

Future Apprenticeships Task and Finish Group

Reviewing effective practice for ensuring appropriate Equality and Diversity in apprenticeship delivery



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Leading Partner:



Strategic Partners:



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Overview

1. This small-scale research was part of a suite of projects funded and commissioned by ETF as part of Future Apprenticeships.
2. The aim of the project was to review effective practice for ensuring appropriate Equality and Diversity in apprenticeship delivery. The research took place between September 2016 and November 2016.
 - The project built on the recently published BIS/DFE Removing Barriers to Apprenticeships Programme and the Peter Little report in 2011/12, "Creating an inclusive apprenticeship offer" for young people to identify the themes that need to be addressed.
 - These themes were used as a framework to identify good equality and diversity practice in apprenticeship delivery in Ofsted reports, focusing on:
 - diversity issues around recruitment and initial appointment.
 - programme support methods for those with a disability and/or learning difficulty.
 - The Ofsted report review identified six good and/or outstanding providers to work with to determine the practices that make a difference.
 - This research has resulted in this report which includes case studies and examples of good practice on increasing diversity in apprenticeships and supporting apprentices who have a disability and or learning difficulty.

Acknowledgements

3. The project team would like to thank the following providers for their contribution to this research by taking part in interviews and providing examples and case studies that highlight their good practice.
 - Chichester College
 - Gateshead College
 - Hawk Training
 - Hull Training and Adult Education
 - Nova Training
 - Weston College
4. The project team would also like to thank Natspec and Derwen College for their additional contribution.

Introduction

5. In 2011, Peter Little OBE was commissioned by the Apprenticeships Unit (Department for Education (DfE) and Department of Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS)) to give an informed and up-to-date description and analysis of the issues related to the inclusion of people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities (LDD) in Apprenticeship provision. The resulting report, *Creating an inclusive Apprenticeship Offer*¹, published in January 2012, praised the potentially radical approach in the SEN and Disability Green Paper (March, 2011), including a single assessment process from “birth to 25”. In particular, it highlighted the need to promote the positive ways in which apprentices with LDD can contribute to business. Peter Little hoped his 20 recommendations would move this agenda forward whilst arresting the decline in the proportion of young people with LDD in apprenticeships.
6. In May 2016, a taskforce was commissioned by the Minister for Disabled People, Justin Tomlinson MP, and the Minister for Skills, Nick Boles MP, to explore access to apprenticeships for those with LDD, including with reference to Peter Little’s recommendations. The taskforce was led by Paul Maynard MP and aimed to: reach an understanding of the issues and barriers that affect people with LDD in accessing and completing an apprenticeship; identify solutions that could help overcome these barriers and raise participation levels; and make recommendations to both Ministers on which options to pursue. The Government accepted the resulting 14 recommendations² (see Annex 1) and agreed to take them forward, although it was recognised that ‘some will be more difficult to put into practice than others’³.

Background: Recruitment and success rates

7. In 2012, Peter Little reported a decline in the proportion of apprentices with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Although the number of apprentices had risen substantially between 2005/6 and 2010/11 from 175,000 to 442,700, as had the number of apprentices declaring a LDD from 19,200 to 35,600, the proportion declaring an LDD had fallen significantly from 11.1%

¹ https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/387040/AU-CreatingAnInclusiveApprenticeshipOffer-Report-May2012.pdf

² <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/apprenticeships-improving-access-for-people-with-learning-disabilities>

³ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/apprenticeships-improving-access-for-people-with-learning-disabilities/paul-maynard-taskforce-bis-and-dwp-response-to-recommendations>

to 8%. The fall during this period for the 19 to 24 cohort from 11.9% to 7.9% was particularly concerning. The proportion of apprentices aged 16 to 19 declaring an LDD was 10% in 2010/11, dropping from 11.9% in 2005.

8. Of the 871,800 Apprenticeships participating in 2014/15, 8.6% declared a learning difficulty and/or disability⁴. This shows that there has been no increase in this figure since 2010/11. Two of the providers participating in this research identified that around 9% of their apprentices had declared a learning difficulty and/or disability (LDD).
9. Peter Little's report celebrated the increase in the success rates for apprentices declaring LDD that had risen during the same period from 49.5% to 69.9%, acknowledging that they had narrowed the attainment gap with their non-disabled peers. He urged the importance of dispelling the myth that apprentices with LDD are unlikely to succeed.

Section 1: Inspection findings

10. The review of the inspection reports of providers judged to be good or outstanding published since September 2012, showed some excellent promotion of equality and diversity and they contained examples of often outstanding support for LDD learners across all types of providers.
11. Providers which were graded good or outstanding for their apprenticeships provision were generally successful in their work to promote equality and diversity by focusing on widening participation, raising awareness of diversity among their apprentices and developing the skills and knowledge of their staff.
12. Many of these providers are working well to tackle stereotypical gender barriers and to increase the racial diversity in their specific industries. For example, BAE Systems is very successful in recruiting women into its engineering programmes. ICON TRAINING is an inclusive learning community that works very well with employers to widen participation and to engage learners in areas of high deprivation and from under-represented minority ethnic groups.

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https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/558293/SFR_commentary_Oct2016.pdf

13. Work to increase the gender and ethnic diversity of learners is part of the broader Lawn Tennis Association's (LTA) work on increasing participation in tennis. LTA leaders have worked hard to increase the proportion of younger tennis players of British minority ethnic heritage, and of females, in preparation for improving the numbers who become apprentices in the next few years. The RAF has also developed strategies to increase the recruitment of more apprentices with a minority ethnic heritage. While these initiatives are highly commendable, few of the reports identified providers with a clear strategic priority to promote apprenticeships specifically to learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

14. Ofsted's Further Education and Skills Inspection handbook⁵ requires inspectors, when making the judgement about the effectiveness of leadership and management, to consider:

'how well the provider prepares learners who have special educational needs and/or disabilities to become more independent in their everyday life'.

15. Most of the inspection reports for good and outstanding providers reviewed for this research exemplify the priority given to this group of learners through the provision of comprehensive staff training, specialist support and resources, and above all realistically high expectations and ambition for all learners to achieve to their potential. Typical good practice often focuses on supporting learners' progress to work, as illustrated in these extracts from the reports:

- The college has been a major partner in a superb programme aimed at enabling learners with learning disabilities or autism to develop the skills needed to gain employment. The number who successfully achieve this is outstanding. (Gateshead College)
- Staff help employers to understand how best to work with apprentices with disabilities such as Aspergers so that they make good progress. (Aspire Achieve Advance Limited)
- Apprentices with physical disabilities are delighted by the positive way in which BT has supported, adapted and extended their development beyond that of the qualifications, including time off to attend the Paralympics. (British Telecommunications PLC)
- Leaders and managers also have great success in providing learners with development opportunities with large companies in the nearby City of London, neatly tapping into those companies' attempts to

⁵ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/further-education-and-skills-inspection-handbook>

fulfil their 'corporate social responsibilities'. This results in briefings, employment seminars, work experience, apprenticeships and other routes into employment for ELATT learners. (East London Advanced Technology Training)

- Coaches are exceptionally good at identifying learners' barriers to learning and helping learners overcome these by, for example, providing financial and emotional support and ensuring learners with mobility difficulties are provided with adjustments that allow them to succeed at the highest level. (Lawn Tennis Association)
- As a result of staff training in disability, mental health and vulnerable learners, the proportion of learners declaring a learning difficulty or disability has increased. These learners receive excellent support and achieve well. (Working Men's College)
- Learners with high needs on supported internships produce work of a very high standard and often exceed their own expectations as they become aware of their abilities and potential. This boosts their morale. Most of them have previously considered their learning difficulties and/or disabilities as barriers to achievement. Most have secured permanent jobs. They make very good progress towards achieving their goals of independent living and gain valuable work experience. (Nova Training)

16. This good practice in developing, recognising and celebrating the skills and potential of people with LDD is to be applauded, but it also needs to be developed further across the FE and skills sector to the benefit of a much higher proportion of the LDD population.

17. In the reports of weaker providers, inspectors often stated that the progress and achievement rates of different groups of learners varied too much or that teachers had been unable to close the achievement gap between learners with LDD and their peers. A closer look at these reports often indicated that managers and teachers' expectations of these learners were low and that the curriculum seemed to perpetuate learners' disadvantages. These providers failed to provide staff with the training and the resources required to bring out the best in all their learners.

18. According to the inspection reports reviewed, the better providers focused well on enabling their learners with LDD to progress to employment, but a small proportion of reports clearly identified providers that were particularly effective in enabling these learners to progress to apprenticeships. In Ofsted's survey: Apprenticeships: developing skills for

future prosperity⁶, inspectors identified that too few disabled people or those with learning difficulties become apprentices and that examples of providers and employers encouraging disabled people or those with learning difficulties to succeed on an apprenticeship were rare.

19. More people with LDD need to be supported to develop their careers through an apprenticeship. All the providers contacted for this research were able to provide examples of outstanding provision for learners with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND), however they all felt that they had further work to do to achieve the goal of opening more pathways to apprenticeships for many more of their learners with LDD. They also agreed that there were some national policy barriers and attitudinal barriers that need to be overcome, as identified in the reports by Peter Little and Paul Maynard.

Section 2: Identified good practice

20. The aim of the second section of this report is to highlight the good practice of outstanding providers in promoting apprenticeships to people with LDD and supporting them to achieve the apprenticeship framework or attain the new apprenticeship standard and progress in their careers.
21. Each of the six providers took part in a telephone interview and/or were asked to complete a questionnaire based on the recommendations relevant to providers made by Paul Maynard's task force.

Marketing apprenticeships to learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, their parents or guardians and/or employers

22. The participating providers were asked for examples of the strategies they used that were successful in making apprenticeships more accessible and in encouraging people with LDD to take up an apprenticeship. The participants were all ready to admit that they could do more to increase the proportion of apprentices with LDD at their institutions. The three FE colleges, for example, had large discrete provision for LDD learners that had been judged to be outstanding and progression rates to employment were excellent, but only a small proportion of their learners progressed from this provision onto an apprenticeship. When asked to identify their good practice in developing successful routes to apprenticeships, the

⁶https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/469814/Apprenticeships_developing_skills_for_future_prosperity.pdf

providers' responses came under the following three themes: making changes to the curriculum, enabling learners to identify their abilities and potential, and encouraging employers to take on apprentices with LDD. The providers also identified good practice in their recruitment strategies for learners with LDD who may have not previously considered an apprenticeship.

Q1: Developing the pathway to apprenticeships through the curriculum

23. All the providers recognised that the step from school or college-based provision to an apprenticeship would be more akin to a huge jump for most of their learners with LDD and they had all therefore used their lower level provision as stepping stones to apprenticeships for these learners. As one provider said, 'This is quite a journey for many of our learners, especially those with multiple and complex learning difficulties, and may well take three to four years.' The range of provision included lower level study programmes with work experience, supported internships and traineeships.

The providers identified the following characteristics of successful progression routes to apprenticeships

- Branding the lower level study programmes, such as 'Head Start', has given them a positive identity and has created an acceptance across the organisation that learners are on a journey. This has been particularly effective when senior managers and governors have been involved in promoting the provision and celebrating learners' achievements.
- The route to apprenticeships is more effective when it is flexible and has clear options along the way, such as foundation learning → skills for independence → skills for work → traineeships or supported internships → apprenticeships.
- It is important to use initial assessments, interview notes or prior information when providing learners with detailed careers information, advice and guidance so that they can understand all their options and make the most suitable choices.
- Short vocational tasters have allowed the learners to try out different industries and they also allow vocational staff to be involved and broaden their understanding of how people with LDD can progress

in their sector. These taster courses are often extended to a more substantial component of the learners' study programmes.

- There are no hard and fast rules about how long a learner takes to complete each stage. Every learner has individualised programmes that builds on their abilities and recognises that they have some difficulties or issues to be tackled.

24. Successful progression routes increasingly focus on enabling each learner to be 'work ready' often involving work placements with job coaching and on-the-job training. This build learners' confidence and employers' trust. Voluntary work is also used as a step to a work placement or internship.

Q2: Good practice at Weston College

The college's supported internship scheme, Into Work, has the primary aim to wherever possible support young people to move into paid employment at the end of the programme. It also aims to equip interns with the skills they need for work, through learning in the workplace. The programmes focus on instilling self-belief/confidence, employability skills, English and maths skills, practical work skills, a strong work ethic as well as independence and self-responsibility. Staff use a tutorial system of agreed individual targets, predominately related to their work placement and work aspirations, to empower the students to take responsibility for their present behaviour and future directions. The staff team includes individuals with experience and specialist knowledge of the following:

- learner-centred approaches and practice
- job coaching and Supported Employment
- training in systematic instruction (employment job coaching)
- communication and complex learning difficulties and/or disabilities
- learners on the autism spectrum
- behaviour for learning
- travel training
- transition and the preparing for adulthood agenda
- person centred planning
- assistive technology
- speech and language therapy
- working a wide range of partners including: parents and carers; employers
- the Community Team for People with Learning Disabilities; the Youth Employment Service and social care organisations

Identifying learners' potential for an apprenticeship

25. One of the most significant barriers that prevent learners with LDD from joining an apprenticeship is often the low expectations of many people around them. This may be their parents/guardians who could be concerned that they would not have sufficient support; provider staff who could worry that they would not successfully complete the programme; or employers (and other employees) who could be concerned that they may not meet the business needs. However, the providers also identified that one of the greatest barriers was often the learners' own lack of confidence and the lack of belief that they could have a 'real' job with 'real' training and be on a programme alongside people without a learning difficulties or disabilities.

The providers identified the following successful approaches to identifying learners' potential for an apprenticeship and encouraging them (and others) that this is a realistic option for a career path.

- It's important to make sure that each learner is introduced to the idea of progressing onto an apprenticeship at the most appropriate stage in their journey. If this is done too early for some learners, it may put them off. For others, knowing that this is a reachable goal may motivate them to achieve.

Quote from Nova Training

'It's important to raise expectations all around and 'sell' that person's benefits by painting the picture of what they can contribute as an apprentice. It is also important to identify any barriers they may have and what could be done to reduce them. By starting with the positives, the glass becomes half full. This has been successful to recruit apprentices with multiple and complex learning difficulties and mental health illnesses.'

- The use of initial and baseline assessments has helped learners (and others) to see their potential. It is also helpful to identify what they have achieved on their journey so far.
- 'Bootcamps', activity centres, and enterprise projects have all proved very useful in enabling learners to take on specific roles in a wide range of activities and contexts. They can also provide opportunities for learners to work alongside a buddy or mentor. Providers have found it critical to keep a record of the learners' progress as well as any

development or support needs they identified during these activities to form a basis for planning the next stage of their programme.

Good practice at Chichester College

The college has a very effective alumni – ‘Where are you now?’. They use case studies and sometimes visits by former apprentices to market all their courses, including apprenticeships. These are always very well received by learners.

Good practice

Staff from Natspec and Derwen College highlighted the work of UK Worldskills UK competitions⁷ in changing the perception of employers and, learners and their parents, about the skills and abilities of people with LDD. The competition activity enables young people with LDD to display their work skills and growing independence. Providers have also used of the pictures and videos on the website (see link below) as a marketing tool for their provision as they demonstrate the high standards the learners have achieved.

<https://www.worldskillsuk.org/worldskills-uk-competitions/inclusive-skills-competitions>

Case study – achieving through an apprenticeship

A former apprentice in business and administration at an NHS Trust hospital had been told by other students and some of her teachers at school and college that she wouldn’t be able to achieve the same as everybody else due to her autism. She has always found it difficult to speak to new people face to face and over the phone. She has now realised that although it may take her longer, it is not impossible to achieve.

During her apprenticeship, she attended group workshops with other apprentices which was great for building new friendships, learning about business administration and developing her confidence. Her tutor gave her weekly tuition to focus on getting her ready for maths, English

⁷ <https://www.worldskillsuk.org/worldskills-uk-competitions/inclusive-skills-competitions>

and ICT exams as well as supporting her with assignments and job applications.

Following her apprenticeship, she has successfully found a full-time job within the Trust.

She says, 'I felt that my tutors were all very understanding about my learning difficulty. It was good to be able to talk to my team about how I was finding the course. This made me feel more comfortable about my progression as I was often worried that I was falling behind. I feel my confidence has grown hugely during my apprenticeship. I even managed to deliver a presentation to 40 people at my graduation ceremony. I am now able to work on the reception desk without feeling anxious, I am able to speak to colleagues and patients face to face and over the telephone. I can now phone the doctor, dentist and even the local Chinese takeaway!'

Q3: Encouraging employers to take on an apprentice with LDD

26. Understandably, many employers are reluctant to take on apprentices with LDD, especially if this would be a new experience for them or if they had had a negative experience on previous occasions. Some of the providers mentioned that they had worked successfully with large national chains, especially in the retail or hospitality and catering sectors. The provider specialising in the care sector found that their local National Health Service (NHS) trusts were very supportive and provided a good range of work experience and apprenticeships for their LDD learners. The providers also said that small and medium enterprises (SMEs) were sometimes keen to support their learners, and this was often due to the positive attitudes of individuals in the company.

The providers identified the following successful approaches to encouraging employers to take on an apprentice with LDD:

- Using the successful business links already built up within the college or provider has opened doors to persuading more employers and other departments within a company to take on an apprentice with LDD or to create a supported internship.

Good practice at Hawk Training

Job carving works well in the childcare sector. There are often simple but nevertheless important duties that can be taken from current job roles and put together to make up a new role that is tailored to fit the skills and preferences for an apprentice with learning difficulties or disabilities.

- Explaining what the learners have already achieved on their journey so far has often helped raise employers' expectations of the potential of these learners and enabled them to see what they could offer as an apprentice.
- Offers of providing training on specific disabilities for the employers' staff, providing reliable key links with the providers' specialist support, including a main contact, and explaining the types of reasonable adjustments that may be required have often reassured employers who were then willing to open up more apprenticeship opportunities to LDD learners.

Quote from Chichester College

'We take great care to stress to employers the benefits and the value our learners with LDD bring to the workplace. These discussions can take away employers' apprehension, give them knowledge about learning difficulties and disabilities and increase their confidence in working with these learners. They also often realise that this will enable them to develop all their current staff in a different way.'

- Being open and honest with employers about the potential difficulties their apprentices may have and the support the provider can offer both apprentice and employer has been key. Nearly all the providers also have guidance or a booklet for their employers with information on some of the different learning difficulties and disabilities.
- Employers have told the providers that they appreciated knowing in advance their role in planning the training and assessments, and in contributing to the feedback the apprentices receive on their progress and development needs. They also felt reassured when they understood that there were no fixed rules about the frequency of the visits the provider's staff would make to support the

apprentices at work; they would be as often as the apprentice of the employer required.

27. All the providers agreed that engaging new employers is a high priority for them, especially with the introduction of the apprenticeships levy. They see this as an opportunity to create more apprenticeships for learners with LDD and they welcome national campaigns, such as the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) Disability Confident campaign⁸.

Q4: Strategies for recruiting apprentices with learning difficulties and/or disabilities

28. Minimum levels of performance targets could be seen by some providers as a disincentive or barrier to accepting some learners onto apprenticeships. The providers participating in this research also identified that employers often set entry requirements, such as English and maths GCSE at a grade C or above, or entry tests and these may prevent people from reaching the interview stage regardless of their practical skills. They also felt that the functional skills requirements of the apprenticeship framework can be a barrier to some learners who complete the study programme or traineeship, but still find the required levels of functional skills too big a jump. The introduction of the apprenticeship standards is also bringing some challenges, especially where the specifications for the end test have not been agreed or specified. The examples below show how the providers managed to overcome some of the barriers.

The providers identified the following successful strategies for recruiting learners onto apprenticeships:

- It is important to look beyond learners' initial assessment results in English and maths and to consider their practical vocational skills, as well as their employability skills, including their attitudes and behaviour. This has opened up the possibilities of apprenticeships to more learners.
- Some of the providers have started apprentices with low levels of English and maths, but good vocational and employability skills, at a lower level in functional skills. They have then provided additional individual support in the hope that they will improve their skills to the next level and succeed on an apprenticeship. The alternative would be

⁸ <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/disability-confident-campaign>

to recommend further training and/or experience before setting them on as an apprenticeship.

- It is also important to learners to consider the reasonable adjustments that are available for apprentices with LDD that may provide them with the best possible chance of success and achievement are assessed at having low levels of English and maths, the providers have. These may include the use of e-portfolios and other technology, as well as additional time and support, such as a reader or a scribe.
- Providers have also stressed the importance of gathering and recording sufficient information about learners' individual learning difficulties and disabilities and support needs as early as possible in the recruitment process. This had allowed both the staff and employers to make an informed judgement with the learners about the most suitable route to an apprenticeship.

Good practice at Gateshead College

All learners on level 2 and 3 courses attend workshops on how to apply for apprenticeships. Learners on lower level courses are also invited to attend these tutorials and they are supported on their application on an individual basis.

Good practice at Nova Training

Learners who have successfully completed the Head Start study programme and are planning to progress onto an apprenticeship are assigned to the apprenticeship recruitment team at the main learning centre. Staff work with them to develop their skills and confidence in preparation for joining an apprenticeship. Once they are approaching 'job ready', staff help them select an appropriate apprenticeship that is available and identify their support needs. The learners then take part in an interview, induction and initial assessments.

Good practice at Hawk Training

Working with third parties in the community, such as housing associations, has been useful in reaching potential apprentices who may not feel comfortable using the National Apprenticeship Service portal. When screening applicants by phone staff ask whether they would need any support at the assessment days, as they may otherwise be reluctant to attend.

29. Some learners are reluctant to declare their disabilities, sometimes because they have been advised not to by family and friends. The providers participating in the research felt that it may be becoming more acceptable to declare disabilities. Comments were made that the raising of the participation age in education and training meant that young people have needed to in training or education when they have previously have signed on for benefits. Most of the providers had recently seen a rise in learners declaring mental health issues.

Good practice at Hull Training and Adult Education

The provider had a “Just a Tick” campaign to encourage learners to tick the box on their application form to declare a disability. Managers stress with all staff the importance of asking the right questions at interview to find out if the learner has a disability. They felt that previously learners were reluctant to declare their disabilities as they were worried about losing the opportunity for an apprenticeship. To support them in doing this, they have provided training to ensure that their teams are more effective at discussing with learners the types of support that they have had in the past and their likely support needs, and explaining the support available to learners with LDD once they have started an apprenticeship.

Teaching, learning, assessment and support for apprentices with difficulties and/or disabilities

30. The inspection reports verified that the providers all had good or outstanding teaching practices and support for learners with LDD, especially those that had discrete study programmes for these learners.

This research therefore focused on the specific practices that have successfully supported apprentices with LDD to complete their programmes and progress in their careers. The good practice the providers identified, came under the following three themes: making apprenticeships accessible through individualised support; using technology for teaching, learning and assessment, including at work; and providing specific support in English and maths.

Q5: Making apprenticeships accessible through flexible programmes and individualised support

31. The providers again referred to the huge jump apprentices with LDD often needed to make from a programme based in a college or learning centre to being employed. The providers explained some of the ways in which they adapted their apprenticeships to give them the best possible chances of success.

The providers identified the following successful strategies for supporting apprentices with LDD:

- Thorough initial assessment was identified as critical in identifying any barriers to achievement, such as social or learning barriers. The providers then used this information to understand what had helped the apprentices to progress previously and the issues that would need further strategies and provision of support.

Close working with employers has been equally critical. For example, providers' staff have worked with employers and workplace supervisors to make any necessary adjustments to physical resources and work schedules etc. to ensure that the apprentices can progress within their work environment from the start of their programmes. This had included arranging for individual job coaching or mentoring.

Good Practice at Weston College

The college has created a specific role to support learners transferring from a traineeship to an apprenticeship. These transition workers act as a 'go between' by liaising with the apprentice, the employer and college staff. Their role is to ensure that the apprentices receive the support

they need, especially at the initial stages of their apprenticeships and to keep college staff and employers informed of any additional support arrangements that have been agreed. The aim is to reduce this support as the apprentices' progress through their programme, but the members of staff remain available should the apprentices require further support.

A case study that shows flexibility in planning

A learner with diaphragmic cerebral palsy can move about independently, but tires if he is required to walk far. He is also dyslexic and has been assessed as benefiting from support with his memory. He progressed from a traineeship that included carrying out administration duties on work experience to an apprenticeship in business and administration. The provider agreed with the apprentice and the employer that he would benefit from an extended apprenticeship of 18 months, working 3 days (20 hours) a week. They also agreed his working hours and other arrangements, including seating at work, support worker, a lighter portfolio to carry, and adapted assessments to avoid large amounts of writing. He is delighted that he has fulfilled his ambition to join an apprenticeship programme, and has flourished in a work environment.

- All the providers agreed that they needed to be flexible by adapting their delivery models to meet the specific needs of each apprentice. The strategies they have used include: going to the apprentices' workplace to support the apprentices rather than expecting them to attend the college or training centre; the provision of job coaching; extending theory sessions or providing additional support because of changes to the routine at work or a pending test or assessment for the qualification. The providers all stressed the importance of reviewing the effectiveness of the support they have provided and agreeing with the apprentices and employers how to increase the apprentices' ability to work independently. They also frequently reviewed the apprentices' job role to ensure that it remained appropriately challenging and was relevant to the apprenticeship and the apprentices' future career plans.
- Providing effective training, assessment and support relies heavily on the expertise and skills of staff and the providers stipulated the importance of staff development and training.

They always ensured that they had staff with specialisms relevant to their apprentices' needs, such as those experienced in supporting learners with autistic spectrum conditions, specialist tutors who can support learners with dyslexia, dyspraxia and/or dyscalculia or tutors who are adept at using British Sign Language.

Good practice at Nova Training

Staff work with the employers to ensure that they are advised of the apprentices' learning difficulties and/or disabilities, including any medical requirements. They suggest coping strategies and advise on any procedures the employer may need to follow concerning the apprentices' medication needs while at work.

Good practice at Hull Training and Adult Education

Staff complete an Additional Learning Needs discussion with the learner (and their parents or guardian if appropriate) to establish what support needs they have and plan for their transition onto the course. For learners with autistic spectrum conditions staff ensure they have the information they need about the course, are introduced to key staff and get chance to view the facilities before they start. This limits the anxiety they may experience.

- The providers had also found using mentors to be very effective. One provider arranges for mentors for all their apprentices, regardless of their ability, while another provider encourages employers to provide a mentor for their learners and they have a guide on mentoring to assist them.

A case study that shows how negotiating with the apprentices and employers can bring about a successful conclusion.

A member of staff visited an apprentice with dyslexia on a motor vehicle apprenticeship at level 2 at home when it was clear that his attendance at work and the training centre was unacceptable. After further lapsed attendance and careful negotiations with the employers and the apprentice, it was agreed that the apprentice would be tutored in the workplace by Nova and the employer. Over the next few months the apprentice achieved all of his functional skills qualifications and passed his technical exams. He was provided with

a reader for his assessments and the tutor used resources to support him with his dyslexic needs such as coloured overlays. He successfully completed his framework and remained in employment.

Q6 Using technology to support teaching, learning and assessment, including at work

32. The providers were asked to provide examples of how they have used multi-media and accessible digital portfolios to support apprentices with learning difficulties and disabilities.

The providers identified the following successful strategies for supporting apprentices with LDD:

- recording discussions and evidence gained digitally to help with difficulties with written work for everyday work activities as well as for assignments needed for their qualifications.
- using e-portfolios for learners to access and post completed word processed work for assessment; this and other pieces of technology can generally be adapted by zooming out/in, changing background colours, adapting the sound etc.
- voice recorders for dyslexic learners to use at work.

Q7 Supporting apprentices' development of English and maths

33. The inspection reports reviewed showed that the development of apprentices' English and maths was one of the weakest aspects of apprenticeships overall. The participating providers agreed that this aspect was often all the more challenging for apprentices with LDD and they had worked hard to find practices that were successful for these learners.

The providers identified the following successful strategies for developing their apprentices' skills in English and maths:

- The provision of peripatetic specialist English and maths tutors has enabled providers to teach these subjects to apprentices in their workplace and adapt their training to the relevant vocational contexts.

- The focus on using work-related communications has helped develop apprentices' English skills and the use of real data, measurements and calculations relevant to their work role has helped apprentices understand why they need to develop their maths skills.
- All the providers, where possible, make full use of the reasonable adjustments for the assessments within the awarding body guidelines. These generally include providing extra time, breaks in tests, enlarged type on the papers and in some cases, a reader and/or a scribe.
- Identifying the apprentices' development needs in English and maths at a very early stage has been critical in enabling them to improve their skills and confidence at work. The providers have identified that the support is more effective when it focuses on helping the apprentices develop learning strategies that they can use at work and at home to increase their independence. It is also important to monitor the apprentices' progress throughout the programme and work with them to review the support and the impact it is having. This has sometimes involved extending the programme time to enable the apprentices to achieve to their potential.

Good practice at Hull Adult Training

Staff recognise that apprentices develop their English and maths skills better when they can relate them to practical contexts. They therefore sometimes arrange additional work in alternative vocational areas, where relevant. For example, an apprentice in business administration who found the principles of weights and measures difficult, spent some time in the catering area to study this in a practical setting.

34. While it was clear that the providers focus well on supporting all apprentices regardless of their entry level of English and maths, they voiced their concern about the following aspects:

- There are now more written assignments in many apprenticeships and awarding bodies are not felt to be flexible enough with their requirements for these assessments or the

reasonable adjustments they will allow. There are also similar concerns about the new end point assessments.

Section 3: The views of the providers

35. The 2014/15 data clearly shows that still more needs to be done to enable people with LDD to access apprenticeships. While the providers participating in this research were rightly keen to share their good practice in preparing learners with LDD for apprenticeships and ensuring that they succeed, they were also keen to receive the examples from other providers.

36. In response to what needs to be done, the providers all indicated that there seemed to be quite a few national and local initiatives and schemes, such as the DWP Disability confident scheme and the UK Worldskills competitions and indeed the government's response to the recommendations made by the Maynard task force, which they welcomed. They also welcomed the research into this area of work and the publication of good practice and training materials. While they were keen for any action that can make funding and support for apprentices with LDD more accessible, their one heartfelt plea was for all this work to be better coordinated and widely disseminated, so that they didn't feel lucky if they came across something that would help them in their cause.

37. In response to suggestions for ways forward, most of the providers' suggestions perhaps not unsurprisingly related to funding and the requirements for English and maths qualifications.

As one provider said: 'If there are learners who are being held back from achieving an apprenticeship because they have learning difficulties and/or disabilities, then surely it's their entitlement that we have access to the extra resources that are required so that they have the same opportunity to achieve as everyone else.'

38. In acknowledgement that the framework requirements for level 1 English can be an obstacle that takes a lot of hard work and determination to achieve and now that GCSEs have been placed in bands from 1-9, one provider suggested that perhaps there could be an acceptable and comparable banding for apprenticeships with English and maths that allows vocational skill development and some form of improvement with English and maths for learners with LDD.

Publications referenced in the report

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Statistical First Release - Further Education and Skills, SFA/DfE October 2016

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Published good practice case studies and training materials

The Education & Training Foundation, Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND)

<http://www.et-foundation.co.uk/supporting/support-practitioners/special-educational-needs-disabilities-send-resources/>

The Education & Training Foundation, Foundation Online Learning, Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND)

<https://www.foundationonline.org.uk/course/index.php?categoryid=15>

Ofsted good practice case studies: Preparing vulnerable young people for employment, Ofsted 2015

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/preparing-vulnerable-young-people-for-employment>

Annex 1: Independent report: Paul Maynard taskforce recommendations

The taskforce recommends the following as being important steps to improving access to apprenticeships for those with learning difficulties.

1. BIS and DWP formulate, implement and subsequently evaluate a joint communications strategy to promote awareness, particularly of the funding and financial support available, and the positive business benefits of taking on someone with learning difficulties or disabilities (LDD), using case studies and role models to inform employers and providers. This should include using existing channels such as the current 'Get In Go Far' apprenticeship communications campaign and the future mental health apprenticeship champions network. In addition, all guidance, including the website and [NIACE toolkit](#), should be reviewed to ensure they are fit for purpose and reflect the needs of LDD apprentices, their employers and training providers.
2. BIS adjusts the minimum standard of English and maths required (to entry level 3) for a defined group of apprentices with learning difficulties and disabilities who are able to meet the occupational standard but will struggle to achieve English and maths qualifications at the level normally required. The taskforce recommends that further work is done to define this group and its potential volume, and quantify the impact any changes will have on people with LDD. This should be implemented in a way that ensures we have a robust system to avoid potential misuse of this adjustment.
3. BIS investigates potential changes to the method of assessments for English and maths for targeted groups as some people with LDD may be able to demonstrate the minimum requirements in the workplace, but be unable to complete a formal assessment.
4. DWP updates the Access to Work eligibility letter to 'sell' the support available better (eg up to £41,400) and emphasise that this support is available in situations which require more than reasonable adjustments. Furthermore, case studies of the transformative effect Access to Work can have for individuals should be included with the letter.
5. DWP uses the Disability Confident campaign – both in terms of pledges and events – to encourage employers to drive demand and increase supply. This could include signposting to good practice (including non-traditional recruitment practices mentioned below) and providing information on 'navigating the system' from a disability perspective.

6. BIS ensure Individualised Learner Records are as robust as possible in data capture by auditing providers, improving data collection particularly on severe and mild/moderate LDD to ensure that the right questions are asked, and also that there are ample responses.
7. BIS and DWP consider 'what good looks like' for relevant hidden impairment groups and age brackets, in order to set appropriate targets for increasing the number of apprentices with LDD. Given that existing analysis indicates that the overall LDD apprenticeship participation is at a similar level to the 16 to 24 year old employed population, the moderate learning difficulty group is likely to be a key group to look at, though there may be others such as those with autistic spectrum conditions. Any targets should take account of any existing departmental or cross-governmental targets in this area (eg the existing priority on recruiting more 19 to 24 year old apprentices with LDD as prescribed in 2013 Regulations).
8. BIS and DWP consider joining up funding streams, for example Additional Learning Support and Access to Work, so that potential hurdles are reduced and that the application is seamless from an apprentice/employer/provider perspective.
9. A defined pilot should be conducted exploring how the funding model introduced with the apprenticeship levy might be flexed to incentivise employers to recruit apprentices with learning disabilities. The pilot should bring together these recommendations and test how they work as the levy is introduced, as well as evaluating the effectiveness of the funding incentives available in the levy funding model, to see if the right support can be provided efficiently to a range of apprentices with learning disabilities.

The pilot should include private, public and voluntary sector employers and look to test out how such an exemption might work within the levy. In turn, this would generate good practice case studies, which could be used to demonstrate how apprenticeships can work for people with a learning disability, showcase the support they need and then be used to inspire other young people.

10. BIS and DWP lead by example with their own apprenticeship programmes, and encourage wider Civil Service and public sector commitment to apprenticeships for those with LDD. Other ways of influencing the wider labour market that departments should consider include using public sector contracts to set expectations with regard to apprenticeships.
11. BIS and DWP investigate and raise awareness of the range of non-traditional recruitment practices including working interviews, job carving roles, electronic portfolios and other digital options to help LDD apprenticeship

applicants. This should include investigating good practice from the Movement to Work programme and organisations such as Mencap, as well as the situation with others that have no previous experience of employing and supporting individuals with LDD.

12. BIS revisits recommendations from the [Little report \(2012\)](#) and provide a response to his update with a view to making further progress in delivering against them.
13. In the light of evidence that providers sometimes refuse to take on people with LDD, DWP and BIS to undertake further work to ensure that the system of reasonable adjustments and the availability of support, for example through Access to Work, are understood and consistently applied by providers, particularly in relation to those learners who could meet the normal English and maths criteria with this help.
14. BIS and DWP to consider the use of technology to support user-led strategies for apprentices with LDD, for example the Brain in Hand app.

Annex 2: The profiles of the participating providers

Chichester College

Chichester College is a large general further education college that offers a broad range of vocational and academic courses and apprenticeship programmes across its two main sites in Chichester and Brinsbury, near Pulborough. In addition, the college operates outreach centres in Bognor Regis, Littlehampton and Worthing.

Gateshead College

Gateshead College is a very large general further education college with its main campus in Gateshead and additional centres in the Team Valley and at the Gateshead International Stadium. It provides a wide range of classroom-based and work-based programme for learners aged 16 to 18 and adults. The college offers a very wide range of provision, comprising study programmes for learners aged 16 to 19 at levels 1, 2 and 3, and provision at levels 1 to 4 for adult learners on college-based courses. Most learners aged 16 to 19 are on full-time courses and most adults on part-time courses. Large numbers of learners aged 16 to 19 and adults are on apprenticeships.

Hawk Training

Hawk Training is a private limited company established in 1988. The company is contracted to provide apprenticeship training in early years and playwork, administration and management. It also has a small number of learners in customer service, information technology, hospitality and retail. Groups of learners reflect the different local populations that it serves. Staff backgrounds similarly reflect the variations in types of learners. Hawk Training is based in Twickenham and operates primarily throughout the Greater London area.

Hull Training and Adult Education

Hull Training and Hull Adult Education Service (HCC) are now within the 14-19 and Skills area of Localities and Learning within Kingston upon Hull City Council. Hull Training has provided work based learning since 1980 and Adult Education has been delivering provision since early 1900. Hull Training offers apprenticeships and foundation learning for young people, operating from four main training centres within the Humber region. The main areas of provision are engineering, business administration and law, information and communication technology (ICT), construction, catering, foundation learning and care.

Nova Training

Founded in 1992, Nova Training (Nova) is an independent learning provider. With its head office based in Willenhall in Walsall, Nova operates from 18 centres throughout the West Midlands. The newly established Wolverhampton vocational training centre acts as a hub for the other centres.

The study programmes for learners aged 16 to 19 account for the largest number of learners. Since October 2015, Nova has established study programme provision in five centres in Norfolk and more recently extended it to a further five centres throughout the east of England. Nova has assimilated learners from four training providers who had lost their contracts with the funding agencies. Learners on apprenticeships and the recently introduced programmes for learners with high needs are based in the West Midlands. Nova offers training in several vocational areas including motor vehicle, construction, business administration, customer service, sales, warehousing, hairdressing, beauty therapy, retail and hospitality.

Weston College

Weston College is a large general further education college based in Weston-super-Mare in Somerset. Weston-super-Mare has a population of around 79,000. Many of the employment opportunities in the area are seasonal. The college has three campuses in the town and works with a large number of partner organisations to provide education and training across the south-west region. The college offers a wide range of vocational and academic further education

courses, has over 1000 apprentices employed by a wide range of employers, and provides vocational courses for around 300 pupils aged 14 to 16. It provides education and training to prisons across the south of England. It has significant higher education provision.