

How to recruit and retain a diverse workforce in construction

**Pathways to creating an inclusive
and diverse workforce**



Hampshire
County Council

Introduction



This toolkit aims to provide support to construction employers to enable you to recruit and retain disabled people who frequently get overlooked as a source of knowledge and skills. Having a workforce which reflects the communities you serve is good business sense!

Employment rates among young disabled people continue to remain low, we know that young people with additional needs are keen to work, and often bring skills and approaches into sectors that benefit employers, teams and communities.

This toolkit will support you to ensure that all young people have the same opportunities to access employment, and add to your skills set, as their peers, by removing some of the barriers traditional recruitment methods often create for young disabled people to showcase their talents.

Links to further resources are provided for your information. Hampshire County Council do not necessarily endorse any of these tools and are not responsible for the maintenance of external websites.

This toolkit is delivered by Hampshire County Council commissioned by the Education and Training Foundation on behalf of the Department for Education.

Did you know?

1.5 million people in the UK have a learning disability, just 4.8% are in paid employment. In construction over 9% of the total workforce are registered disabled which is significantly lower than the 20% of adults with a disability who are able to work.

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Look out for our **Did you Know ?** sections to find definitions and statistics, and our 'mini case studies' to hear examples of how this has worked in the construction sector.



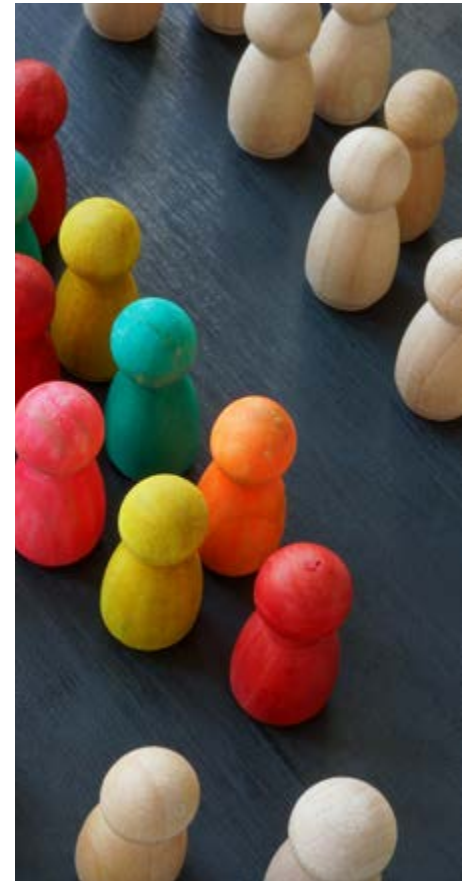
Alternative Recruitment Pathways

Traditional recruitment pathways often create barriers to young people with special educational needs and disabilities when transitioning from education into employment.

We have included some alternative recruitment pathways that can support you in overcoming these barriers and working alongside the education sector to nurture the future skills requirements of the Construction Sector.

The outlined pathways will also:

- Reduce the time and cost associated with recruitment and remove some of the risks of recruitment by providing a 'professional recruitment service' via the education provider and time to 'test' the new relationship through work placements.
- Provide access to a wide pool of young people that have traditionally been overlooked for employment but are motivated and passionate about working.
- Engage and support the local community during this challenging time, particularly with the exponential impact on young people's employment.
- Ensure that your workforce more accurately represents your community and customers, providing innovation in understanding disabled people as customers to access the 'Purple Pound'. This can be particularly important in the creation of infrastructure for long term accessibility.
- Strengthen diversity and equality in the workplace and raise your profile as a socially responsible employer.
- Provide young people with pathways to paid employment leading to financial and social independence, improved confidence, wellbeing and self-esteem.
- Access to financial assistance (through Access to Work) to make needed adaptations to support disabled employers to carry out their work successfully.
- Support your organisation to meet your obligations under the Social Value Act through Procurement.



Did You Know?

The Purple Pound refers to the spending power of disabled households. Many organisations lose approximately £2 billion a month by ignoring the needs of disabled people (*Purple: changing the disability conversation, 2020*)

Supported Internship Programmes (SIP)

Supported Internship Programmes are work-based learning placements, with the aim the learner will secure a job at the end of the placement.

On-going support is available from the Further Education providers, including a job/skills coach who will support the learner with their work placement.

The employer does not need to pay the learner a wage, as a work-based placement forms part of their education programme.

Placements should last at least 6 months and up to one year, with either a single high-quality placement or high-quality rotations within the employer/ between employers.

Hours can vary, but the intern should spend 70% of their time in the workplace, with the government recommending a minimum of 20 hours per week.

The learner will have the opportunity to complete qualifications relevant to their work placement and personal study programme at their college, alongside the work placement.

Supported internships are a partnership between the employer and college, which aim to provide young people with special educational needs and disabilities ([SEND](#)) the opportunity to experience the workplace and help employers by providing a matching service to ensure they have the best person for their job.

FIND OUT MORE

[SUPPORTED INTERNSHIPS, SUPPORTED APPRENTICESHIPS AND THE SEN REFORMS | BRITISH ASSOCIATION FOR SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT \(BASE-UK.ORG\)](#)

[SUPPORTED INTERNSHIP INFORMATION FOR REFERRERS, EMPLOYERS, AND YOUNG PEOPLE | HAMPSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL \(HANTS.GOV.UK\)](#)



Apprenticeships

Apprenticeships are an opportunity to work and learn at the same time. The apprentice would attend the workplace and study alongside this, to gain the skills and qualifications related to their job. The 'off the job' training is usually 20% of their time. How this is delivered is agreed between the employer, education provider and the employee.

Apprentices are employed members of staff and have the same rights as any other employee. [APPRENTICES \(19 AND UNDER\) MUST BE PAID AT LEAST THE NATIONAL MINIMUM WAGE FOR APPRENTICES.](#)

Recruiting an apprentice give you, as the employer, the opportunity to employ someone who is motivated and wants to learn. They can share their skills and experiences and you can adapt their training to your business needs.



FIND OUT MORE

[EMPLOY AN APPRENTICE - APPRENTICESHIP & SKILLS PARTNERSHIP \(THEAPPRENTICESHIPHUB.COM\)](#)

[HIRE AN APPRENTICE \(APPRENTICESHIPS.GOV.UK\)](#)

USEFUL VIDEOS

[REASONABLE ADJUSTMENTS THROUGHOUT THE APPRENTICESHIP JOURNEY](#)

[APPRENTICE SUPPORT FOR LEARNERS WITH SEND](#)

Supported Apprenticeship

Supported apprenticeships use the same framework as a standard apprenticeship but offer extra support for apprentices with special educational needs or disabilities.

If the apprentice requires part time hours, rather than the traditional minimum of 30 hours per week, the provider can extend the minimum duration of the apprenticeship.

There may also be some flexibility around the English and maths requirements as they can now complete Entry Level 3 Functional Skills instead of Level 1 and reasonable adjustments can be made during the apprenticeship to ensure success and at end point assessment.

There are a range of funding streams available to support employers. Learners and providers can also access funding to support the learner. Please see webinar for further information.

- Access to Work - which will help to pay for workplace assessments, any workplace adjustments that are required, job/skills coach and a contribution towards specialist equipment. Extra support is also available for small employers. Please see factsheet for further information.

All tier one construction contractors will usually support with sponsoring a learner to help remove barriers. This could be funding travel, lunch or equipment needed which would help to support their study such as a laptop or books. This is available for both supported apprenticeships and internships.

Did you know?

If you apply for Access to Work within the first six weeks of employment they will fully fund workplace adjustments required. Following this you will be asked to contribute and the amount will depend on the size of your organisation. Please see [ACCESS TO WORK FACTSHEET](#)

FIND OUT MORE

[20120.009 LDWW2019_FACTSHEET 7.PDF \(MENCAP.ORG.UK\)](#)

[SUPPORTED APPRENTICESHIPS | BRITISH ASSOCIATION FOR SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT \(BASE-UK.ORG\)](#)

[EMPLOYER TOOLKIT.PDF \(BASE-UK.ORG\)](#)

USEFUL VIDEOS:

[REASONABLE ADJUSTMENTS THROUGHOUT THE APPRENTICESHIP JOURNEY](#)

[APPRENTICE SUPPORT FOR LEARNERS WITH SEND](#)

[HOW TO ACCESS AND USE LEARNING SUPPORT FUNDING](#)

Work experience (WEX)

An opportunity for young people to see the world of work and how the skills and knowledge they are learning in education can be used in future jobs. A WEX learner may shadow employees and learn what their job involves or complete tasks with the support/observation of a mentor.

WEX placements can be tailored to meet organisational and individual needs e.g. one day per week over six weeks as an alternative to the traditional two week block placement.

Extended WEX placements also give you the time to work with the young person and shape their skills to the needs of your workplace, whilst developing your own staff by offering a mentoring/supportive role.

By offering WEX, you can see how the young person works, rather than how they perform in an interview, which can be helpful if you are planning to recruit in the future.

FIND OUT MORE

[WORK EXPERIENCE: EMPLOYER GUIDE - GOV.UK \(WWW.GOV.UK\)](#)

[WORK EXPERIENCE EMPLOYER GUIDE - YOUTH EMPLOYMENT UK](#)

[WORK EXPERIENCE | HAMPSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL \(HANTS.GOV.UK\)](#)

The Technical Construction Skills for the Unemployed project (TCS) offers construction training courses and employment support across north Hampshire and Surrey in Winchester, Basingstoke, Aldershot and Guildford. TCS is funded by the European Social Fund.

Training or support is free and for anyone unemployed and over 18 (learners are welcome).

[CONSTRUCTION SKILLS TRAINING | HAMPSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL \(HANTS.GOV.UK\)](#)

Did you know?

WEX is open to anyone over 14 (no CSCS card needed). It can be tailored to specific needs and interests of the young person e.g. brickwork taster sessions (half an hour to one hour) or meet the team and see the site in preparation for a WEX placement. All tier one supply chains should make this commitment too.



How To Recruit Inclusively

Introduction:

By making small changes you can recruit young disabled people directly. This not only benefits the person, but also benefits the business.

By ensuring that your recruitment processes are accessible you will be able to access a previously unrecognised pool of talent and skills, individuals that are passionate and committed to working.

We can often see impact across the wider workforce, with team members and managers reporting increased wellbeing, productive and commitment to the business.

This webinar where our employer partners share learning about the implementation of the Social Value Act in procurement, and what this can mean for young people being supported in the workplace and the wider workforce can give you further information. [THE SOCIAL VALUE ACT IN PROCUREMENT - YOUTUBE](#)

The following section offers advice on changes that can be made to your recruitment processes at every level. Embedding inclusive practices across every recruitment not only increases accessibility for young disabled people, but also give you a more through insight into every person joining your team.



How To Recruit Inclusively

Advertising the role and job descriptions:

Check list

- Language & font to use
- Job description content
- Photo/video of the site and the team
- Checked with an accessibility checker

If you want to have a more diverse and inclusive workforce, there are a few things you can do in your recruitment processes to attract from a wider pool of talent. We have listed some suggestions below that you may want to consider and given examples of how organisations have used these previously.

Language and font

Use language that is inclusive; advise you have an equal opportunity policy/you are a disability confident employer – provide a link to your website and check your website reflects you are an inclusive employer.

Choose a font which is accessible; Arial, size 12+ point for advert & any handouts and 28+ for PowerPoint presentations. Remember to consider screen reader technology. Use the 'Headings' and 'Body' options when selecting your font so it is clear to a screen reader what is a heading and what is the content of what you are

sharing. Ensure any pictures have 'alternative descriptions' to advise if they are for display only or if they are to share information.

Consider colour of font and background and use a contrast checker (available on Microsoft Office).

FIND OUT MORE

[MAKE YOUR CONTENT ACCESSIBLE TO EVERYONE - MICROSOFT SUPPORT](#)



How To Recruit Inclusively

Advertising the role and job descriptions - continued:

Content

When designing your job description try to ensure it is inclusive. This doesn't mean you need to start from scratch. If you have a job description already, you might just want to do a few checks to ensure you are inviting to everyone. To do this, you may want to consider the tips below:

- Consider what the actual needs of the job are when listing the skills and experience and break them down e.g. not just 'communication skills' highlight each skill.
- Keep requirements outcome focused – what do you want to see at the end?
- Do not use any jargon or abbreviations or include definitions for common abbreviations e.g. 'PPE'.
- Consider if you need x years' experience, if not, do not ask for it as it will exclude some candidates.
- Do you need a full driving license? Is it necessary for the role or could public transport be an option or support from Access to Work e.g. a driver to drive them when needed?
- Keep sentences short.

- Ensure all text is left aligned.
- Do not use capitals unnecessarily.
- Keep text away from any images and ensure no text is over an image, as this can be difficult to read.
- Use bullet points to keep information concise.

To encourage candidates to apply for your role, you may also want to provide details of who they can contact to find out further information, site address and directions on how to get there

(SEE OUR EXAMPLE OF [WATES RESIDENTIAL'S GREEN TRAVEL PLAN](#)).

This will help demonstrate you are considering their needs and are an inclusive employer.

Ensure you advise 'if any reasonable adjustments are required, please let us know' and discuss these when the offer of an interview is made as each person's requirements will be unique to them.

Offer application form and any other resources in alternative formats – have you considered recording yourself telling someone about the job? Videos may be more accessible for some candidates, and it will help them to see you too.



How To Recruit Inclusively

Advertising the role and job descriptions - continued:



Here are some examples of questions you may want to answer in the job description. Providing photos will also be useful. If you have a 'meet the team' page on your website, highlight this.

- Who will I be working with? What is the size of the team? Is there an opportunity to have a buddy? See Wates Residential's workbook for an example of how to do this which includes information on previous projects too ([EXAMPLE](#))
- Where will I be working?
- What would an average day look like?
- What time would I need to arrive and when would I leave? Maybe you could include something about breaks in here too.
- If I need to adjust the timings because of my medication, is this possible?
- What other reasonable adjustments would you be happy to make for me?
- Is there a medical room or a private area someone can go to take medication?
- Is there a fridge on site where medication can be stored?
- What uniform/ protective clothing would be needed?

Photo/video of the site

It would be useful to include a photo or video of the workplace(s) to give potential candidates an idea of where they would be working. It is also good to include photo/videos of the team they will be working with. By including photos which are diverse and inclusive you will help to reassure candidates who are nervous and open your application up to people who may not have considered working for you before. It is also a good opportunity to showcase how you are an inclusive employer.

Sharing photos and information about the interview room and facilities is also good practise.

How To Recruit Inclusively

Advertising the role and job descriptions - continued:

You may want to ask where the best place for them is to sit and if they require any reasonable adjustments for example if they are deaf or hard of hearing or need a BSL interrupter. Also consider the colours in the room (particularly important for neurodiverse candidates) and consider noises in the room e.g. a fan may be distracting.

Online checkers

Running your job description through an online checker is a quick and easy way to check for gender, disability and other

biases in the text. It helps ensure you are showcasing your organisations commitment to being an inclusive and supportive workplace to potential candidates, which in turn will help you recruit from a more diverse talent pool.

Accessibility checker

Microsoft now have an accessibility checker on most of their software. It is quick and easy to use and can be found under the 'Review' tab.

FIND OUT MORE

[GENDER BIAS DECODER | TOTALJOBS](#)

[MAKE YOUR CONTENT ACCESSIBLE TO EVERYONE WITH THE ACCESSIBILITY CHECKER - MICROSOFT SUPPORT](#)

[ACCESSIBILITY TECHNOLOGY & TOOLS | MICROSOFT ACCESSIBILITY](#)

[HEMINGWAY EDITOR \(HEMINGWAYAPP.COM\)](#)



How To Recruit Inclusively

Considerations before Interview:

Before you arrange a traditional interview, consider if this is the best approach to take. You may want to consider one of the options below to ensure you are seeing the real candidate, rather than how they can perform in an interview.

Work trials

Could you accommodate a work trial? This would give you and the candidate you are thinking of hiring an opportunity to see how they do on the job. The candidate could also have the support of a job coach (via their college/training provider or Access to Work). A job coach would support them initially and then gradually move away as the candidate works more independently. A mentor or buddy in the workplace would then be able to support the candidate. This is also a great way to upskill your own staff and gives the candidate an opportunity to see if they like the environment and job.

A Supported Internship would be a great way to use a work trial and save your business recruitment and hiring costs as the education provider would match you to a suitable intern and as the workplace learning is part of their education course, you would not be required to pay the intern a wage. This is a

great opportunity for you as an employer and provides the intern with the experience they need to succeed in the workplace. More information can be found on [PAGE 5](#).

To give you an example of how a work trial/supported internship can work, we have included two case studies below:

[SOUTHERN TYRE AND BATTERY SERVICE CS](#)

[GRADUATE LANDSCAPE CS](#)

Work assessment

Another option would be to offer a work assessment instead of a work interview. This is like a work trial but for a shorter period. The candidate might still bring along their job coach to offer support.

Pre-interview

If you are not able to offer an alternative to an interview, there are things you can do to make the process more accessible, which in turn will give you more talent to choose from. We have highlighted some of the key considerations below but you can also access more information from the links at the end of this section.



How To Recruit Inclusively

Considerations before Interview - continued:

Questions

We all know interviews can make people feel nervous and for some potential candidates this level of anxiety will be enough to put them off applying. One thing you can do to help applicants feel more comfortable is to send out the questions in advance. This will give them more time to prepare their answers and think of relevant examples. This will make the interview process fairer for young disabled people or young people who do not have English as their first language.

If it is not possible to send the questions in advance, perhaps you could send out information on the themes of the questions. Make sure these are actual requirements of the job and break them down to be specific. This way the candidate can consider relevant examples.

Consider the wording – make sure the language you use is inclusive and will help the applicant to answer the question. If you want examples of teamwork do not ask ‘are you good at teamwork?’ because some candidates will view this as a closed question and will say ‘yes’ or ‘no’. Instead, you might want to ask, ‘can you give me examples of how you worked in a team?’

This will make it clear to the candidate what you want to know and help them to give you the correct information and examples. A good way to approach this is to think; what is the answer I want and what is the direct question I need to ask, to give me that answer?

Be concise, do not use jargon and only ask one question at a time. If it is a two-part question, make it two questions. Try not to use hypothetical questions such as ‘where do you see yourself in three years?’ or ‘if you were an animal what animal would you be?’ as some disabled young people, particularly if they are neurodiverse, may struggle to visualise this.

If you would like to know how the candidate would act in a situation, give clear, precise, and specific information.

Rather than ask ‘If someone had an accident on site how would you act?’ which could cause them to think ‘what kind of an accident? do they require an ambulance or a plaster? where on site did it happen? who was around?’, you might want to ask ‘Whilst working on site, someone fell off a ladder from the first floor and you were the only person around, what would you do?’ By providing a little more detail, you will enable them to understand the situation fully and answer the question.



How To Recruit Inclusively

Considerations before Interview - continued:

To ensure your questions are inclusive and not gender biased, consider running them through the Gender Calculators and Accessibility Checker mentioned on [PAGE 13](#). Also be mindful of non-binary language.

Phone call to introduce yourself

Before the interview it is a good idea to ring the candidate to introduce yourself. This will reassure them as they will have heard your voice and know your name. If you haven't sent out photos and information about the team and workplace prior to this, now is a good opportunity to do so.

Pre-recorded Video Interviews

Pre-recorded video interviews have great benefits for the candidate and the employer. All you do as the employer is identify the candidates you would like to interview and send them the questions in advance, along with specific instructions on how you would like the interview recorded. These may include how long you would like the recording to be, what format, inside/outside, any particular background, etc. Benefits to the employer of using pre-recorded interviews include:

- Saves time trying to arrange each interview
- You can interview more people
- In a normal interview you are restricted to how many people can be on the interview panel as too many can be intimidating to the candidate. However, if using pre-recorded video interviews, you can have as many people involved in reviewing as you like
- If the interviewee does not showcase the skills you are looking for you can move onto the next one without worrying about offending the applicant

Benefits to the candidate:

- Candidates can review the questions in advance and prepare their answers and examples
- If the candidate is anxious, it will remove some of their anxiety as they will be able to re-record any answers they think they could have answered better
- It will remove any transport or financial barriers that might face the candidate in accessing the workplace for interview
- Please note, you may need to consider making

alternative provision/ reasonable adjustments for those candidates who are unable to record themselves e.g. some visually impaired candidates

FIND OUT MORE

[PROS AND CONS OF ONE-WAY INTERVIEWS: ARE PRE-RECORDED INTERVIEWS THE FUTURE? \(4CORNERRESOURCES.COM\)](#)

[12 TIPS FOR ONE-WAY OR RECORDED VIDEO INTERVIEW SUCCESS | JOB-HUNT](#) (employer benefits halfway down the page)



How To Recruit Inclusively

Considerations before Interview - continued:



Location

Prior to the interview, consider the room you will be using:

- Is it accessible to all?
- Do you have good lighting?
- Is it quiet? Be mindful of distractions outside the room
- Will it require candidate to work through an active workplace?
- Is it ground floor with a window where people might be walking past or in a busy office?

If there are lots of distractions people may find it hard to concentrate and appear distracted. Consider if there

are any ways you can limit/ minimise potential distractions. For example, could you close a blind or choose a day when less people are in the office?

If possible, conduct interviews in a room that has curtains and a carpet as this provides better acoustics. This is particularly helpful to candidates who are hard of hearing but will also benefit everyone.

If you are interviewing on site such as in a porter cabin, as well as the recommendations above, it is also important to ensure the room is clean and people do not need to enter or walk through it whilst the interview is happening.

Did you know?

Support provided to people should be individualised depending on the disability or health need a person has and their personal preference. To find out more about how specific disabilities and health conditions can be supported check: [EMPLOYING DISABLED PEOPLE AND PEOPLE WITH HEALTH CONDITIONS - GOV. UK \(WWW.GOV.UK\)](#) and remember to ask the person their preference when planning your interview

What next?

Congratulations you now have all the tools to ensure you are recruiting the best person for the job by ensuring an accessible and fair process.

It is important to ensure that you continue to create an inclusive and accessible experience for the young disabled person as they go through induction and commence work.

There are a range of tools available to support businesses in creating inclusive environment and supporting disabled people in work.

FIND OUT MORE

[INCLUSIVE TOOLKIT V12 \(CCN.AC.UK\)](https://ccn.ac.uk)

[EMPLOYERS-GUIDE-TO-EMPLOYING-PEOPLE-WITH-A-LD.PDF \(NDTI.ORG.UK\)](https://ndti.org.uk)

[EMPLOYING PEOPLE WITH A LEARNING DISABILITY - FAQs | MENCAP](#)

[SUPPORT WITH EMPLOYEE HEALTH AND DISABILITY – GOV.UK \(DWP.GOV.UK\)](https://gov.uk)

[EMPLOYERS AND VOLUNTEERS | CEC RESOURCE DIRECTORY \(CAREERSANDENTERPRISE.CO.UK\)](https://careersandenterprise.co.uk)

[SUPPORT FOR EMPLOYERS](#)

This recruitment tool has been developed with the support of the construction organisations below and following feedback from students at Eastleigh College and Hampshire Achieves.



If you use this tool, please provide feedback to candice.reynolds@hants.gov.uk

