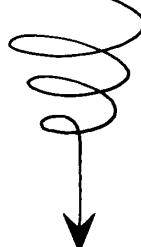


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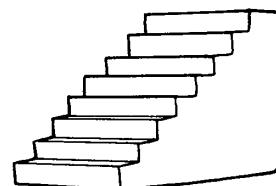
described the current experiences of people with learning difficulties; and the changes they would like to make in their lives



- * BEING 'GROUPED'
- * TRAPPED IN POOR QUALITY SERVICES
- * DENIED OPPORTUNITIES TO LEARN
- * THE SUBJECT OF LOW EXPECTATIONS
- * UNEMPLOYED AND SEEN AS UNEMPLOYABLE
- * SOCIALLY DEVALUED
- * ENFORCED POVERTY - £, EXPERIENCES, RELATIONSHIPS & OPPORTUNITIES
- * A WASTED LIFE.

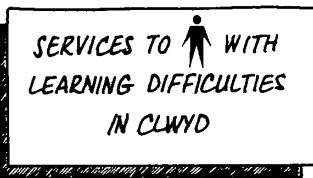
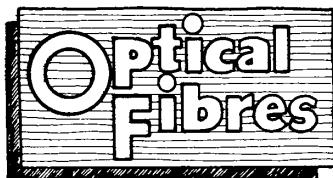


- TREAT  AS INDIVIDUALS
- PROVIDE HIGH QUALITY SUPPORT ACCORDING TO  'S NEEDS
- PROVIDE SYSTEMATIC & INTENSIVE INSTRUCTION AND POSITIVE ROLE MODELS
- SET HIGH EXPECTATIONS OF , STAFF AND COMMUNITIES
- TO SUPPORT  IN OBTAINING AND KEEPING JOBS
-  GAINING RESPECT - ACHIEVING VALUED SOCIAL ROLES - WORKER/EMPLOYEE, HOUSEHOLDER, NEIGHBOUR etc.
- ASSISTING  TO GET PROPER REWARDS, NEW EXPERIENCES, CHOICES & POSITIVE INTRODUCTIONS
- ASSIST  TO PLAN & OBTAIN A DESIRABLE FUTURE



ABBEY METAL AND FIBRE DRUMS

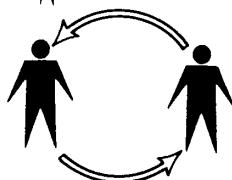
fed back to OF what they have learned about the company; and explained where they felt services for people with learning difficulties were going;



- * AN 'EXCELLENT COMPANY'
- * COMMERCIALLY SUCCESSFUL
- * POSITIVE REPUTATION AND VALUED IMAGE
- * HIGH QUALITY PRODUCT
- * NEW AGE FEATURES
- * VALUES - STAFF
- WITH LEARNING DIFFICULTIES
- * HAVE HELPED THE PHOENIX TO RISE!

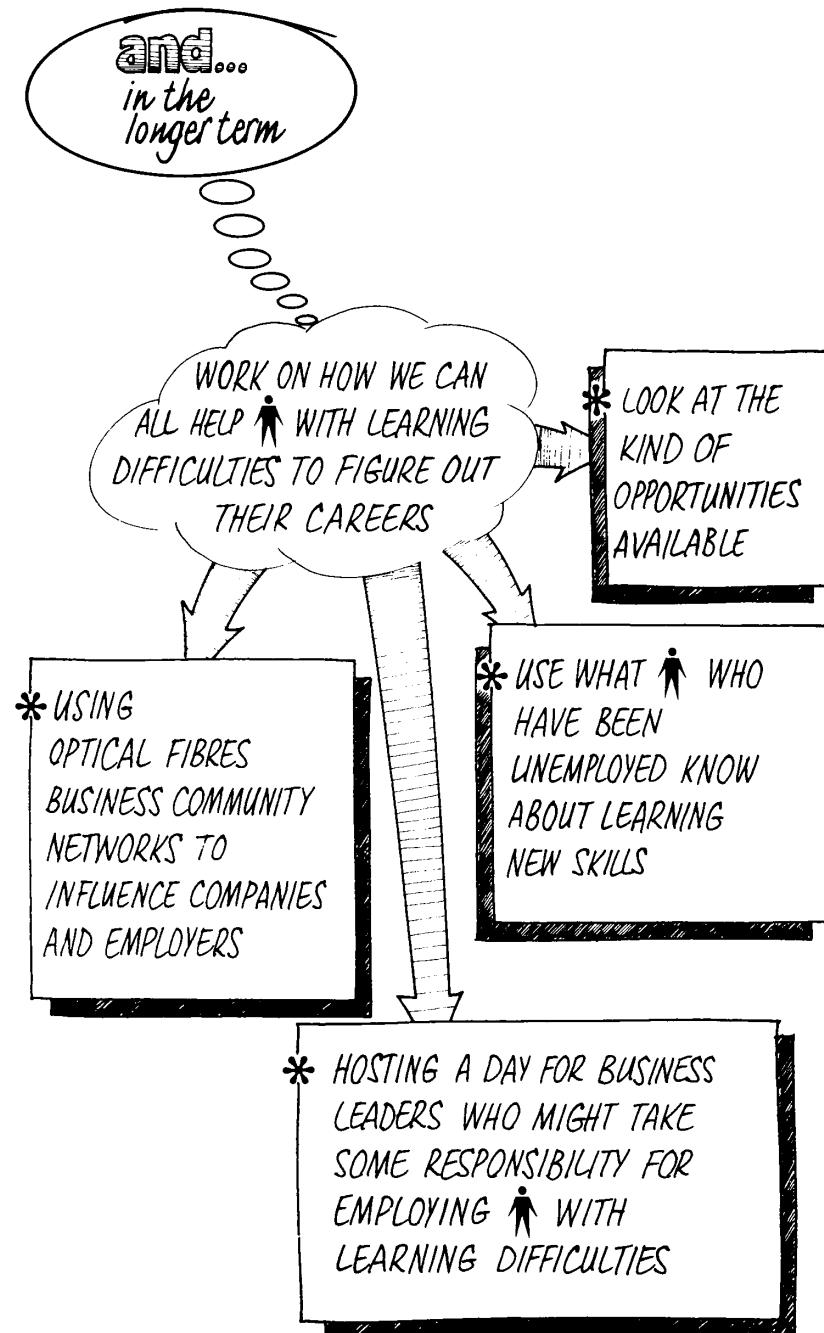


- * STRIVING FOR 'EXCELLENCE'
- * LEADING THE FIELD IN THE U.K.
- * POSITIVE REPUTATION - WELSH O, PUBLICATIONS, SERVICE USERS AND FAMILIES, VISITORS FROM U.K. AND ABROAD
- * HIGH QUALITY SERVICES
- * REORGANISED - SHAPING UP
- * EAGER FOR STAFF AND SERVICE USERS TO HAVE POSITIVE INTRODUCTIONS
- * WOULD LIKE TO LEARN FROM OTHER 'S EXPERIENCES



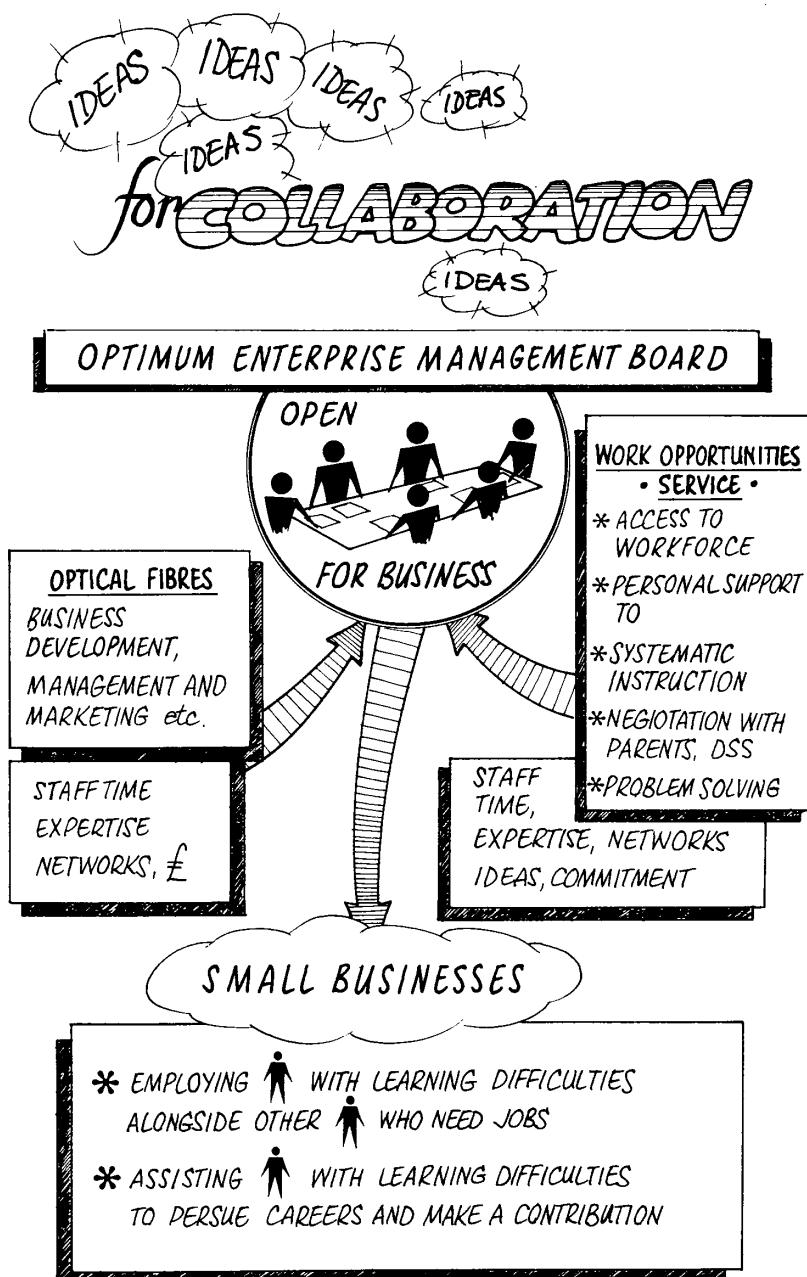
ABBEY METAL AND FIBRE DRUMS

having set out some longer term aims.



ABBEY METAL AND FIBRE DRUMS

They completed the presentation with their ideas about how OF might collaborate with them to develop work opportunities for local people with learning difficulties.



ABBEY METAL AND FIBRE DRUMS

Presenting the Community Project

Optical Fibres then made their own presentation to the workforce – three times, in order that workers on all three shifts would have the chance to learn about what was now called 'The Community Project'. Briefly, this presentation was as follows.

Background to Optical Fibres

The company gives generously to charity with a rather 'scattergun' effect and the staff also contribute to various charitable causes, but this is unco-ordinated and there are no measurable results. As one of the most successful companies in the area, OF has a lot to be grateful for and should maybe be making a more committed and visible contribution to the community?

People with learning difficulties

Using material from the Social Services' presentation, they described some of the historical experiences of people with learning difficulties and how, having moved back into the community from institutions, they are still trapped in poor quality services, but the Council was now hoping to find valued employment for them as an alternative.

The challenge

There are 250 people with learning difficulties aged 19–60 in the East division of Clwyd, almost half of them based at the Greenfield Day Centre (which became the focus of future developments). There are no legal requirements to provide anything different. Social Services is not a job creator anyway, and does not have the necessary industrial or commercial skills.

What do Optical Fibres want?

We want an opportunity for both the company and any of its staff to contribute in a wide variety of ways to an ongoing programme of real value in the community.

What are we doing about it?

We will be launching a joint initiative with Clwyd County Council, the first such partnership in the UK. It will be a 50:50 effort, pound for pound, person for person.

What we are not looking for?

This is not a 'do-gooding' act nor is it simply a fundraising venture which will satisfy public conscience. It is not a gimmick and neither is it about throwing money at a problem.

ABBEY METAL AND FIBRE DRUMS

Setting up Abbey Metal

Towards the end of 1990, Optical Fibres obtained a building in Flint, overhauled and redecorated it, and Abbey Metal moved in in January 1991. Abbey Metal produces decorative iron products such as gates, garden tables and seats, floral display units, and bespoke designed security screens.

Its workforce includes ten people with learning difficulties – one of whom is a man of 55 in his first job. Although it is not yet possible to pay people the full rate for the job, they plan to do this as and when the business expands. Sales are currently mainly by word of mouth but they hope to move towards a more structured marketing approach and obtain bulk orders.

Eighty per cent of the funding has come from Optical Fibres and 20 per cent from the County Council (including All Wales Strategy funding). Optical Fibres' investment is 'ring fenced' so that if the company should get into financial difficulties, the money going into Abbey Metal is secured.

One of the main challenges has been the need to develop business skills. 'People skills' matter too, but you need the former for successful business, so Optical Fibres showed them how to write a business plan, for example.

Critical factors for the development of meaningful outcomes for the Abbey Metal workforce

- **Financial rewards** are important but should not be the sole criterion in the measure of the value of employment.
- **Quality**, that meets the personalised needs of the worker – the worker's satisfaction with the job is critically important in realising a successful business venture.
- **Opportunities** to engage in valued interactions with non-disabled co-workers, supervisors and customers.
- **Safety** and access to **challenging work**.
- **Training**, with opportunities for advancement and retraining to allow the individual to adapt to the changing needs of the business.
- **Kudos**, by ensuring that all products and work activities are status-enhancing and culturally valued.

ABBEY METAL AND FIBRE DRUMS

Fibre Drums

This business operates in its own fully equipped and dedicated premises within Greenfield Day Centre and is currently contracted to Optical Fibres to refurbish up to 500 draw spools a month. Six people with learning difficulties are employed, together with a supervisor/job trainer (funded under the All Wales Strategy).

Monies from the work are currently paid to the workforce via the Delyn Work Opportunities trust funds. They receive up to £15 weekly (the upper limit before people's benefits are affected) and the remainder is paid 'in kind' in the form of goods and holidays, etc.

Other small businesses and work opportunities

Abbey Metal and Fibre Drums are the two businesses with which Optical Fibres are involved but under the Council's Delyn Work Opportunities initiative, a number of other schemes have been developed which offer employment to people who were formerly at the Greenfield Day Centre.

Freshfield Cafeteria is based in a Young Enterprise Centre which encourages and offers support to people setting up their own businesses. It serves the administrative staff and all the business trainees – about 80 people in all. The cafeteria, open from 8.30a.m. to 4.15p.m., Monday–Friday, employs two people with severe learning difficulties plus an instructor (Council-funded) and a project worker (AWS-funded). At present the two people with learning difficulties are paid on the same basis as those working with Fibre Drums (see above) but it is hoped that they will eventually be paid on a normal basis as the business develops. It is run as a separate business and there are plans to extend it to include a peripatetic catering service.

Riverview Organic Food Farm is managed via a local businessman and our service and employs eight people with learning difficulties and four non-disabled people – although it is hoped to redress this imbalance as the project develops.

Tiger Tim Ltd., a local company manufacturing and packaging household toiletries, employs sixteen people with learning difficulties. Employees receive the going rate for the job and are supported by co-workers.

Six people have individual jobs in integrated settings.

ABBEY METAL AND FIBRE DRUMS

Progress to date and plans for the future

The **good news** is that we know that:

- individuals can learn a job;
- individuals can maintain a consistent performance;
- staff are remarkably dedicated.

The **bad news** is that:

- we have no business skills;
- we don't know about marketing;
- we are locked into bureaucracy and red tape;
- we will never tap the full potential.

Our **objectives for the future** are to:

- develop the Greenfield projects to the best industrial standards;
- demonstrate that our work performance is equal to the best;
- use our starter projects to demonstrate capability;
- attract other sponsors (in addition to Optical Fibres) into the programme;
- get three or four businesses off the ground;
- have about 40 people in work by the end of the first year.

Our overall objective remains to provide meaningful work by integrating people into a real job environment offering a more valued life.

TSI: TRAINING IN SYSTEMATIC INSTRUCTION LTD.

Background to the formation of TSI Ltd.

In 1987, Marc Gold & Associates were invited to the UK to run a series of training workshops. These workshops focused on helping participants to develop new skills in supporting people with learning difficulties in open employment. Following this, TSI was formed as a non-profit organisation, and has continued to pass on skills by running training workshops in many parts of the country. Through funding from the Joseph Rowntree Foundation, TSI has appointed a co-ordinator and with the National Development Team is collaborating with the 'Real Jobs' project – (see Mark Feinman's presentation below).

What is Systematic Instruction?

During the 1960s, the late Marc Gold began to develop a conceptual framework of instruction for people with learning difficulties based on the following fundamental beliefs:

- the students he worked with had much more potential than anyone realised;
- all people with disabilities should have the opportunity to live their lives in the same way as everyone else;
- everyone can learn if we can figure out how to do it.

From there, Marc Gold went on to formulate a system of instruction initially known as TAW (Try Another Way) but now known as systematic instruction. A number of principles underpin SI:

- we can best serve people by teaching them to do marketable tasks;
- people learn best when the trainer values their human worth and

TSI: TRAINING IN SYSTEMATIC INSTRUCTION LTD.

capabilities;

- if the person has failed to learn it is the teacher who has failed to teach appropriately;
- labelling is both unfair and counterproductive.

SI – a practical way forward

Systematic instruction provides a teaching framework which combines with values to give a practical way forward. It provides a framework for organising information to be taught, including a structured approach to job analysis, informing strategies for teaching tasks and a value base which underpins the system.

Systematic instruction is evolving on the basis of practical experience of supporting people in integrated employment. Since Marc Gold first developed 'Try Another Way'. Integration has come to be considered more important than training and valued outcomes more important than formal structures.

The work of TSI Ltd.

TSI offers the following services:

- Advice and assistance to local organisations developing employment opportunities.

Over the past three years TSI has contributed to the setting up of many small employment initiatives around the UK, and as a point of reference for a wide network of people working in the field. In particular, the network can provide practical assistance and support while people are starting up.

- Training in directly relevant skills.

Workshops are usually run for five days and combine new information with opportunities to practice skills with Consultant Learners in Community Settings.

THE PATHWAY EMPLOYMENT SERVICE (PES)

Andy Oxley (Islington, London) and Laurence
Lennon (Leeds)

Background information

PES was set up in 1975 and there are now almost forty local Pathway services in England and Wales. PES schemes are mainly funded by either health and local authorities (or a combination of both) and a local service will usually have one (occasionally two) full-time Employment Officer and part-time secretarial assistance.

PES places people in paid open employment (often under the SPS scheme), or in unpaid work experience; since 1975 it has made approximately 2,500 paid work placements and over 2,000 unpaid work experience placements.

How does Pathway operate?

Pathway accepts *referrals* from a variety of sources including: social education or adult training centres, Job Centres, DROs, families, social workers, and occasionally there are self-referrals.

The next stage will be a detailed assessment, where the Employment Officer will meet with the individual to start building a picture of that person's strengths, needs, support networks, previous experience, etc. Examples of some assessment sheets are reproduced on the following pages. The Employment Officer will also liaise with other agencies with which the individual has links and gather any further information needed to help the person with learning difficulties make an informed choice about work. Assessment not only aims to try and predict how someone will cope with employment but also tries to ascertain, for example, how realistic someone's commitment to work really is. Do

THE PATHWAY EMPLOYMENT SERVICE (PES)

they have a realistic grasp of what is involved or do they see work as the answer to other difficulties in life? Are they prepared for the 'hard graft' of work which can be very different from the leisurely pace of most adult training centres?

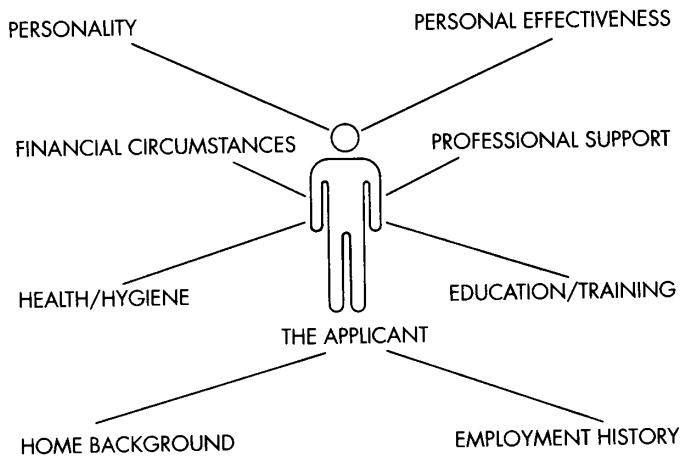
After completing the assessment the next stage will either be further work preparation and training or job placement.

Where it has been decided that further *work preparation* is necessary this may involve a specialised college course, or a work experience placement.

Where the individual is ready for work the next stages will be *job finding and placement*. Employment Officers find jobs in a variety of ways including through newspapers, vacancy bulletins, and job centres, by speculative calls on employers and by word of mouth. The next stage is job matching, taking into account such issues as type of employer, job location, co-workers, hours and pay, and seeing whether the job's requirements meet the individual's abilities and interests. Assessment is a two-way process; the employer will be assessing the potential employee but Pathway will also be assessing the suitability of the employer and the workplace. Possible sources of financial subsidy also have to be ascertained (see below). The Employment Officer will assist with any application forms that need to be completed and will usually accompany the individual to the job interview.

Finally there is the provision of whatever on-the-job support is needed. The Employment Officer will usually accompany the person on the first day and provide whatever level of ongoing support is needed after that, including regular visits to the work place until the employee is able to manage independently. Where possible they will also arrange for a co-worker to take responsibility for training and integration into the work place, and 'foster workers', as they are called, will be paid a small allowance if necessary. The Employment Officer is also available to offer any help and advice which the employer may require. Support may also be offered to the employee's family and/or other carers where this is appropriate.

THE PATHWAY EMPLOYMENT SERVICE (PES)



Personality

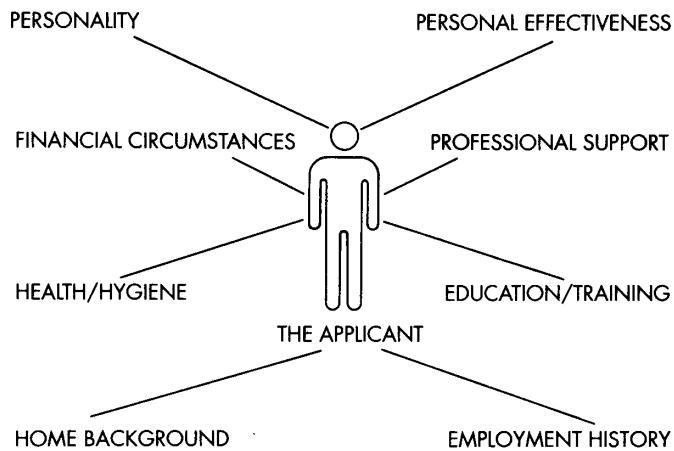
For example:
Level of commitment
Self confidence
Extrovert/introvert
Behavioural problems
Job preferences
Hobbies/interests

Personal Effectiveness

For example:
Physical capabilities – ability to lift, stand, use of hands, endurance, etc.
Social skills – accepting criticism, independent travelling, teamwork, reliability, self confidence, etc.

Intellectual skills – ability to communicate, literacy, numeracy/money, understanding of time, telling the time, recognition of warning signs/symbols, etc.

THE PATHWAY EMPLOYMENT SERVICE (PES)



Financial Circumstances Professional Support

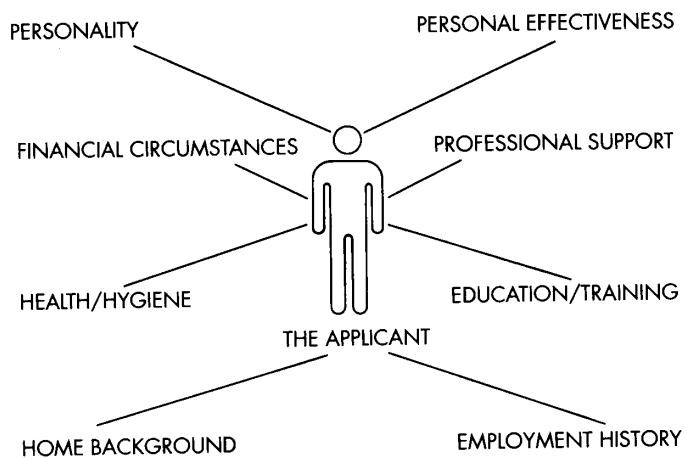
For example:

Attendance Allowance
Income Support
Severe Disablement Allowance
Invalidity Benefit
Housing Benefit
Residential Care Costs

For example:

Adult Training Centre (A.T.C.) Staff
CMHT's – Social Workers,
Community Nurses, Psychologists,
Occupational Therapists
Generic Social Workers,
Doctors
Disablement Resettlement Officers
(DRO's)
Careers Officers
Further Education staff
Teachers
Work Skills Centre staff

THE PATHWAY EMPLOYMENT SERVICE (PES)



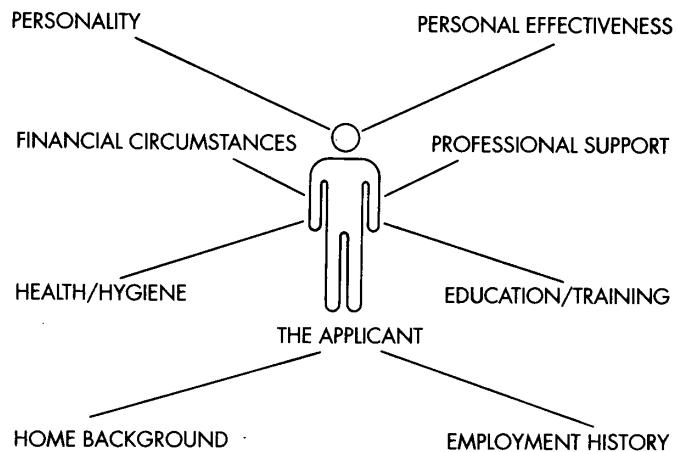
Health/Hygiene

For example:
Epilepsy
Chest conditions
Sensory difficulties
Allergies
Diabetes
Personal hygiene
Dress/appearance

Education/Training

For example:
Special schools
Independence skills training
Pre-vocational training
Work experience placements
Works skills centre
City and Guilds/NVQ
YT/ET
Job acquisition skills

THE PATHWAY EMPLOYMENT SERVICE (PES)



Home Background

For example:
Living alone
With parents
Group home
Hostel
Parental support
Residential staff support

Employment History

For example:
Previous paid employment
Type of environment
Type of occupation
Hours of work

THE PATHWAY EMPLOYMENT SERVICE (PES)

Work Preparation

<i>Personal Effectiveness</i>	<i>Vocational Guidance</i>	<i>Job Acquisition Skills</i>
Social and life skills	Task analysis	Job search
Numeracy/literacy	Career literature/video	Advertisement analysis
Independence skills	Industrial visits	Telephoning employers
Pre-vocational skills	Skills sampling (eg Colleges, Skills Centre)	Application forms
Health and safety	Project-based training	CV'S
Hygiene	YT/ET	Interview techniques
	Work experience	Job Club
	Systematic instruction	Job Centre visits
		Visits by employers

Raise Awareness

Improve Individual Choice

THE PATHWAY EMPLOYMENT SERVICE (PES)

Available subsidies

Pathway is able to draw on a number of different sources for employment subsidies including:

- the Sheltered Placement Scheme; (some local Pathway services have become SPS sponsors);
- the Job Introduction Scheme (which offers a weekly subsidy for the first six weeks after a person starts work);
- Interwork;
- a top-up from Pathway funds;
- therapeutic earnings.

What sort of jobs does Pathway help people find?

Most Pathway placements are in the service industries – in retailing, supermarkets, hotels and catering; other people find jobs in factories, warehouses, banks, post rooms, and farms. It is fair to say that most employment is still low paid, low skilled and often part-time.

However, one encouraging development is that Pathway is beginning to work with more severely disabled individuals and in some local services Employment Officers have started to use the systematic instruction teaching technology.

THE SHAW TRUST AND THE SHELTERED PLACEMENT SCHEME

Joanna Willey, Support Officer, Shaw Trust
(Didcot, Oxon)

Background

In 1981, the International Year of the Disabled (*sic*), a group of people came together in Shaw, Wiltshire, to try and establish a local employment initiative as an alternative to local sheltered workshops and day centres. The Shaw Trust evolved from these meetings and in 1982 appointed its first staff member, and its first disabled employee was found work under the Sheltered Placement Scheme (SPS). (For details of how SPS operates, see David Lillistone's presentation on pp. 9-12.) By the end of 1991, the Trust hopes to have 2,147 people in employment under the SPS scheme. It currently has 26 development officers whose role is to liaise with employers and with health and social services professionals.

Who finds employment with the Trust?

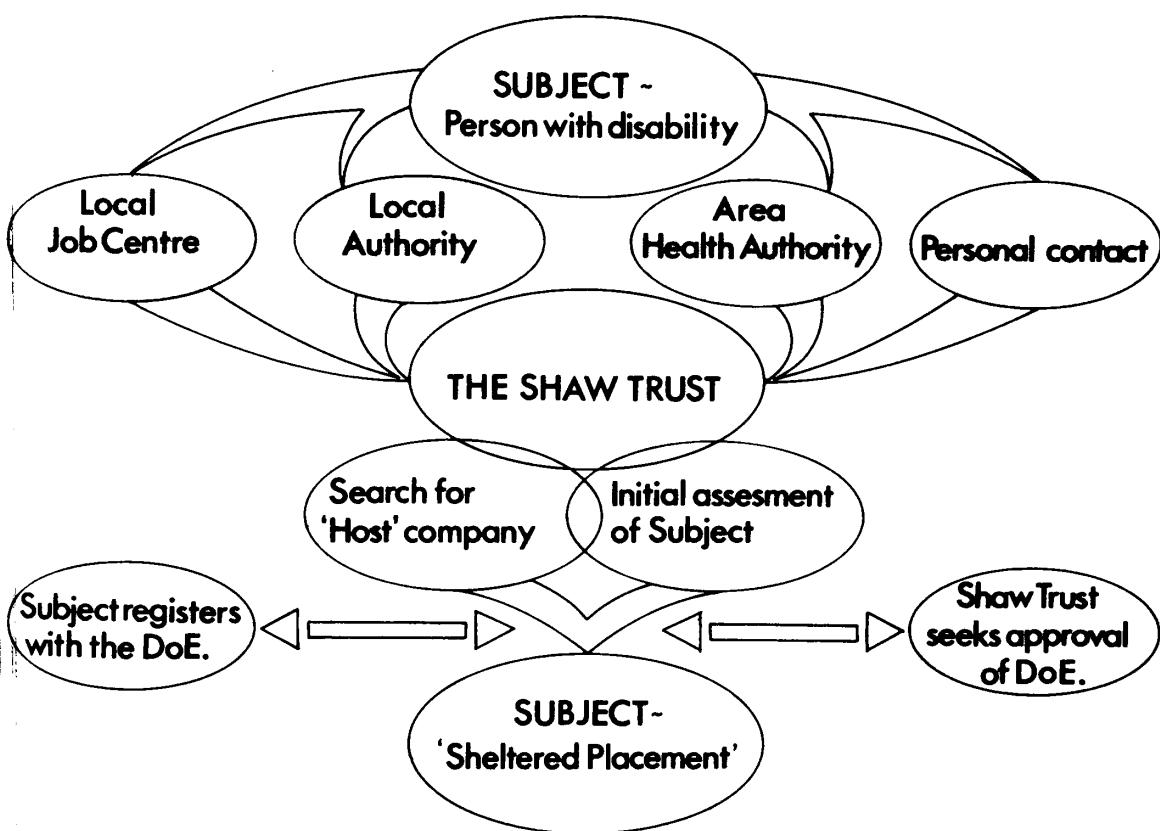
Today the Shaw Trust is the single largest sponsor of SPS placements and has grown into a national organisation with disabled people placed in jobs all over the country. Initially the Trust worked with people with physical disabilities but today:

- people with learning difficulties make up 40 per cent of their employees;
- 30 per cent have physical or sensory disabilities;
- 13 per cent have disorders of the nervous system;
- 7 per cent have epilepsy;
- 6 per cent have mental health problems;
- 4 per cent have other disabilities.

THE SHAW TRUST AND THE SHELTERED PLACEMENT SCHEME

Approximately 65 per cent of those placed in jobs are under the age of 30, 19 per cent are aged 30-40 and 10 per cent between the ages of 40 and 50.

How the Shaw Trust places people in employment



Recent developments

The Trust has opened three Work Preparation Centres – in Hereford, Enfield and Wycombe – with the following objectives:

- to offer further training to those who approach the Trust seeking

THE SHAW TRUST AND THE SHELTERED PLACEMENT SCHEME

employment but who are felt to need further training before this is possible;

- to offer a range of individual programmes which may focus on such diverse areas as manual dexterity, numeracy and social skills.

The Shaw Trust is aiming to introduce a system for the acquisition of measurable skills and training strategies to assist in various occupational areas. NCVQs will be available to both sheltered employees and those attending static training centres. The Trust in co-operation with Independent Link has been working towards Approved Centre status in connection with care organisations. We anticipate that our accreditation for Approved Centre status will be treated favourably. Shaw Trust in conjunction with CETSW has devised training materials for care organisations accessible to those with learning difficulties or special needs. The NCVQ in care organisation will be at Level 2. The Shaw Trust is extending its work with people with mental health problems, and now has some health authority-funded development officers working specifically with this group. With support from the Employment Service, it is seeking ways of making SPS more accessible for people recovering from mental illness.

Current issues facing the Trust

Relinquishing benefits entitlements

Transferring from a 'benefit-dependent' culture to the world of work can sometimes be traumatic for people with disabilities. Shaw Trust officers will attempt to make that transfer as smooth as possible through regular liaison with local DSS offices and they will try to ensure that when someone starts work they are not financially worse off than when they were receiving benefits. However, the changes in welfare benefits legislation due to come into force in 1992 may ease the situation by creating greater flexibility.

Because the level of financial grant which the Trust receives as an SPS sponsor from the Employment Service has a ceiling (£3,800 per placement for 1991/92), it can be difficult to place people in relatively well paid jobs, as the amount of subsidy may be insufficient to meet the sponsor's share of the SPS worker's employment costs. For example, if someone's output is assessed as being 65 per cent in a job paying £11,000 a year, the sponsor would be required to find £3,850 for wages together with a percentage of the additional employment costs (employer's NI and pension contributions). The sponsor also incurs

THE SHAW TRUST AND THE SHELTERED PLACEMENT SCHEME

costs in administering and supporting placements and this expenditure has to be contained within the grant ceiling figure.

Working as a national sponsor

As a national SPS sponsor, the Trust covers a wide geographical area which can make it difficult for staff to develop effective local contacts with, say, local services to people with disabilities.

Impact of cutbacks in national training programmes

Cutbacks in government programmes such as Employment Training have severely affected the work opportunities of many young people with special needs.

EXCEL EMPLOYMENT: CREATIVE RECRUITMENT IN THE HIGH STREET

Deborah Steele, Director, Excel Employment
Trudi Scrivener, Business Development
Manager, Excel Employment

All persons with disabilities should be provided with the opportunity for employment in integrated settings. The availability of these opportunities is not contingent upon any prerequisite skill levels or developmental competencies. Opportunities for employment are clearly related to the degree of commitment demonstrated by human service agencies and the degree to which training procedures can be made responsive to the needs of the individual.

(McLoughan, Garner and Callahan),
Getting employed, staying employed, see p. 3.

Introduction

Excel Employment is a voluntary organisation and registered charity with premises in North London. Its aim is to promote people with disabilities as valuable employees and it seeks to do this by:

- establishing model projects which directly serve people with disabilities who are looking for work;
- offering a nationwide consultancy service;
- holding employment seminars and workshops;
- working with professionals and with people with disabilities;
- working with employers to help them fully implement their equal opportunities policies;
- publishing *Workmate*, Excel's employment newsletter written by and for people with disabilities.

In autumn 1990, Excel Employment opened a recruitment agency specialising in:

EXCEL EMPLOYMENT

- job finding: assistance with job seeking, matching, interview training, and advice on legal and benefits issues;
- individual counselling in career development;
- on-the-job training and support for as long as the person requires it.

The customers will primarily be people with disabilities who are looking for full-time employment. Non-disabled job seekers will also be welcome, making the agency fully equal in its service. Segregated services have proved ineffective in assisting people with disabilities to find valued employment in the competitive market. With positive marketing of people's skills in an ordinary recruitment agency, Excel will reduce the discriminatory practices against the disabled job seeker.

Excel Employment will offer a complete package of support and advice to employers including:

- instruction to the employee and a guarantee that the job is successfully completed during the induction period;
- legal, health and safety advice and training in disability awareness;
- advice on government grants, aids and adaptations, where appropriate.

Although a registered charity, every aspect of Excel Employment mirrors the commercial sector as we aim to provide a progressive service. We are seen to be businesslike – and professional (but not in the medical or welfare sense).

Excel staff are recruited mainly from a background of industry or ordinary high street recruitment. We have a dynamic staff of four: a co-ordinator/director, two job coaches and an administrative worker. Two additional posts of recruitment consultants, and three more job coaches are planned for later in 1991.

Building on developments in employment for people with severe disabilities

Excel Employment has not been developed in isolation. During the 1980s there were various moves away from traditional day-centre services for people with learning difficulties.

- One of the earliest schemes which challenged the day centre model was the **Outreach Project** in Greenock, Scotland which, in an area of high unemployment, succeeded in finding jobs for people with learning difficulties who wanted to leave their local day-centre.
- **Blakes Wharf** Employment Service in West London has challenged

EXCEL EMPLOYMENT

the idea that only those requiring minimal support are employable. Using the Systematic Instruction teaching technology, they have enabled a wide range of people to find and keep jobs.

- The **WISE** project in Swansea is based on the idea that there is no single route to employment, and their flexible approach has led to jobs in large and small industrial concerns, in co-ops and in self-employment.
- **Rowanwood** in Cambridge established that quality of product was as important as quality in training and have developed an inclusive workplace which markets some high quality wood products.
- **Applejacks Cafe Project** in North London disproved the idea that people with learning difficulties can only do the most mundane and repetitive work. Catering is as varied and complex as almost any semi-skilled job can be.
- **Vox Employment** in Hillingdon has adopted a high profile, using professional marketing techniques and creative businesslike approaches to the whole area of recruitment. They have also worked constructively to involve day-centre staff.

Excel has studied these and many other training and recruitment projects and has drawn on the lessons learned in these schemes.

What do people with disabilities want?

Excel also undertook market research to identify the nature of service wanted by people with disabilities. A recent survey of people with learning difficulties who were attending day-centres in North Hertfordshire, South West London and North London found that:

- 80 per cent of people said they wanted a job;
- 40 per cent of those people were thought to need minimal support in their choice;
- only 1 per cent of people had found jobs in the open market;
- 3 per cent (mostly SPS) had been found jobs through special schemes.

Excel also keeps in touch with the views of people with disabilities by having an equal opportunities policy under which a minimum of 50 per cent of Excel Recruitment's staff and management committee have personal experience of disability.

After two years of research, we believe we have designed the most effective employment model to meet the needs of the workforce of the 1990s.

EXCEL EMPLOYMENT

Involuntary unemployment?

There are many service barriers which prevent people with disabilities from moving naturally from school into work as most non-disabled people do. People move slowly through a segregated system from special school into ATC, SEC, or Resource Centre where thousands become trapped. Excel believes that we must not continue to warehouse people in under-resourced day-centres where aims and objectives – if they exist – are vague and any move to open employment is usually left to chance.

The service response to people wanting jobs has been to provide training, and yet more training – work experience, pre-vocational instruction, training projects – but less than 1 per cent leap from training carousel into real community jobs with real wages.

We know that many people who have become involuntarily unemployed have found a dramatic difference in their lifestyle and have said that one of the hardest adjustments has been their lack of social standing in the community. They have found the experience degrading and have felt themselves to be devalued by the media and by society in general. Ninety-five per cent of people with learning difficulties who are unemployed are involuntarily unemployed.

Barriers to employment: demolishing the misconceptions

Other people often make value judgements about people with disabilities which create insurmountable barriers before they even get to meet an employer:

- 'You wouldn't like that, it's boring...'
- 'You need to be able to read...'
- 'Your benefits will get mixed up...'
- 'Your parents won't like it...'
- 'Unemployment is so high you wouldn't get a job...'
- 'If you can't travel on public transport then you can't work...'

We need to get rid of the misconceptions surrounding people with disabilities and the world of work.

For example, 'People are better off on benefits'

People on benefits are poor, and most people can find jobs where it is possible to earn more than they are receiving on benefits, even if they live in hostel accommodation. There are many ways through and round the benefits trap.

EXCEL EMPLOYMENT

For example, 'People with learning difficulties can't cope with the outside world'

With support, everyone can cope with the real world. The segregated world of the day-centre has its own language, customs, culture, rules and conformities. A person with disabilities who has to adjust to this complex environment is more than capable of learning the new work environment if taught and supported.

For example, 'They are not ready yet'

Everyone is ready for the world of work as soon as they express the wish to enter it.

For example, 'They can't cope with a full day's work'

People with learning difficulties can cope with a full day's work although they may need to work up to it. They are bound to feel tired at first but they need to be told that this is a normal reaction.

For example, 'People with learning difficulties are too vulnerable and will be exploited'

Employers are unlikely to exploit any employee where the unions are active or where support is provided to the worker.

For example, 'People will be laughed at and even victimised'

Teasing happens everywhere but more so if one uses stigmatised transport and special services. Using ordinary facilities and working in an ordinary environment reduces the effect of differentness. Teasing because of differentness will be less likely, but a person can learn how to deal with it if it does occur.

Support in employment: the key to success?

Available statistics indicate conclusively that people with learning difficulties who receive on-the-job support succeed in their jobs, but many unsupported workers tend to bounce back into services at about the third month. The reasons are numerous: the trial period ends, the job changes and the change is not fully explained, there are relationship problems, misunderstandings get out of proportion if communication is difficult. But when a job coach is working with an employee many potential difficulties can be spotted before they become a problem. Where systematic instruction is used, all the elements of the work environment will have been assessed, explained and taught to the employee.

Most of us have learned the skills of 'fitting in' at an early age. We can bluff our way out of it when we forget the boss's name, or when

EXCEL EMPLOYMENT

we walk into the wrong meeting or sit in someone else's place in the canteen. People with learning difficulties, for the most part, do not have these skills, but a job coach can prepare a person for these sort of situations by on the job training and support. They cannot be learned in the artificial setting of a day-centre.

The importance of marketing

At first glance, people with disabilities may not look very marketable: they may look different or the employer may start worrying that he is going to have to build ramps or increase his insurance, but if you get someone an interview, nine times out of ten they get the job. Excel always aims to be seen as professional rather than presenting an image of charitable tin-rattling. By assuming that the problem is unemployment rather than 'disability', the importance of finding the right working environment for someone is the same, whether they are disabled or not. What matters is that a person finds the right job for them and then has the option for individual support in the workplace.

Marketing is the crucial function of employment services but it is not something which can be done by sitting in the office. Listening to customers means going out and meeting customers and assessing the market. Monitoring your competitors means being out and about and constantly looking for trends, changes and new developments. In any successful service, a significant proportion of time is spent out of the office and in the market place.

The rehabilitation system must begin to identify those characteristics of the disabled labour force which are most likely to appeal to employers. In order to do this it must have some picture, however general, of how the target group – employers – perceive themselves and what their values are. For example, given that most employers value independence and self-reliance, a direct message from a disabled individual that he or she is self-reliant could be well received.

When an employer is told that a social services worker wishes to talk to her about placing a person with learning difficulties in work she is likely to have an immediate mental image of a dependent person who has lots of problems and needs a handout. But when a high street recruitment consultant rings an employer to say they can fill the vacancy perfectly, the employer is more likely to feel she is getting what she needs. This is not a handout; it is good business. The marketing of the job seeker should therefore be linked into and use the

EXCEL EMPLOYMENT

language and settings of the commercial sector, thereby relating to the employer in the culture that she is accustomed to.

Employment service workers commonly fail to use the language of the business community; they are often perceived as being amateurish in their presentation and unspecific in intent. Brochures and posters should include pictures which show disabled people in normal work and their services must be perceived as relevant, appealing and efficient by potential employers.

Employers usually have little or no knowledge of the welfare system and find the fragmentation of services confusing and frustrating. It is up to us to bridge the gap but it can only be accomplished by wearing the clothes of the employers, even if your heart is still in social work!

Recommendations

- Don't get bogged down in funding issues; choose the model first and worry about funding later. Money is available for good employment initiatives, especially from trusts and corporations.
- Start with setting high standards. Go for the best results.
- Be businesslike. Employers expect you to be punctual, enthusiastic, smart and well presented.
- Don't try to be all things to all people. Specialise. Don't mix leisure activities or social work with employment.
- Train your staff. Recruitment agency workers in London are paid around £15,000 a year and may get a further annual £15,000 commission as well. If it was an unskilled job, something anyone could do without training, why would they pay such a high salary? It is a specialised job – so train your staff.
- A range of employment services should be available in your area. There is no single magic solution or easy answer. Supported employment is hard work but it can be successful.
- Network – share your ideas – don't re-invent the wheel. We are years behind North America. Look around the country, examine ideas. You could even pool resources.

THE FUTURE OF SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT AND THE REAL JOBS PROJECT

Mark Feinmann, Clinical Director
(Learning Difficulties), Liverpool Health
Authority

What have we achieved in supported employment?

- We have demonstrated that people with severe disabilities can get and can sustain jobs on the open market.
- Some statutory and voluntary agencies have demonstrated a commitment to invest in employment schemes.
- There are now a range of agencies which are offering job placement, job training and on-the-job support to a small number of people with severe disabilities.
- There are some small businesses which have been set up to offer employment to people with severe disabilities.
- We have recognised that people don't need preparation for employment and that on-the-job training is more appropriate and effective.
- We have begun to understand the technology of providing support.

What have we yet to achieve?

- The majority of people with severe disabilities are still using segregated day services in congregate settings. There are 54,000 people with learning difficulties in ATCs or SECs and 27,000 living in long-stay hospitals.
- Those people with learning difficulties who are in jobs are virtually all people who require only minimal support.
- We are not making any significant impact in terms of getting people into employment.
- We remain primarily dominated by a service culture rather than an

THE FUTURE OF SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT AND THE REAL JOBS PROJECT

employment culture. We operate a 'push' response to employment rather than 'pull'.

- There is conflict within our own values. Are we jobs-led or people-led? Are we just slotting people into jobs rather than finding out what people want and then trying to find the jobs that match their aspirations?

The Real Jobs Project

The Project is a partnership between the National Development Team (NDT), the Joseph Rowntree Foundation (JRF), and Training in Systematic Instruction (TSI). It aims to develop supported employment for people with severe learning difficulties.

The Project is designed to test and demonstrate ways of developing locally owned and responsive supported employment services which might not otherwise grow as rapidly, effective, reliably or durably as they could. The Real Jobs Project will aim to do this by:

- developing an initiative for a national strategy for supported employment which is comprehensive and co-ordinated;
- working together with the Department of Health, the Department of Employment, and with local initiatives including TECs and statutory and voluntary agencies;
- developing a co-ordinated response to the provision and design of localised and coherent strategies;
- making a major investment in support to people through high quality training in systematic instruction, marketing, selling, etc.;
- looking at effective strategies for disinvestment from traditional segregated provision such as day-centres;
- moving away from employment provision which is dominated by a service culture;
- securing the commitment of employers to the aims of the Real Jobs Project.

We need a national policy on supported employment, together with local pilot initiatives, in order to effect major changes in current provision. We need a group of people working in targetted pilot areas over a period of time to design, support and maintain change.

ISSUES ARISING FROM THE TWO CONFERENCES

During the two conferences, a number of key issues emerged in the plenaries and workshop sessions, from presentations and from discussions. We do not have the answers to all these issues but we are reproducing them here as we believe they can begin to form an agenda for future discussion and action.

Creating desirable futures

We need a vision of the desirable future for people with learning difficulties which will often be radically different from how their lives appear now. How do we build and sustain that vision and ensure that all those concerned are committed to it?

Shifting the culture

Most employment initiatives to date have been linked to service-providing agencies and are locked into a service-providing culture. How do you move away from that and into the real world of commerce and industry?

Funding new employment initiatives

Who should be funding the costs involved in developing supported employment? If we're talking about moving away from a service-led culture is it appropriate to expect social services to put up the money? However, the fact remains that it is usually in social services departments where the money is currently tied up – in day-centres, staffing, etc.

A comprehensive system

Providing work opportunities for people with severe and profound disabilities not only challenge our creative thinking, it can also be very expensive. Is it realistic to think that we can find (on-going) funding for

ISSUES ARISING FROM THE TWO CONFERENCES

supporting people who pose significant challenges to services?

The benefits trap

The current system is counter-productive in terms of encouraging people to move into employment. On the other hand we know that there are people who have succeeded in making the switch from being benefits recipients to wage earners. How can we convince some service workers and families/carers that it is possible? Will the changes in benefits legislation coming into force in 1992 make things easier?

Work experience

An awful lot of people with learning difficulties are still going on work experience placements and there are many service workers who would argue that it can be not only useful but a necessary preparation for proper paid employment. Some of our main employment schemes such as Pathway are still using work preparation extensively.

Where do we start?

Faced with an adult training centre of 150 people, thinking about getting everyone into work can feel very daunting. Isn't it better to start with one or two people and build on that?

APPENDIX A USEFUL ADDRESSES

The Sheltered Employment Branch

The Employment Service
Steel City House
Moorfoot
Sheffield
S1 4PQ
Tel. 0742-739190

Training in Systematic Instruction (TSI) Ltd.

Room 116
Ray House
6 St Andrew Street
London
EC4A 3AD
Tel. 071-353 2090 ext. 3334

The Shaw Trust

Caithness House
Western Way
Melksham
Wiltshire
SN12 8DZ
Tel. 0225 790860

Excel Employment Ltd.

1A Hornsey High Street
London N15
Tel. 081-348 8141

APPENDIX A

Abbey Metal

1 Heinzel Court
Aber Park
Flint
Clwyd
CH6 1XX
Tel. 0352-661653

Co-Options Ltd.

2B Millbank Road
Rhyl
Clwyd
LL18 4NY
Tel. 0745-330030

Pathway Employment Service

MENCAP
169 City Road
Cardiff
CF2 3JB
Tel. 0222-482072

Anne O'Bryan

3 Rockfield
Colerne
Wiltshire
SN14 8EG
Tel. 0225-743130

APPENDIX B



Department of Employment
Caxton House
Tothill Street
London SW1H 9NF
Press Office (24 hrs) 071-273 6950
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Exchange 071-273 3000

PRESS NOTICE

118/91

16 April 1991

MICHAEL HOWARD ANNOUNCES MORE HELP FOR PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

Major improvements in the special help which the Employment Service provides for people with disabilities were announced today by Employment Secretary Michael Howard.

In a written reply to a Parliamentary Question from Keith Mans (Wyre) Mr Howard said: "Helping people with disabilities is an agreed priority for the Employment Service agency. In 1989/90 it placed 76,900 people with disabilities into jobs.

"Following consideration of comments on the Consultative Document 'Employment and Training for People with Disabilities', I have now agreed with the agency major improvements in the special help which it currently provides through Disablement Resettlement Officers, the Disablement Advisory Service and the Employment Rehabilitation Service.

"New local teams will be set up, over the next 12 to 18 months, to provide more accessible, professional and integrated help to individuals and employers. The teams will offer to individuals specialist advice, assessment and help in finding and keeping jobs, and to employers encouragement and help in applying good practice. Staff training will be strengthened."

APPENDIX B

"The Employment Service will now implement the plans for improved employment rehabilitation announced in the Consultative Document. These will involve more use of voluntary and other agents. Nine Employment Service centres - in West London, Bristol, Birmingham, Nottingham, Leeds, Manchester, Newcastle, Cardiff and Glasgow - will be developed as centres of excellence. The Employment Service expects to be able to phase out the others over up to five years as adequate agency provision is put in place. Access to residential rehabilitation will be assured for those who require it.

"Following those changes, local coverage of specialist assessment and rehabilitation will be substantially increased, the Employment Service's own service will be more coherent, professional and effectively managed, and have a higher profile; and sources of expertise and commitment in the wider community will be more effectively harnessed. They represent major improvements in the quality of service to both individuals and employers and will help more people with disabilities to get and keep suitable jobs.

"I will take decisions on possible developments in other forms of help provided by the Employment Service to people with disabilities after relevant comments on 'Employment and Training for People with Disabilities' and the 'Evaluation of the Special Schemes for People with Disabilities' have been fully considered."

Notes to Editors

The Consultative Document on the Employment and Training of People with Disabilities was published on June 29 1990 and all those interested were invited to respond. More than 400 detailed responses have been received from a wide variety of organisations and individuals.

The Employment Rehabilitation Service currently provides specialist assessment and employment rehabilitation for people with disabilities mainly in 30 centres of various sizes. In 1989/90 it helped 26,000 people of whom 14,600 received rehabilitation.

APPENDIX B

Disablement Resettlement Officers are based in Jobcentres. They provide advice to Jobseekers with disabilities as well as help in placing them in jobs.

The **Disablement Advisory Service** consists of 60 teams who encourage and help employers to develop and apply good practices in employing people with disabilities. They also advise employers on employee problems and administer the Employment Service's special schemes eg special technical aids to employment.

APPENDIX C



Department of Social Security

DISABILITY WORKING ALLOWANCE

On 10 January 1990 the Secretary of State for Social Security announced major proposals to improve the balance and structure of Social Security benefits for disabled people. The proposals, which were developed with the benefit of the wide ranging surveys of disabled people by the Office of Population, Censuses and Surveys, are contained in "The Way Ahead: Benefits for Disabled People" (Cmd 917) published by HM Stationery Office.

One of the proposals in "The Way Ahead" was the introduction, in April 1992, of a new benefit, now called Disability Working Allowance (DWA), designed to promote the independence of disabled people who have limited capacity for work. DWA will remove the rigid distinction in the benefit system between ability and inability to work, making it easier for about 50,000 people with long-term illnesses or disabilities to work.

Simple qualifying rules will make the benefit easy to understand and will ensure claims can be dealt with quickly. One of the main conditions of entitlement to DWA will be prior receipt of a long term incapacity benefit (payable to people who have been incapable of work for 28 weeks or more), or receipt of a disability benefit (payable to people who have care or mobility needs). This connection with a "qualifying benefit" makes it possible to simplify the DWA disability test and base it on self-assessment of disability by claimants themselves.

An important aspect of DWA is a new longer "linking" rule which will remove a considerable anxiety for disabled people who would like to work but are uncertain of their ability to do so. For some disabled people the current benefit arrangements contain a positive disincentive to try work, because if they work for more than 8 weeks, they have to serve a further qualifying period for Invalidity Benefit (IVB) or Severe Disablement Allowance (SDA) should their experiment with work fail. This leaves them temporarily worse off. DWA addresses this problem. A person receiving DWA who was receiving IVB or SDA before claiming DWA, and whose attempt at work fails within 2 years, and who is incapable of work, will be eligible for the benefit they were receiving rather than for Sickness Benefit.

To target resources to those most in need DWA will be income related. The income test will be similar to Family Credit. The amount of DWA will depend upon financial resources such as earnings and savings. Unlike Family Credit, DWA will be available to single people and couples without children.

The maximum benefit payable will be dependent on the composition of the claimant's family, with a tapered withdrawal of benefit as incomes rise. DWA will be awarded for a fixed period of 26 weeks, and will not alter to take account of changes in the claimant's circumstances. This means that if the claimant manages to increase their earnings this will not affect their benefit during the 26 week award.

APPENDIX C

WHO CAN CLAIM DWA?

WORK

DWA will be available to both employees and self-employed people. Claimants must, on average, work 16 hours or more per week, and if the job is temporary it must be expected to last at least 5 weeks.

QUALIFYING BENEFITS

The claimant must:

- i). have been getting - IVB, SDA, or a disability premium or higher pensioner premium ¹ paid with Income Support, Housing Benefit or Community Charge Benefit, in at least one of the 56 days before the date of claim or
- ii). be getting - Attendance Allowance (AA), Mobility Allowance (Mob A), Disability Living Allowance (DLA) ²

INCOME

Income is all the money that is coming into the claimant's household, including earnings, other income and an assumed income or "tariff" income from capital. Tax, national insurance contributions and half of any contributions to an occupational or personal pension will be deducted from the earnings which are taken into account.

CAPITAL

People with more than £16,000 will not be entitled to DWA. For people with capital between £3,000 and £16,000 a weekly income will be assumed and taken into account in the calculation of DWA. Some forms of capital will be ignored, such as the surrender value of a life insurance policy, an occupational pension or an annuity, compensation for personal injury held in trust, and the value of a person's home and their personal possessions.

DISABILITY

For first claims a simple declaration by the claimant that they have a physical or mental disability which puts them at a disadvantage in getting a job, will usually provide sufficient evidence of disability.

For second and subsequent claims, claimants will be given a list of functional disabilities which are likely to put them at a disadvantage in the labour market and will be asked to indicate which apply to them. To "pass" the test they will have to have one or more of the specified disabilities. They will also be asked to name a professional involved in their care who can provide confirmation of their assessment. People who are receiving DLA at the higher rate or who were getting SDA before claiming DWA will be assumed to satisfy the disability test and will generally not need to complete a self assessment form.

¹ Premiums are paid to special groups who have extra needs. Disability premiums are paid to those who are under age 60/higher pensioner premiums are paid to those who are over age 60, - and have been incapable of work for 28 weeks or more, or are receiving DLA, AA, (or for claims made in the four weeks before the start of the benefit Mob A), SDA, or IVB, or are registered blind or have an invalid carriage.

² The introduction, in April 1992, of DLA will extend help, already given by AA and Mob A, with the extra costs of being disabled.



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King's Fund

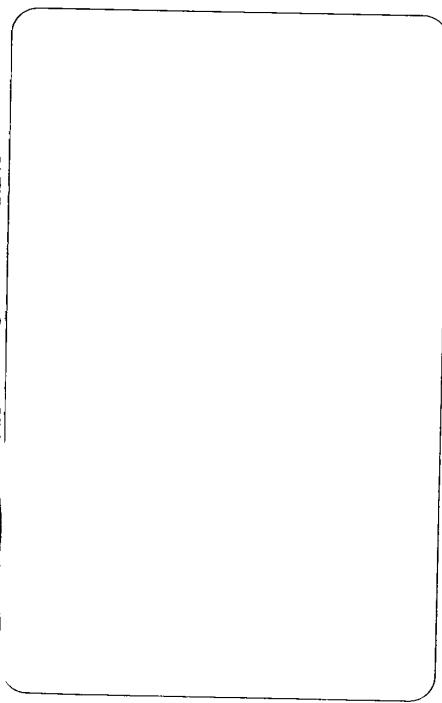


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MAKING IT HAPPEN: Employment opportunities for people with severe learning difficulties

This conference report includes contributions by Anne O'Bryan, a well known employment consultant, David Lillistone for the employment services, and Mark Feinmann, psychologist and member of the Real Jobs Project, set up by the National Development Team.

It also contains descriptions of a range of schemes from all over the country, where people with learning difficulties are helped to find and be maintained in supported employment. These are concerned with current service structures, strategies for job development and employment training within community settings.



£6.50