



October 2024

Knowing me, knowing you

What we learnt from our events in Cardiff, Carmarthen and Llandudno in June 2024

This document was written by **Influencing and Informing Engage to Change**. It is an easy read version of ‘**Influencing and Informing Engage to Change Knowing me, Knowing you: Listening and learning events**’.



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 29**.



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About Engage to Change



Engage to Change was a project that ran for 7 years in Wales.



It gave people with a learning disability and **autism** employment support.



Autism is a condition someone is born with. Everyone is different but people might:

- find it hard talking to and being with others
- do or think the same things over and over
- feel bothered by bright lights or loud sounds
- worry about new places or events
- need more time to understand things.



The project gave employment support to over 1000 young people.



Over 4 in 10 people got a paid job. This is much higher than the numbers of people with a learning disability that would usually get a job.



Learning Disability Wales are working with the **National Centre for Mental Health** to learn more about what was achieved.



This project is called **Influencing and Informing Engage to Change**.

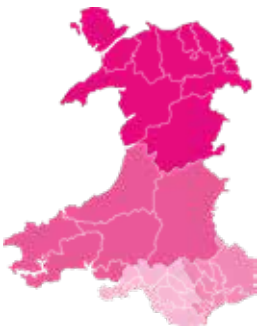


This also involves working with other people and organisations. For example, the Welsh Government, local councils, health boards, schools, colleges, people with learning disabilities, **autism** and their families.

Knowing me, knowing you events



We ran 3 events to talk about employment and people's experiences.



They were in Cardiff, Carmarthen and Llandudno.

Each of the events included talks from:



- the Influencing and Informing Engage to Change project manager
- a young person who had been supported by Engage to Change to get a job



- a parent and
- an employer.

The project manager talked about:



- The work Engage to Change has done since the project finished.



- The need for job coach support in all employment programmes.



- For job coaching to be recognised as a job that people have to be qualified to do.

Young people and parents talked about:



- Their experiences and the support they had.



- The positive difference having a job made.

Employers talked about:



- Supporting people to find their skills.



- The difference employing someone with a learning disability made to their workplace.



In the afternoon, group sessions were run. Here people were asked questions and shared their views.

This report will now talk about what the groups said at the 3 events.



What people said



There were some common views that came up across the groups. The main things were:

The importance of working



All groups of people thought employment was important.



They said it made a difference to people's lives, independence and choices.



People said they felt more involved with society.



Employers said it helped them. And helped them to see why it is good to employ people with learning disabilities and **autism**.

Communication and accessibility



All groups thought it was hard to find out about employment and support.



They said there should be more information and advice in school and college.



Written information must also be more **accessible**.

Accessible means it is written in a way that most people can understand. For example, in Easy Read.



Plus, information about employment schemes must reach people and parents.

Support



There is some good work going on across Wales but not everywhere in Wales.



Many people did not know of the schemes available to them.



People felt there was a lack of direct support available. For example, job coaching.

Funding



It should be easier to access funding for supporting employment. Also, long term funding.



We will now talk more about the main views of each group, across the 3 events.

People with lived experience

Some things people said were:



- It was hard to find the right support in finding the next steps in training and work.



- They did not have careers advice in school.

- There was not enough careers advice.



- No paid work.

- There was no support until Engage to Change.



- Job coaching helped.



- They would need support again from Engage to Change.
- Not being able to drive and transport issues are hard.
- Had not heard of things like **Access to Work** funding.
- They had not been asked what job they wanted when they leave college.
- There were concerns about working and the effects on benefits.
- People talked about the importance of work for independence and other things.
- Some people had not heard of things like Young Person's Guarantee or Jobs Growth Plus.

When asking what having a job means people said:



- It means everything to have a job and earn money.
- It makes them happier.
- It gives people independence.
- Happy for the chance to be part of society.

When asked what would help, people said:



- Support to learn about work.



- Support and breaking down tasks helps.



- Employers need to get to know the person.



- More support from school into work.

- Need to know more about options.

- Support from employer with people's needs. This is also called **reasonable adjustments**.



- Better information about options and how to access support.
- Help is needed on applying for jobs and where to look.
- One to one support in work and with travel.
- Getting feedback on work is important.

Parents and carers

Some things people said were:



- There was a lack of support from Careers Wales.
- Not many options.
- No information about support to get a job.
- Parents have to fight for support and do not get told of the right place to go.
- Young people are not asked for their views about work.
- It is harder if you live in a rural area or do not have the internet.
- Changes to the workplace are not made to support people's needs. This is called **reasonable adjustments**.



- Workers with disabilities are good workers.
- Support was given by Engage to Change.
- National Autistic Society were a good way of meeting other parents.
- There is a lack of support when a programme ends if the young person does not have a job.
- Support can be different types.
- Parents often need to push for support.
- It is often assumed people cannot work so they are not given a chance.
- Parents and carers need to know what support is available.
- Job coaching is useful.

What would help:



- More information and in a way people can understand. Also, in 1 place.
- Support for travel.
- Support into paid work.
- More support from employers.
- Ongoing job coach support.

Employers, commissioners and service providers



This included staff from Welsh Government, local councils, health boards, organisations that support people, schools, colleges and a university.

Some things people said were:



- A lot of support is provided as part of the Young Person's Guarantee.
- Work has been done with Engage to Change.
- There is support and funding through further education, Jobs Growth Wales and Communities for Work+.
- Working Wales can offer advice and find support, but it should be better.



- Funding for projects is often short-term.
- Young people's talents are being wasted.
- Lots of employment programmes do not know how to support people with disabilities.
- People talked about organisations that provide supported employment across Wales.
- Welsh Government employ Employment Champions. They visit employers and help them to think differently about employing disabled people.
- Employment champions support employers to understand the changes they can make in the workplace.
- All employment champions are disabled. But there is no one with a learning disability now.



- Sometimes parents can be very protective.
- People talked about how the job centre does not work. People do not get enough support.
- Health check champions is run by people with learning disabilities. It helps develop skills.

What more could you be doing and what would help:



- Each council should employ someone who works in between young people and employers.
- More work is needed with schools and improving career advice.
- People need to know about **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.



- There needs to be more information.
- Information needs to be easy to read and accessible.
- Find out if employers know about employment programmes.
- Work with employers to deal with travel difficulties.
- It is important to ask people what they want.
- Start working with people about employment at a younger age.
- People need to know they can and should have chances.



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government



- Travel training is needed.
- Involve young people at a younger age.
- Welsh Government should make a list of the support that is available.
- Change how to recruit people. For example, apply for a job by video.



What is needed

All groups were asked what was needed. There were a lot of shared views. Some of these were:



- Long term funding is needed.
- If a programme works, use it.
- Employers need to learn about hidden disabilities. This means not all disabilities can be seen.
- Role models with learning disabilities across all areas talking about supported employment.
- There needs to be work about employment and work experience in schools.



- Job coach support could help with all things related to work.



- There should be better work with employers.

- Help employers understand the benefits of employing disabled people.



- There needs to be better information sharing about pathways to employment and support.



- Big employers, local councils and health boards should employ people with learning disabilities and or **autism**.

What should Welsh Parliament be doing?



- They need to know what is needed, what is available and what is not.
- No one should be left behind.
- Support should be given to all disabled people who need help to get a job.
- The kind of support should be what each person needs to help them.
- Keep projects like Engage to Change going.
- Make sure supported employment is treated the same across Wales.
- There should be more funding for job coaching.
- The funding for job coaching should always be there.



- Better information for everyone.
- Information must be in Easy Read and **accessible**.
- Listen to young people with learning disabilities better.
- Employ a Disabled People's Champion who **has learning disabilities**.
- Set up a scheme for businesses to provide work experience for young people.
- Set up an award scheme for schools, colleges and employers who help people with learning disabilities and or **autism** to get paid jobs.



Hard words

Accessible

Accessible means something is written in a way that most people can understand. For example, in Easy Read.

Autism

Autism is a condition someone is born with. Everyone is different but people might:

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