

Making a National Job Coaching plan for Wales

Helping people with learning disabilities and autism find jobs



The Influencing and Informing Engage to Change project wrote this document. It is an easy read version of 'From service to strategy: A National Job Coaching strategy for Wales to support people with learning disabilities and autism into employment'.

August 2024

How to use this document



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



Words in **bold blue writing** may be hard to understand. You can check what the words in blue mean on **page 22**.



Where the document says **we**, this means the **Influencing and Informing Engage to Change project**.

The people working on the project are:

Dr. Elisa Vigna - NCMH, Cardiff University

Andrea Meek - NCMH, Cardiff University

Angela Kenvyn - Influencing and Informing Engage to Change, Learning Disability Wales.

Gerraint Jones-Griffiths - Influencing and Informing Engage to Change, Learning Disability Wales.



For more information about this report contact:
Dr. Elisa Vigna: Vignae@cardiff.ac.uk



For more information about the **Engage to Change** project please contact:
Angela Kenvyn: angela.kenvyn@ldw.org.uk



[Easy Read Wales](#) made this document into Easy Read using **Photosymbols**. [To tell us what you think about this easy read version, click here.](#)

[Photosymbols Licence number 403527247](#)

Contents

About Engage to Change.....	5
A national job coaching service	8
What works	10
Work experience	10
Job coaching	10
Needs-led support.....	10
Paid work placements and supported internships.....	11
Working with employers.....	12
The importance of paid work	12
Funding	12
What we think should happen.....	15
Thank you.....	21
Hard words	22

About Engage to Change



Engage to Change was a 7-year project. It ended in May 2023.



The project worked across Wales. And supported 1075 young people with a learning disability and or autism.



The **National Lottery Community Fund** funded the project and the Welsh Government supported it.

The project helped young people with a learning disability and or autism to:



- Learn skills for work



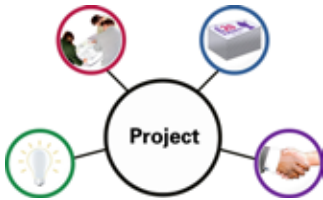
- Move into paid jobs



Almost half of the young people on the project found paid work.



You can find out more about the project on the website here: www.engagetochange.org.uk



This part of the project is **Influencing and Informing Engage to Change**.

The project is run by:



Learning Disability Wales
Anabledd Dysgu Cymru

- **Learning Disability Wales** and



- **The National Centre for Mental Health (NCMH)** at **Cardiff University**.

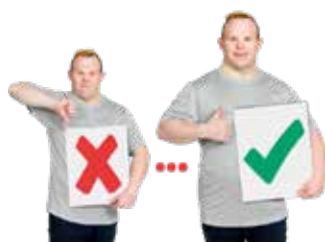


Our aim is to find out what helps people with a learning disability and or autism get paid work.



We will use what we learn to:

- Change policies.



- Improve how we support people with a learning disability and or autism to find and keep paid work.



We want a **Wales National Job Coach Strategy**. This would be a plan to provide **job coach** support to anyone who needs it.



Job coaches help people find, learn and stay in their jobs. This help is **job coaching**.

A national job coaching service



In 2020, we said there should be a **National Job Coaching Service**.



This would be a good way to help people with a learning disability and or autism get paid work.



We are basing this idea on what we learned from the **Engage to Change** project.



Supported employment and **job coaching**:

- Helps people develop skills for work
- Supports people into paid work



In Wales few people with a learning disability aged 18 to 64 have a paid job.



Only 4.8% of people with a learning disability in England have a job. This means less than 1 in every 20 people have a job.



21.7% of autistic people in England have a paid job. This means less than 5 in every 20 people have a job.



We do not know the numbers in Wales. But we do know that more people in Wales do not have a job compared to the rest of the UK.



There are good employment support schemes in Wales. But many of these do not meet the needs of people with learning disabilities.



Since 2020, we have collected more information about what works and what people need.



What works

What we learned from Engage to Change.



Work experience

Good work experience helps young people get paid jobs. We must offer high quality work experience to young people in school or college.



Job coaching

Job coaching was the most important part of getting young people into paid work.



Needs-led support

Support must be based on each person's needs. Some might need more time and support to learn work skills. Others might need help with social rules in work.

Paid work placements and supported internships



Work experiences like **supported internships** and paid work placements were most successful.



A **supported internship** is where people go to college for some hours each week but are learning in a workplace for most of the week. The work is unpaid. They get help from a **job coach**.



More young people found paid work after doing these types of placements.



In the Engage to Change project, we matched placements to young people's skills and interests. They did real work, in real workplaces and had support from a **job coach**. This worked very well.



Working with employers

We need to work with employers to provide supported employment and **job coaching**. It works best when we work with each employer.



The importance of paid work

Having a paid job helps people gain confidence and improves mental health.



Making the move from school to work easier will help the Welsh Government meet its health and social care goals.



Funding

Funding is important for this work. We think every job and skills programme should have money just for **job coaching**.

Where the money could come from:



Department
for Work &
Pensions

1. [Access to Work](#)

This is a scheme from the **Department for Work and Pensions (DWP)**. It provides money to help disabled people in paid work. **Engage to Change** supported more people because of this funding.



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

We think the **Welsh Government** should keep this going and work closely with **DWP** to make using it more accessible and better. It is important to make sure this works well and without long delays.

2. Pathway 4 funding



This money is for **supported internships** and is available to Further Education colleges in Wales. There is no money for **job coaching** to help people get ready for their **internship** or for helping people after their **internship** ends.



Department
for Work &
Pensions

We need to do more work with **DWP** so that **Access to Work** funding can be used for more support in Wales.



Department
for Work &
Pensions

3. Universal Support

Universal Support is a **Department for Work and Pensions (DWP)** programme. It gives money for training and support at work for disabled people.



It should be based on supported employment models that we know work. If the Welsh Government sets up a **National Job Coaching Strategy** it should work with this funding.

4. The North Wales Learning Disability Employment programme



Health and Social Care run this. The **Regional Integration Fund (RIF)** funds it.



It provides supported employment for people of all ages who have a learning disability. This could work in other parts of Wales.

What we think should happen



These are our ideas for a **National Job Coaching Strategy**, based on what we learned from the Engage to Change project:



- Welsh Government employment programmes must have money that is just for **job coaching**.



- **Job coaching** should be based on each person's skills, interests and needs.



- **Supported Employment Agencies** are experts in helping people with extra supports needs. They should provide **job coaches**.



- All **job coaching** should follow the **National Occupational Standards for Supported Employment**. These standards describe the skills and knowledge needed to do **job coaching** well.



- All organisations that provide **job coaching** should have training in the **Supported Employment Quality Framework** and **job coaching**. They should learn **Training in Systematic Instruction**. This is a way to teach people by breaking tasks into smaller steps.



- The Welsh Government should support a national **job coach** training program. This would set what someone needs to learn to become a qualified **job coach**.



- There should be ongoing **job coach** support for people who do not get a paid job after they have finished **Jobs Growth Wales+**, a **supported internship**, or a **supported apprenticeship**.



- Programs like **supported internships**, **Jobs Growth Wales+** and **supported apprenticeships** do not work for everyone. All job and skills programs should include **job coach** support.



- **Job coach** support should be given to anyone who cannot get and keep a paid job without it.



- The Welsh Government should look at including **job coaching** in schools, alongside the support from **Careers Wales**. This would help children and young people who need extra help during work experience.



- Government employment and skills programmes for young people should cover at least 16 to 24 year olds, but it would be better up to 30 year olds.



- **Job coach** support should be for everyone who is of working age, not just young people.



- People need to recognise that **job coaching** helps people get paid work.



- Employers across Wales should get information about supported employment and **job coaching**.

As well as these ideas, we have found some best ways of working:



- We need to raise the **aspirations** of young people with learning disabilities.

Aspirations mean their goals, wishes and aims for what they can achieve in life.



- Information about how to get a paid job needs to be better. It should be easier for young people to find and understand.



- Information for parents and carers should also be easier to find and understand.



- Parents, carers, employers and teachers should believe that young people with learning disabilities and or autism can get and keep paid work.



- Work experience should help young people explore their work options. Around age 14 years, work experience should be about what work is. From age 16 years, it should focus more on:
 - Skills
 - Types of jobs
 - Practical experience



- **Careers Wales** should work with supported employment agencies to do these things.



- There should be a **Youth Friendly Employer** scheme. This would help employers provide good work experiences for young people.



- Welsh Government departments should work with politicians to better understand the impact of paid work. This is for people with learning disabilities and or autism.



- Welsh Government departments should work better together and with the organisations they fund. This is to support people with a learning disability and or autism to get paid work. And keep paid work.



- Any talk about helping people with a learning disability and or autism into paid work must include:

- People with a learning disability
- Parents and carers
- Employers
- People who plan and pay for services



- We need to encourage employers to include everyone. To make it easier for people to apply for jobs, go to interviews and get training.



- The Welsh Government should look at making Easy Read examples that everyone could use. Like Easy Read job adverts and application forms.

Thank you



Thank you to the **National Lottery Community Fund** for funding and supporting our work.



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Thank you to the Welsh Government for their support.



Thank you to the **Engage to Change** partners:

- Agoriad Cyf
- Elite Supported Employment
- All Wales People First
- DFN Project SEARCH



Special thanks to the employment advisors and **job coaches** for helping us collect data.



And to the young people and parents for helping with this research.

Hard words

Aspirations

Aspirations mean their goals, wishes and aims for what they can achieve in life.

Job coaches and job coaching

Job coaches help people find, learn and stay in their jobs. This help is job coaching.

Supported internship

A supported internship is where people go to college for some hours each week but are learning in a workplace for most of the week. The work is unpaid. They get help from a job coach.