



Work In Progress: A 2 year research project looking at how supported employment agencies can help people with learning difficulties into work.
What We Have Found Out So Far - June 2011

What we have done

We have talked to 19 people with learning difficulties who are members of 3 supported employment agencies in different parts of the country.

Support

It is important for people with learning difficulties to get good support when starting work.

This can come from

- Job coaches
- Employers
- Work mates



'I work in the laundry and the lady I work with she's absolutely brilliant with me'

Confidence

Being supported to find employment helps people with learning difficulties feel more confident about how to look for work on their own.



Targets

Most supported employment agencies have targets. This means that if they do not get people jobs they will not get any money. Targets can sometimes change the way supported employment agencies work. For example it may mean that they only work with people who have less severe disabilities.



What people are expected to do

People with learning difficulties need to know what employers want from them. Different things work for different people. Some people might find a long list of jobs confusing. Others may need to know all the jobs they will have to do in the day.



Job Coaches

People who use supported employment agencies do not always understand what the job coaches should be doing. For example they may not know that they can help sort out benefits.



'I sometimes wonder what you are here for'

Good job coaches can make a big difference. Some of the people we have talked to have said that their job coach *'goes the extra mile'*. This makes them feel more confident about finding and keeping work.

Planning

Supported employment agencies should have early planning sessions with clients and the people who know them well. That helps them to find out what kind of work is best for people.

'What I definitely liked was...they asked my parents' permission...my mum and dad came in and were involved'



Job Matching

Job matching means matching people's skills and experience to the right job. This is important for people with learning difficulties but should not stop them looking at a wide range of jobs.



Leaders

Strong leaders of employment agencies can make things happen. They can make sure that supported employment agencies work better.

