

Department for Work and Pensions

Research Report No 203

Working lives: The role of day centres in supporting people with learning disabilities into employment

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A report of research carried out by the Learning Disability Employment Research Partnership on behalf of the Department for Work and Pensions and the Department of Health

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Dedication

We would like to dedicate this research report to Ken Simons, who sadly died in January 2003. Ken was passionately concerned to improve the opportunities people with learning disabilities have to work and to do significant things with their lives during the day. He played a major part in designing the study and his contribution will be greatly missed.

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The Authors

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Abbreviations and acronyms

DEA	Disability Employment Advisor
DoH	Department of Health
DSS	Department of Social Security (former Department for Work and Pensions)
DWP	Department for Work and Pensions
FE	Further Education
IB	Incapacity Benefit
IS	Income Support
JIP	Joint Investment Plan
LA	Local Authority
LD JIP	Learning Disability Joint Investment Plan
NDDP	New Deal for Disabled People
NMW	National Minimum Wage
NPTC	National Proficiency Training Certificate
PCT	Primary Care Trust
PSA	Public Service Agreement
VP	Valuing People
WTC	Working Tax Credit
WtW JIP	Welfare to Work Joint Investment Plan

Summary

The research

This research explored the employment activities and support being undertaken by day centres and other organisations, and the views and experiences of people with learning disabilities and their carers, to understand how people can be helped most effectively into employment and draw lessons from current practice.

The research team carried out qualitative research in nine Local Authorities across England, to obtain the perspectives of users of day services, their carers, managers and staff of day services, and managers of employment-related providers, both within the Local Authority and independent of it.

Experiences of employment for people with learning disabilities

The importance of work and its main benefits

- People with learning disabilities in our study liked (and disliked) work for much the same reasons as everybody else. They liked paid work best of all. The advantages they identified included money, social contact, making a contribution to other people, and having something to do.
- People want to work even if they are not working at present, and mainly want paid work. Those in employment want to stay in their job or seek better jobs.
- The main reason people left work was because of company closure, or because they didn't like the work they did, rather than because of negative attitudes or bullying from an employer.

Type of work, hours worked and pay

- The types of jobs people had were mainly in catering in cafes and residential care homes for the elderly; office work; cleaning; and retail. People also did recycling and gardening work.
- The majority of people interviewed who worked were paid. Most people earned only the minimum wage or just above. Most people were satisfied with their pay, although some wanted more. Most of those who weren't paid at all wanted to be paid.
- Most people worked for less than five hours per week, some worked five to 15 hours, and a small minority worked more than 16 hours.
- Permitted Work rules for those working up to 16 hours were not mentioned as an issue. Generally, few people in day centres worked anywhere near the 16 hours limit. The issue was connected to Income Support. Only a few felt that four to five hours was all that they could manage.
- There was a potentially real, or perceived, fear that by taking part in paid work or increasing their hours, people would not gain, or be worse off.
- The Income Support disregard means that people can only earn £20 per week (effectively, four to five hours per week at National Minimum Wage (NMW)) before losing some benefit.
- This meant that for those who were only likely to increase their hours slightly, say to eight hours, which many people felt they could manage, it was perceived that there was no incentive to do so.
- The low hours worked could disadvantage people with learning disabilities, who may need more time than is available per week to learn job skills.
- People were also concerned that losing Income Support would have wider effects on their income and would affect linked benefits such as Housing Benefit, upon which many rely to cover their housing costs.

Sources of employment help and support

- People reported that day centres were good at helping them to consider the possibility of employment. They also provided practical support – in particular they organised visits to workplaces and provided work experience.
- Specialist employment officers in agencies were mentioned frequently as providing help, particularly with job applications and job trials.
- College attendance was common, but few people reported receiving active support from colleges to think about or get a job.
- Once a job was found, employers and work colleagues were mentioned as good sources of support, with day centres remaining a source of support in problem solving.

The role and experiences of carers

- Carers in our study both provided and received support to help users to obtain employment. Their main practical supporting roles were resolving benefits issues and helping with transport.
- Carers were more critical of day services than were people with learning disabilities, and some felt that they had struggled alone to find employment opportunities.
- Carers views on employment varied widely, but many carers were powerful advocates for employment. Many carers we talked to valued work highly and felt that being employed was beneficial to their relative.
- Day centres seemed to work more closely with carers than specialist agencies; agencies prioritised contact with the (potential) worker.

The employment role of day centres

- Day centres in our study varied greatly in the emphasis they placed on achieving paid employment outcomes. Some day centres were focused on employment and understood good practice in the area, while others were imprecise about how their activities helped people to get jobs.
- The smallest group of day services provided little or no employment-related activity and referred on to specialist agencies for most aspects of employment work. They used social care planning for assessment of need; provided a broad range of general activities (sport, arts and crafts); and trained basic skills, such as time management, money management, numeracy and literacy. Here, the links to employment outcomes were weak.
- A second and largest group of day services used systems of work skill assessment and formal work preparation, ranging from courses in specific work skills to work activity programmes (greenhouse projects, buffet enterprise, voluntary work placements). It was not always clear how well these led on to paid jobs.
- A third group of day services had their own employment placement teams, and provided support for people into paid work. They mainly used vocational profiling to enhance other forms of assessment; either drew on colleges or other local courses for some training (health and safety, food hygiene, work awareness) or trained people on the job.
- Where day centres are focused on employment outcomes, they tend to use the concepts developed in Supported Employment (vocational profiling, job matching, job placement, on-the-job support, career review etc.), which are wholly compatible with Person Centred Planning, the system for planning people's futures promoted by *Valuing People*.

Relationships between day centres and employment-related services

An important part of the role day centres play is to work with a range of employment related services:

Schools and colleges: Schools and colleges have a role in providing an education for people with learning disabilities that will enable them to develop the skills needed for work, and to plan what they will do when their education is completed.

Learning and Skills Councils: are responsible for planning education and training including for people with learning disabilities aged over 16. Training may include work trial placements.

Connexions Service: Connexions advisers work with people aged between 13 – 25 to help them plan their futures and provide continued support for those who have progressed into employment.

Jobcentre Plus: Jobcentre Plus provides integrated support to people claiming benefits who want to work. People making a new claim for benefits have a work-focused interview with a personal adviser and the adviser may refer them on to specialist organisations that can help people into work.

Disability Employment Advisers: specialist support is available from Jobcentre Plus to help disabled people who want to work – advisers provide tailored advice and information and can refer people to specialist programmes, and help ease the transition into work.

Specialist training and work preparation providers: specialist agencies include those in the voluntary or social enterprise sectors offering training and work preparation.

Specialist employment agencies: Local Authority disability employment teams and *WORKSTEP* providers, as well as a range of voluntary agencies including *WORKSTEP* providers, and social businesses offer employment support and placements, in both open and supported employment sectors.

Most day centres were working with schools and colleges to help school leavers manage the transition process and organise work experience. Many day centres wanted to work more closely with education providers and offer more help to young people with learning disabilities who were still in the education sector and had not yet entered the day centre system. The creation of Connexions is too recent for partnerships between the service and day centres to have developed fully, but many reported that it would be important to introduce employment as an option at the point of transition to adult services. Day centres recognised the strategic importance of these bodies and were beginning to seek to influence them to promote the interest of people with learning disabilities.

Day centres were using specialised training providers to offer pre-vocational training, but this did not often lead to relevant job placements. Some day centres were working with specialist employment agencies, and referring their users to these agencies, and most respondents were positive about these partnerships. There were sometimes difficulties over who was responsible for providing transport, liaison about the user's situation and following through on agreed decisions.

Links to Jobcentre Plus were weak – few day centres reported working with Job Brokers or Disability Employment Advisers, and awareness of employment programmes that would be relevant to this group were low. Links between day centres and *WORKSTEP* were frequently underdeveloped. Other providers had better relationships, and generally found joint working through referrals and contracts to be effective. A small minority were concerned that the re-organisation of some DEAs into Jobcentre Plus management had disrupted communication with some providers.

The extent to which day centres work with other partners can be broadly modelled into three types:

- Hands-on services: where day centres provided all aspects of employment support through their own specialist teams or staff.
- Hands-on partnerships: where day centres provided aspects of work preparation, but referred people on to specialist employment agencies for job-finding, placement and support.
- Hands-off partnerships: where day centres provided little or no employment-related activity and referred on to specialist employment agencies for all aspects of work preparation, experience and placement.

Barriers to employment

Barriers to employment can be separated into two types – structural and individual:

- **Structural barriers:** The barriers to employment most commonly reported were the inflexibility of the benefit system, negative attitudes on the part of employers and society in general, and the reluctance of some carers to support employment. Unavailability of employment support and lack of transport were also often mentioned.
- **Individual barriers:** Respondents most commonly reported that people with learning disabilities attending day centres were hindered by poor communication ability, lack of concentration, lack of social skills, and lack of basic independence skills. Some felt that people suffered from 'learned helplessness' and a lack of motivation.

- **Enablers:** The things that enabled day centres to support people to enter employment more easily were: being able to offer good welfare benefit advice; understanding the situation carers were in and addressing discussions of their relative's employment in this light; and having staff with relevant expertise dedicated to providing employment.

Improving employment opportunities for people with learning disabilities

- The research suggests that extending employment opportunities for people with learning disabilities will require action from a range of key players
- Developing partnerships between Local Authorities (including day centres), specialist teams and agencies and mainstream services is an effective means of providing support to people with learning disabilities and of providing the comprehensive provision of support they need.
- Appointing employment specialists within day centres is unlikely to provide the necessary vision or impetus to overcome cultural resistance to trying out integrated employment.
- This research suggests that change can be initiated by investing in partnerships, bringing in mainstream and specialist organisations to work with day centres on vocational profiling and to helping them align their in-house programmes with the requirements of local employers.
- It is easier for people to find and stay in work if they receive specifically targeted support in which employment of their choice is assumed to be a goal. This needs to begin at school to create a climate of expectation and aspiration of paid employment. At the transition stage, Local Authorities should ensure that a direct route into employment is available after school and college.
- The research indicates that Local Authorities may need to consider all of their employment related activity and ensure it is focused on achieving paid jobs.
- Evidence from other studies suggests that a comprehensive range of work exploration, work placement and support services are required to help a greater number of people into paid jobs.
- Work preparation is fundamental to employment for some people with learning disabilities. However, the wide range of approaches we have seen in day services and linked services suggests that advice and support as to what constitutes effective work preparation for getting people into paid employment is needed.
- Work preparation alone is not enough. It needs to be part of a spectrum of provision, including availability of support into work and access to expert benefits advice for people wishing to work. To overcome the evident fragmentation of employment support services, clearly signposted individual pathways through complex inter-organisational structures are required.

- Local Authorities may need to consider how they can ensure their policies on residential care and Housing Benefit reflect the principles set out in Valuing People, and particularly that they are supportive of increasing employment opportunities and remove barriers to people in residential care moving into employment.
- There is a need to enlist carers as full partners in the pursuit of employment, beginning at the transition phase, and recognising that carers have individual perspectives and attitudes towards work.
- Availability of support into work from mainstream services should be increased. One way to do this might be to reduce the minimum number of hours worked to qualify for *WORKSTEP*, *Access to Work* and Working Tax Credit from 16 to, say, eight hours per week.
- This research suggests that many people with learning disabilities are working only a few hours a week. The key factor limiting hours appears to be the inability of people to work more and continue to claim Income Support, rather than limits due to health and support needs. Wider evidence has suggested there are a range of benefits connected to being in employment including increased independence, improved mental health, and the ability to learn and develop. There is no reason to suppose that these benefits do not extend to people with learning disabilities.
- The research indicates that the reason people are working few hours is mainly due to the perceived and potentially real, loss of earnings due to Income Support rules which acts as a disincentive, rather than due to limits deriving from health and support needs. In order to extend employment opportunities for this group the Income Support disregard may need to be increased to permit someone to work for, say eight hours per week at the NMW without losing their entitlement to benefits.
- There is a need to build examples of individual employment pathways that are visibly successful in improving income, integration and quality of life of people with learning disabilities. These examples could be made available to people with learning disabilities and their families via pictures, videos and other materials.
- In this research the education and training sector was not playing a prominent role in facilitating employment opportunities for people with learning disabilities. The sector needs to be more outcome-focused in relation to the courses they are running to promote employment for people with learning disabilities and foster expectations of paid employment as the norm, distinct from day centre or college activity.
- Learning and Skills Councils may consider the exit strategies available to people with learning disabilities graduating from their courses and ensure that appropriate support services are available to help people get paid jobs.
- Support services may be needed to enable people with learning disabilities to

take advantage of Connexions, and to broaden the opportunities offered by Connexions to include work for this group.

- As more DEAs come under generic Jobcentre Plus management, care is needed to ensure information flows are not disrupted and that Jobcentre Plus managers are clear on disability issues to drive forward joint work with provider organisations.
- Employers should be encouraged to recruit people to meet their actual labour needs, rather than as any form of community service, and to offer sustainable employment.

Development activities

There is a need to demonstrate the efficacy of a partnership approach on a locality basis. Demonstration projects are, therefore, recommended along two possible models.

- **Build employment capacity within day services:** One way forward might be to develop a pilot with organisations with a good track record of finding and supporting jobs in the learning disability field. They could become a resource to less experienced local services wishing to employment opportunities. The pilot should include education, Connexions and Jobcentre Plus as well as specialist agencies in a given locality.
- **Enable specialist services to address the employment needs of day centre users:** A more direct form of intervention could be to pay accredited organisations with a proven track record to offer Supported Employment to a limited number of people in day centres that have no employment programmes. The process would feed on success by building up living examples of what people can do if given the right support.

Areas for further research

- Understanding how people with learning disabilities use benefits would allow policymakers to assess fully the impact of benefit rules on this group.
- Further research may be needed to assess the impacts of different types of employment preparation and support activities offered by day centres and other agencies.

1 Introduction

1.1 Background

1.1.1 Definitions

Learning disability

This study adopts the definition of learning disability used in *Valuing People* (DoH 2001). The definition describes learning disabilities as:

'the presence of impaired intelligence (a significantly reduced ability to understand new or complex information and to learn new skills) combined with impaired social functioning (a reduced ability to cope independently). These will have begun before adulthood, and will have had a lasting effect on development.'

Such a definition encompasses people with a broad range of disabilities. Learning disability as defined here does not include those who have a specific 'learning difficulty' in an educational sense such as dyslexia.

Work and employment

Work is traditionally defined as an activity that involves the exercise of skills and judgement, taking place within set limits prescribed by others (Bennett, 1970). *Work* is therefore essentially something you 'do' for other people.

Here *Employment* is work you get paid for. In particular it is any remunerated work where payment (at least at National Minimum Wage level) is based on the expectation that the worker will fulfil basic requirements – working set hours, completing specified tasks. This implies the existence of a contract, even if this is not a written contract. Where such a contract exists, the work is deemed to be employment and the worker must be paid at or above the NMW or not paid at all. In this report the focus of interest is employment, though it also discusses work experience and unpaid placements as preparation activities for paid employment.

1.1.2 Research objectives

The Government have instituted a new policy for the provision of services for people with learning disabilities (DoH, 2001). As part of *Valuing People* the Department of Health (DoH), in partnership with the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP), has stated its commitment to encouraging employment opportunities for those with learning disabilities. The DWP and the DoH jointly commissioned this research to:

- assess the advice and employment preparation activities undertaken by day care staff (in relation to a range of level of impairment);
- explore the extent to which day care centres interface with local employment-related services;
- uncover and explore the key facilitating and inhibiting factors to people with learning disabilities engaging in work-related activities;
- describe the forms of work-related support that people use, including wider employment support organisations;
- draw out lessons from current practice to consider how employment opportunities for people with learning disabilities may be extended.

1.1.3 *Valuing People* and employment

The White Paper *Valuing People: A New Strategy for Learning Disability for the 21st Century*, published in 2001, sets out the Government's approach to providing new opportunities for people with learning disabilities and enabling them to lead full and independent lives as part of their local communities. The paper sets out the need to modernise services for people with learning disabilities. In particular, it urges the transformation of traditional day centres, which in the past made:

'... a limited contribution to promoting social inclusion or independence for people with learning disabilities. People with learning disabilities attending them have not had opportunities to develop individual interests or the skills and experience they need in order to move into employment.'

(DoH, 2001; p 76)

A key part of *Valuing People* is recognising that paid, integrated employment can be a positive and valuable part of the lives of people with learning disabilities.

In respect of employment, *Valuing People* echoes the overall Government agenda on the centrality of employment and its aspiration to achieve greater social inclusion for disabled people. The Government are committed to increasing employment opportunities for those who can work, while retaining support for those who are unable to work. This commitment is reflected in the Public Service Agreement with Local Government that aims to significantly reduce the gap between the employment rates of people with disabilities and the wider population and to remove barriers to their participation in society (HM Treasury, 2002; p50).

Although *Valuing People* is very clear that day centres should move rapidly towards a person-centred, socially inclusive approach to the delivery of their services, there are no specific requirements for day services themselves to deliver employment goals. However, they are well positioned to support the effective integration of people with learning disabilities into mainstream activities including employment, where this is the clear aspiration of the individual. Day services are expected to enable individuals to have the experiences and information that will help them to make realistic choices about seeking work and to build their services around peoples' working lives when they are in employment. The guidance document *Framework for Developing an Employment Strategy* (DoH, 2002) explores how links can be made between day centres and mainstream Government disability employment programmes.

1.1.4 Learning disability and employment policies

The Government offers a number of programmes to assist disabled people to enter employment.

Types of work for people with learning disabilities

Open employment: employment in the mainstream job market.

Supported employment: employment in the open job market, but with additional support provided through a variety of agencies including voluntary sector organisations, local and health authorities or through *WORKSTEP*.

WORKSTEP: the Government's Supported Employment Programme is available to disabled people who are long-term unemployed or on Incapacity Benefit (IB) and gives tailored support and training to both employees and employers.

Social Firms: sustainable businesses operating in the open market providing jobs for both disabled and non-disabled people.

Permitted work (previously 'therapeutic work'): people are allowed to work for up to 16 hours a week without loss of Incapacity Benefits for 26 weeks (or as long as they like provided they have ongoing regular support and supervision).

Voluntary work: work for a non-profit making organisation on an unpaid basis.

Work experience/trials: on-the-job placements for a fixed period.

Source: MENCAP Making it work: What you should know if the person you care for is considering employment.

WORKSTEP sets out to help people into employment in supported factories and businesses, operated by Local Authorities and voluntary bodies. *WORKSTEP* also offers funding that can be used flexibly in support of people in community jobs. In

addition, assistance is offered through the network of Remploy factories and the Remploy Interwork scheme. *WORKSTEP* contractors have not generally provided specialist Supported Employment as a way of placing people in ordinary jobs. Local Authority social services and, to a lesser extent, health authorities have been the key providers of Supported Employment places (Beyer, Goodere and Kilsby, 1996).

The *Access to Work* Programme can provide funding support to remove disability-related barriers to work. The programme is operated locally by Disability Employment Advisors and provides funding to employers for aids and adaptations for people in the workplace.

In 1997 the Government introduced the *New Deal for Disabled People* (NDDP), a major part of which is the Job Broker scheme. Job Brokers from independent organisations provide intensive support for disabled people to overcome labour market disadvantages.

Most disabled people who use Jobcentre services make use of mainstream services. However, for those with more complex needs, Disability Employment Advisors, accessed through Jobcentres, act as the gateway to specialist support.

A number of other recent developments have affected people with learning disabilities who want to work, or who are working:

- **The Disability Discrimination Act:** Implemented in 1995 this act makes it unlawful for an employer to unjustifiably treat a disabled applicant or employee less favourably than others because of their disability, and places a duty on employers to make reasonable adjustments to ensure that the workplace or working practices are suitable for disabled applicants or employees.
- **The Special Educational Needs and Disability Act (SENDA):** This act applies to further education institutions, higher education institutions and Local Education Authorities for post-16 education and means that disabled students must not be treated less favourably than other students because of their disability.
- **Welfare to Work Joint Investment Plans (WtW JIPs):** These joint plans sought to bring together all providers of employment support for people with disabilities under the leadership of the Local Authority to better integrate their provision and investment.
- **Public Authorities as model employers:** In addition to coordinating the WtW JIPs, public authorities are being asked to open up employment opportunities for disabled people, including people with learning disabilities, in their services. Local councils will be setting targets for employment of this group of people as part of local Public Service Agreements (PSAs). Local PSAs are a means by which Local Authorities can build upon best value and commit themselves to delivering better outcomes for local people – especially those who are disadvantaged.

1.1.5 The evolution of day and employment services

Day services

Day centres, as non-residential institutions for people with learning disabilities, have been in existence in one form or another since 1913. The focus of what have been called at different times occupation centres, adult training centres, social education centres and day centres has shifted over the years. At various points they have concentrated on sheltered work, the need for training for independence, or developing social skills (Whelan and Speake, 1977; National Development Group, 1977). During the 1980s and 1990s centres became increasingly specialised and education, leisure and employment functions were often separated (Seed, 1998). However, wide variations in what people actually do in centres persist, reflecting historical precedent more than deliberate design (Beyer, Kilsby and Lowe, 1994).

At the point that *Valuing People* was launched, traditional centres were slowly being replaced by:

- small, local bases (including user-run drop-in centres which offer individualised support organised on an 'outreach' basis;
- new centres are focused on providing greater access to continuing education;
- more employment-focused support.

(Simons and Watson, 1999)

Employment services

The idea of work for people with learning disabilities is not new. Some of the earlier day services for people, such as the adult training centre model, featured ideas about 'occupation'.¹ However, the predominant assumption was that if people worked at all it would primarily be in sheltered settings. Significant numbers of people who were seen as more capable moved into workshops set up after the Second World War. However, most people with more significant intellectual impairments (particularly those using the developing social care services) were, by definition, seen as 'incapable' of work (Simons, 2000).

Those assumptions began to be challenged in the UK during the 1980s, with the publication of *An Ordinary Working Life* (King's Fund, 1984), which argued that people with learning disabilities had as much right as any other citizen to 'valued, rewarding and unsegregated' employment. It focused less on the value of work as occupation and more on the recognition that work had a wider range of benefits, including social status and the opportunity to develop relationships. *An Ordinary*

¹ Adult Training Centres set out to provide people with general work skills, commonly using simple parts assembly tasks and packing products as a work training activity.

Working Life also began to question assumptions about incapacity, shifting the emphasis away from individual impairment as the primary barrier to work. It suggested that people with learning disabilities have something to offer employers, and that, with the right support and adaptations, anyone might be able to work.

Since the publication of *An Ordinary Working Life*, employment policies, and specifically services targeted at people with learning disabilities, have moved on. Depending on where they live, individuals with learning disabilities who wish to work may be presented with an array of services focused around employment as opposed to social care. Employment preparation, advice and support is provided by a variety of services, including:

- **day centres:** As well as providing social activities, some day centres are to some extent focused on preparing people for appropriate employment.
- **supported employment agencies:** Support is offered to assess individuals' needs and preferences, identify appropriate jobs with employers, place individuals within jobs and support individuals in the workplace and in their subsequent career.
- **mainstream Government services:** The Department for Work and Pensions, and its agency, Jobcentre Plus, oversee a range of services used by people with learning disabilities. The Department for Education and Skills covers all aspects of education and training including the career service, Connexions and Learning and Skills Councils.

This study aims to explore how people with learning disabilities in day centres use these services to move towards employment.

1.1.6 Numbers known to social services and using day services

Precise information on the numbers of people with learning disabilities, and service users is difficult to find and dependent on definitions used (DoH, 2001; Learning Disabilities Foundation, 2002). *Valuing People* estimated that there are around 210,000 people with severe and profound learning disabilities in England, with some 120,000 adults of working age. This is supported by statistics for 2001/02 showing 115,000 people with learning disabilities aged over 18 and in receipt of Social Services provision. About 57,000 of these people received day care at some point in 2001/02. The numbers using day centres are very variable, ranging from three to 198 per 10,000 population for different Local Authority areas.

1.1.7 Numbers in employment

Estimates of the number of people with learning disabilities in work vary and are also dependent on definition. The Labour Force Survey (Office of National Statistics, 2003) estimates that 35 per cent of people with 'a severe or specific learning difficulty (mental handicap)' in Great Britain were in work.² This is lower than for the disabled population in general, with 48 per cent in work, and for the population as a whole, with 74 per cent in work. One of the targets for *Valuing People* is to bring the level of employment for people with learning disabilities up to that of the disabled population in general.

1.1.8 Numbers in work schemes

As well as attending day centres and being in paid employment, people with learning disabilities participate in a number of Government employment schemes:

- **WORKSTEP:** offers places in supported factories and a network of community jobs for around 22,000 people. People with learning disabilities represent about 38 per cent of those on the *WORKSTEP* programme (Beyer, Thomas and Thornton, 2003).
- **Access to Work:** supported 36,500 disabled people in work in 2002/3. People with learning disabilities represent around two per cent of people accessing the scheme – a figure comparable to the number of people with learning disabilities in the general population (Thornton, Hirst and Arksey, 2000). The figure of two per cent is low when one considers the proportion of people with learning disabilities accessing *WORKSTEP*.
- **Local Government funded Supported Employment programmes:** provide between seven and ten thousand additional jobs (Learning Disabilities Foundation, 2002). The majority of people using these schemes are people with learning disabilities (Beyer, Goodere and Kilsby, 1996). Many employed in this way work part-time and earn only small amounts within Income Support disregard limits and the Permitted Work regulations.

1.2 Research methods

1.2.1 Case study methods

This research was carried out between September 2002 and July 2003. It consisted of case studies that included in-depth interviews with a range of people who had a perspective on employment opportunities for people with learning disabilities.

² There are concerns that this figure includes people with specific learning difficulties other than 'mental handicap', such as dyslexia, and it is likely that the number of people with learning disabilities who meet our definitions in work is much lower than that shown.

Day centres and services

We conducted 30 interviews with managers of day centres or services, three with staff within day services directly involved in employment work, and eight with staff from Local Authority training or vocational training programmes.

Employment-related services

We carried out 24 interviews with managers of LA or non-LA employment agencies that worked with day services, including *WORKSTEP* providers, Supported Employment agencies and social enterprises.

People with learning disabilities and carers

We interviewed 158 people with learning disabilities who attended participating day centres. The sample comprised three groups: those who were in work; those who had had a job in the past; and those who had never had a job. In addition, we conducted interviews with 20 carers, the majority of whom were family carers. The sample is representative of those attending day centres, rather than people with learning disabilities, including those who may be in supported or open, employment.

Focus groups

We held nine focus groups for people placed in employment through non-LA employment organisations. Members of the groups each came from one of seven organisations that already had existing service user reference groups. These focus groups supplemented individual interviews with discussions covering the same areas.

The appendices contain descriptions of sampling and fieldwork methods (Appendix A), as well as profiles of respondents by their characteristics (Section B.1). There is also a discussion of issues that arose in fieldwork (Section A.3).

1.2.2 Case study areas

Research was carried out in nine Local Authorities, selected to represent a range of characteristics of local areas – such as size, unemployment rate and deprivation level. These characteristics are summarised in Table 1.1. For a full profile see Appendix B.1.

Table 1.1 Profile of study areas

	Study areas								
	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I
Urban/Rural	U	U	U	U	R	U	U	R	R
Population - 1000s	163	330	305	259	569	217	248	498	754
Poverty- IMD rank ¹	Low	Low	Low	High	Low	High	High	Low	Low
General population unemployment rate	High	High	High	High	Low	High	High	Low	Low
Non-white residents %	3.3	29.8	6.3	6.9	1.5*	13.9	3.1	1.5*	2*

* Estimate

¹ Index of Multiple Deprivation Rank

1.3 The structure of the report

This report is split into three main parts:

- **The views and experiences of people with learning disabilities (Chapter 2)**
- **The views and experiences of carers (Chapter 3)**

These chapters explore aspirations, attitudes to, and experiences of work, and also sources of employment advice and support, from the perspectives of people with learning disabilities and their carers.

- **The employment role of day centres and other organisations (Chapter 4)**

This chapter describes the type of help and support that day centres are offering from preparation to placement, and the partnerships with other organisations that exist, as well as exploring the barriers and enablers to employment from the perspective of organisations.

Conclusions, discussion of the original objectives and suggestions for change are reported in Chapter 5.

The appendices contains a detailed description of research methods (Appendix A), as well as tables profiling the respondents of this research (Appendix B) and the research instruments used (Appendix C).

2 Views and experiences of people with learning disabilities

2.1 Background

2.1.1 Introduction

The research set out to explore employment from the perspective of people with learning disabilities themselves. This section presents findings on: their experiences of work (if any); what help and support they receive, in terms of work and employment, from families, carers, day services and other sources; and their views of their experiences – their work-related aspirations, what they see as the benefits of work, and the barriers they face.

2.1.2 Profile of people with learning disabilities interviewed

Of the 158 people with learning disabilities interviewed, a small majority were men. They ranged in age from 20 to 65, most falling between the ages of 30 and 49. The great majority described themselves as being 'White British'. Just under half were living at home with family, a further third with other people with learning disabilities and a very few on their own.

The support need levels of respondents varied, just under half of participants needed high levels of support at all times and just over half only needed 'support sometimes'. Eight participants had too little verbal communication to be interviewed directly, and for these a proxy interview was carried out with a day care key-worker.

Of those we interviewed, 60 people were in work, a further 40 people had had a job in the past, while another 57 people had never worked.³

³ One person gave us only the core information, and nothing on their employment status.

For a full profile of the people with learning disabilities who took part in this study please see Table B.2.

2.2 Experiences of employment

2.2.1 Types of employment

Of the people currently in work the great majority had one job only, and a small minority had two or more jobs. Most were in paid work, with a small number in voluntary jobs or work experience placements. The most common types of jobs people had – in descending order – were as follows:

Catering jobs

Jobs described in this area covered a full range of tasks, from basic table waiting and cleaning, through to making sandwiches and small meals, serving in cafes and canteens and using tills.

Cleaning, retail shop work and office work

Cleaning jobs included in-store, office and factory cleaning. Retail work covered tasks such as collecting shopping trolleys, shelf stacking and handling stock deliveries. Office jobs tended to comprise specific tasks such as photocopying, shredding confidential documents and handling mail.

Horticulture or gardening, work in nurseries or classes, charity shops, or with animals

These types of jobs were the most likely to be unpaid voluntary work.

Work with self-advocacy organisations

People who worked with self-advocacy organisations tended to be paid. The work included checking emails, producing a newsletter, answering the telephone, photocopying, administering meetings and taking and distributing minutes.

Most people who had worked in the past had been without work for more than a year. The most common job type for these people was factory work, although work in catering, retail, cleaning and office work were still well represented.

2.2.2 Hours worked and pay

Hours worked

The majority of people in work in our sample worked for eight hours or fewer per week, the greatest number of these for below five hours. Only a small minority worked for 16 or more hours per week.

Income Support (IS)

Those on Income Support are permitted to disregard an overall maximum of £20, before Income Support and linked benefits – Housing Benefit (HB) and Council Tax Benefit (CTB) are deducted. Work at National Minimum Wage is effectively limited to around four to five hours.

Incapacity Benefit and Permitted Work

Those on Incapacity Benefit are permitted to do the following types of 'permitted work':

Permitted work lower limit:

Those on Incapacity Benefit can earn no more than £20 a week. Since 2001, there is no need for work to be therapeutic. The £20 limit means that this work does not interfere with entitlement to means-tested benefits such as Income Support, HB and CTB.

Supported permitted work:

Those on Incapacity Benefit may undertake work which is supervised by a person employed by a public or local authority or voluntary organisation which provides, or arranges, work opportunities for people with disabilities. Earnings from this work are limited to £72 a week, or at National Minimum Wage level, around 16 hours a week.

Working for less than five hours a week is consistent with the Income Support disregard limit based on current National Minimum Wage levels⁴ and it appeared that even though many were keen to increase their hours, the Income Support disregard was working as a disincentive. Some people also mentioned anxiety around the transition to work and about managing their support needs in work. The number of people in our sample with access to Government support programmes (such as *WORKSTEP* or *Access to Work*) was limited, as eligibility for these programmes is achieved by working above a threshold of 16 hours per week.

Pay

Hourly rates of pay were generally low, although respondents were often not able to report their hourly rates of pay. For this admittedly small group, hourly rates ranged from £1 to £5, with half being above and half below the National Minimum Wage rate of £4.20.

Only 17 people told us the amount they earned per week – the amounts ranged from £4-£170, with roughly equal numbers of people earning £4-£10, £12-£20, and £56-£86 per week. A very small number of people earned upwards of £100 a

⁴ 4.5 hours at £4.20 per hour generates a total weekly wage of £18.90, below the £20 disregard figure, beyond which benefit is withdrawn pound for pound.

week.

The great majority of people interviewed, whether currently employed or not, received some form of benefit income. From their responses it was clear that benefits made up the most significant part of their income, with employment making a smaller contribution.

Analysis

Respondents were working for few hours for fairly low pay and were reliant on income from Income Support and linked benefits, which were working as a disincentive to increase hours as people would not gain anything by doing so, and many perceived that they would be worse off. The figures suggest that at least some people are working on informal wage rates and conditions outside of the National Minimum Wage framework, but the small and self-selecting sample means that this data should be treated with caution.

As the people in our sample were, on the whole, placed in work by Local Authority services, these figures indicate that jobs being found through this route are for only a small part of the week, are not generally taking people off benefits, and are making only a small impact on income.

2.2.3 Characteristics of those in work

In this research we explored whether there were any differences between the people who were currently in work, those who had worked in the past, and those who had never worked.

In our sample, those who were in work were more likely to live at home than the other two groups, and required a lower level of support than those who had never worked. They reported having received more support than others in thinking about and finding jobs.

People who had worked in the past were generally older than those in the other groups. They too tended to have lower level support needs.

Those who had never worked were far more likely to need high levels of support, including 24-hour care.

The numbers living with other people with learning disabilities in residential situations were roughly the same for all three groups. We also looked at whether the friendship patterns people had and the benefits they received impacted on their employment status, but found no differences between the groups in terms of these.

2.3 Help with employment

People with learning disabilities in our sample received employment support from the following sources:

- day centres;
- families and carers;
- specialist employment agencies;
- colleges;
- employers and work colleagues;
- social workers, and other mainstream employment sources.

We asked all of our interviewees what employment advice and support they received from these sources. The types of activity we asked about were: thinking about work; finding out about jobs; visiting workplaces; talking about what they can do well; writing CVs; practising interviews; and doing work experience.

2.3.1 Day centres

The great majority of those people currently employed had had input from their day centre in *'finding out about jobs'* and *'talking about what they can do well.'* Just under half said that they had been involved in *'visiting workplaces'* and had *'tried work experience'* under the auspices of the day centre. While most people with jobs said that looking for a job had been *'their own idea'*, the largest formal source of prompting was *'someone from the day service.'* Day centres and services were the highest reported providers of assistance in *'thinking about the kind of job you might want'*; *'finding some jobs to try'*; and *'providing other kinds of help'*. Day centres appeared to be a significant but less dominant source of help in *'applying for jobs'*. About half of this group said that they were still getting help from day centres, some saying that the day centre provided help in *'learning my job'*. Some mentioned that day services provided support in problem solving at work.

Of the people who had worked before, about half had had input from day services in *'finding out about jobs'*, and *'talking about what they can do well'*, and about a third said that the day centre had helped them to *'try work experience'*. Far fewer of those who had worked before had been involved by day centres in *'visiting workplaces'*.

Significant numbers of people from these two groups provided examples of work experience within day services, including canteen work, cleaning, horticultural and gardening work, and particularly parts assembly work. Only a few people mentioned that they had done work experience outside the centre. For both those currently in work, and those who had worked in the past, input on writing a CV or doing practice interviews was uncommon.

Of those people who had never worked, just over a third had been helped with *'talking about what they can do well'*. Only a small minority had received any of the other types of input from day services. In contrast to the people who were currently in work or who had worked in the past, this group did not mention having received any specific input in thinking about employment and developing experience of work.

2.3.2 Specialist employment agencies

Specialist employment officers in agencies were often mentioned as providers of support and advice, although less frequently so than the day centre. They provided help with *'thinking about the kind of job you might want'*; *'finding some jobs to try'*; and with *'applying for jobs'*. Employment officers were also reported to provide help in *'learning my job'*.

Job coaches (workers usually from specialist Supported Employment agencies) played a significant role in providing other forms of general help, but less so than day centres.

The role played by the specialist employment officer within the day centre is an interesting one, highlighted by the data. They do not exist in all areas, and in some cases they appear to be out-posted from the day centre to more centralised employment preparation or placement organisations within the Local Authority. Specialist officers are clearly valuable, but how effective they are as a response to finding increasing numbers of jobs is unclear.

2.3.3 Other services

Individuals had also been given advice and helped to find jobs by the Jobcentre, social workers and the MENCAP Pathway service. With regard to welfare benefits, only a very small minority mentioned help from social workers or care managers.

2.3.4 Families and carers

While few people reported prompting about getting a job from family, or from staff where they lived, some people did receive assistance in finding a job from residential care workers.

Families were the largest providers of assistance in the area of welfare benefits, followed by residential care staff. They also provided transport to and from work. Carers provided emotional support for people while they worked.

2.3.5 Colleges

There were no real differences in college attendance between those in work, those who had worked before, and those who had never worked – just under half of each group attended. Few people said they had received any kind of help thinking about jobs or their job strengths, undertaking work experience, or practising CVs or interviews, although some individuals had been given help and advice on finding a

job by college staff. If anything, the trend seen in day centres was reversed, with those who had never worked receiving help in all areas more commonly than those in work or who had worked before. However, even here numbers involved were very small.

The activities people were doing at college were very wide ranging, but most had little direct relevance to employment. The most common courses with employment relevance were cooking and catering. A number of people were studying for food hygiene certificates.

People interviewed were asked where they expected to go after ending college. The largest group said that they did not know, followed closely by those who said that they would take up another course. Very few reported that they would be going on to a job after leaving college. The people we interviewed did not see colleges as playing a major role in preparing them for work.

2.3.6 Employers and colleagues

Our interviewees who had employment experience reported that their *'boss at work'* and the *'person they work with'* were the most likely to provide help in *'learning their job'*. They also provided in-work support. Employers and work colleagues played a significant role in providing other forms of general help, but less so than day centres.

The fact that employers and work colleagues are playing a role in teaching people their jobs is an important one. Evidence from the Supported Employment literature (Kilsby and Beyer, 1996) suggests that the presence of 'outsiders' in the workplace can mark the disabled worker as different, and can be an impediment to social inclusion.

Our findings show that people who are in work receive support not only from formal services but from a wide range of sources, including family carers, employers and colleagues.

2.3.7 Views on help received

As well as asking about the type of support people received to help them move toward employment, the research examined what people with learning disabilities thought about it. We asked people currently in work about the level of the help they received. The great majority said that the help they had was *'about right'*, and a small minority said that it was *'too little'*. No one said they had *'too much'* support.

People currently in work were also asked what the best thing was about the help they received. Most people were happiest with the fact that colleagues in the workplace were supportive and helpful. Colleagues included managers as well as co-workers.

'Supervisor's the most helpful because she is the one who can tell you what job you've got to do.'

(Man, 34, Locality C)

People appreciated help with practical problems, which were wide ranging, and included health and welfare benefits. It was important to them that colleagues made themselves available if there were problems.

'I get help if I have a seizure.'

(Man, 59, Locality I)

'I have helpers, if anyone needs help. Yesterday I had a cupboard door come off.'

(Man, 48, Locality H)

Interviewees mentioned that they valued emotional support, which seemed to come from a range of sources, including people at work, family or residential care workers. Here the key seemed to be that the supportive people were there to talk to every day.

'If I've got a problem they are there to talk it over.'

(Man, 30, Locality H)

Another welcome area of support was the availability of staff, commonly a day centre worker or employment officer, whom they could talk to if problems arose or who came to check that things were going well.

'Employment adviser comes around now and then to check that everything is OK.'

(Man, 31, Locality H)

When asked what the worst thing was about the help they received, people did not generally see any negative aspects. Only two people suggested that there were any 'worst' areas of support. These were the need for more help with extending the hours the person worked, and the fact that the person did not see a key-worker from the day service now that they were in work.

Finally, people were asked what other things they might like help with that they didn't get at the moment. The largest group of responses concerned the need for more help with problems or conflict at work, focusing largely on relationships with colleagues and in particular co-workers.

'I'd like help with my manager when he is not being fair with me.'

(Man, 49, Locality H)

A small number of people wanted help with aspects of personal care or personal behaviour that would potentially impact on their work, or improve their prospects at work.

'When I get tired I get angry. I would like help with this.'

(Woman, 34, Locality H)

A third small group of comments were about the need to develop more skills, usually basic skills such as reading and writing.

'Sometimes I need help with reading and writing which I need in my job. Like you have to look up numbers on home deliveries.'

(Man, 34, Locality C)

Finally, there were some people who wanted to move jobs, and were looking for help to do so.

'Finding another job. That's what I would really like.'

(Woman, 34, Locality A)

We asked people who were not currently in work what help they felt they would need to enter work. A majority felt that they would need help to *'think about the kind of job they may want to do'*. They also mentioned help with *'finding a job to try,'* *'applying for a job'* and *'learning a job'*. Just over half of those who responded felt that they would need help to negotiate benefits issues.

People with learning disabilities in work in our sample felt, on the whole, that they received the right level of support, and were positive overall.

While there were people who reported that they were their own best form of support, many people with learning disabilities in our sample continued to require at least low-level support in a systematic way throughout their careers. They required a wide range of help, from everyday practical problem solving to large things, like moving on to another job. The point of support was different for different people, and depended on whether it was practical, developmental, or emotional support that they required.

2.4 Views on employment

2.4.1 Work aspirations

Of those who had been in work in the past, or had never worked, just under half said they would like to get a job. Another quarter said that *'maybe'* they would like to get a job. This represents a significant proportion that may have an interest in employment. We also asked what type of work people would want. The great majority said they would like a paid job. Only a few people said they would like a work experience placement or a voluntary job.

We asked all of the people we interviewed what they would like their next career move to be. Of the people currently in work, about a third said they wanted to get a better job, and a smaller number said they were unsure, or wanted to retire. Around half said they wanted to remain in their existing job.

2.4.2 Benefits of work

We asked the people who are currently in employment, and the people who had had a job in the past, to tell us what they thought the benefits of work were, and how having a job could make a difference to their lives. Respondents identified several benefits:

Keeping occupied

The largest number of responses was about the need to keep busy and occupied. Some commented that this was a benefit to work, even if at times people do not like everything about the job they do. Some said that a job provided them with a routine to their day, that time went quicker when they were occupied, and that they avoided tedium. People also wanted to be out of the house or the day centre, operating in different settings.

'I'm happy having a job again. I hate the work. I'd be pretty bored if I stayed at home, it gives you something to do.'

(Man, 30, Locality H)

'Independence. It gives me something to do. I'd hate to sit around all day doing nothing, it would drive me potty. It makes me use my brain and that is important for people with learning difficulties.'

(Woman, 34, Locality H)

Financial independence

The second largest group of comments was concerned with the importance of having money. Earning money reinforced to respondents the fact that they were the same as other people.

'It's nice – earning money, like the people there.'

(Woman, 50, Locality I)

Some people commented that you need money to pay bills, and saw having a job as part of paying your way in society.

'If you didn't have a job you wouldn't have a roof over your head. If you didn't have a job you'd end up on the street.'

(Man, 29, Locality A)

It became evident that being able to buy the things they wanted was an important motivator for people to go to work. Some saw having a job and money as important enough to be life changing.

'All the difference in the world, because you've got money to buy stuff, haven't you?'

(Man, 60, Locality H)

'It changes their lives, doesn't it? People who get a job can get money.'

(Man, 37, Locality A)

Some people were able to save for the first time, and have money for things they wanted or needed. Some saw their wage as a stepping-stone to fulfilling dreams (for example, one person wanted to save for a farm). Having more money also provided some people with a little more independence because they could decide what to use it for, which varied among respondents:

'Having a little bit of money on me. They put it into the bank once a month.'

(Man, 47, Locality H)

'Fine. I'm not fussed about it. I put it in the bank and save up for my holiday.'

(Woman, 33, Locality C)

'Good – I put it straight in the bank to pay for food and drink. I'm saving for a fold-down bed so I can sleep downstairs when I have seizures.'

(Man, 28, Locality H)

It is clear that having control over money was particularly important for the people with learning disabilities we spoke to, and that wages were an important motivator for people in finding and keeping a job. It is, therefore, crucial that services help people to get the most out of their money, to take control over it wherever possible, and learn to use it. It must, however, be remembered that very few people with learning disabilities are financially autonomous through earned income – partly because it is not often possible to earn enough through work. People are mainly in low-paid work and often cannot afford to move off benefit, even if they are in a full-time job.

Making friends and forming relationships

The opportunity to make friends at work was a key theme for those we interviewed.

'It makes you feel happy inside, because you've got people to talk to.'

(Woman, 33, Locality H)

'Everyone was good and kind and gave me tea. I learnt a lot about kindness from them.'

(Woman, 62, Locality B)

Respondents felt it was important to widen the network of people they came into contact with.

'Yes having a job makes a difference – you get out and about and you meet people you wouldn't have known before.'

(Man, 59, Locality I)

The great majority of people in work felt that their relationships with their bosses and colleagues were good. Belonging, and feeling part of a team, was a key benefit. People felt it was important to be included, for example in banter and joking within a team, or in nights out and company events.

'Getting on well with the people there. We have a laugh, we are a team. We have staff dos.'

(Man, 59, Locality A)

The network of relationships people formed extended beyond direct colleagues and co-workers. Most people who responded said that they met, and had good relationships with, people from outside their company during work:

'I see a lot of customers.'

(Man, 38, Locality E)

'Meet people coming into the café'

(Man, 29, Locality A)

'The school children and the parents come in and I talk to them. They're all very nice.'

(Woman, 44, Locality C)

Personal development

Some respondents felt that they were developing as people by being in employment, taking on new responsibilities and learning more about themselves, (including, in some cases, learning about the boundaries to their ability). People talked about gaining confidence through being able to learn new things and be seen as competent. A number talked about the new skills they had learned in the job, and about increasing the amount they could do in work as a result.

'Doing more things. When I started I just did the jet work. Now I do the things the mechanics do. They teach me things all the time.'

(Man, 42, Locality C)

'I'm proving to myself what I can and can't do and what I need help with. Often I get shown things that I've never done before, like the scanner. Anyway, it's better than staying at home and sitting on my backside.'

(Woman, 33, Locality H)

Having responsibility through a job was important for some people because it gave them status in the eyes of others.

'Telling people what to do. We had students on work placement and I told them what they had to do.'

(Man, 35, Locality C)

For some there were symbols involved in having a job, such as badges and uniforms, which helped them to develop a good sense of self-image.

'I enjoy it. I like working with the staff. I like the things I do at work. I have a special uniform and an apron.'

(Man, 29, Locality C)

For some, the best thing about the job was that it was a way of fulfilling long held ambitions and dreams.

'I remember at the vets once helping with a Caesarean. When I saw the calf it was the most wonderful thing I'd ever seen in my life. I just love working with animals. It's what I've always wanted to do.'

(Woman, 34, Locality H)

We asked those we interviewed to respond to a series of statements to discover what they felt was important about work. The highest positive response was to the statement that *'work makes you feel good about yourself'*; many people in jobs felt that they were being *'treated as an adult'* and were *'part of real life'*.

Making a difference

A minority of respondents felt that one benefit of work was that it enabled them to make a contribution to others. For a small number of people having a job changed their status from someone traditionally seen as in need of help to someone who could help others and do something important.

'A lot of responsibility and feeling that you are helping other people.'

(Woman, 46, Locality H)

2.4.3 Problems with work

The problems with work that respondents (both those currently in work and those who had worked in the past) identified mainly fell into the following categories:

- The demands of the job.
- Rates of pay and the potential for impact on benefits.
- Environmental factors.

Further, we noticed some evidence to suggest that, although people saw the workplace as somewhere to make friends, genuine social inclusion was not always a reality.

The demands of the job

It is a reality that jobs can place significant strains on people, and most respondents had demanding aspects of their jobs that they disliked. These included:

- demands made by managers:

'Being nagged at by the area manager who tells me to hurry up with my work and keep the stock room tidy.'

(Woman, 33, Locality H)

- travelling and time demands:

'Having to get up at 6.30am and catch two buses to get there.'

(Man, 22, Locality H)

- physical demands:

'I get very tired and then get snappy, because I'm tired. But I don't want to give my jobs up so I'll stick.'

(Woman, 34, Locality H)

A few people preferred unpaid work because it enabled them to limit the physical demands made on them.

'Years ago my mum and dad tried to get me a job there but they said they couldn't take me on, and I was gutted. They weren't sure if I'd be able to cope because I do get tired. So being a volunteer's good because I do as much as I like.'

(Woman, 34, Locality H)

However, only a minority reported these demands as a down side of working and as a problem. Only a minority said that they felt stressed at work, and this was fewer than reported being stressed while attending a day service.

Rates of pay

While many people in our sample said they were happy with their rates of pay, some were not. Some felt that they should be able to earn more, and one person touched on the issue of whether low wages were exploitative.

'It's not enough for me to live on. I felt really annoyed about that because I did have a lot of money. When my mother was alive we went on good holidays abroad. Now I can't afford it and I go to Cambridge, Kent and Devon.'

(Man, 49, Locality H)

'I think you should get more. What's the point of you going all the way there for a pound?'

(Woman, 40, Locality D)

Moreover, a particular concern over wages was the impact they could have on welfare benefits. Respondent income could be significantly reduced if they increased their hours of employment and thus lost benefit entitlement. People in work cited this as a reason for not working more hours, although few of the people we spoke to felt that five hours was all they could manage, and some reported that they would like to work more hours as they enjoyed their jobs.

'I had to watch my money because if I worked too many hours they would take away some of my benefits.'

(Man, 30, Locality C)

A few people felt that, if they worked more hours and stopped claiming benefit, and then lost their job, it would be difficult to claim again.

'I used to work on a farm and they stopped them for a while. I struggled to get them back.'

(Man, 34, Locality C)

Some people in unpaid work named concerns over benefit entitlement as a major factor in choosing such work.

'At the end of the day it's all about my benefits. If I got paid then I'd lose my benefits so I don't care. I like to keep busy all the time.'

(Man, 33, Locality A)

When we asked people who had said that they did not want to work why this was, the most common response was that they felt they were bound to lose their benefits.

'Your money would be stopped, you would have to hand in your book. I assume that you would lose your benefits.'

(Man, 40, Locality G)

It is clear within our sample, therefore, that concerns over benefit entitlement are not only a problem for those in work, leading them to accept hours and rates of pay with which they are unhappy, but are also an active barrier to people entering work at all. It appears that these concerns continued to prevent larger numbers entering employment, and hindered people in employment progressing their careers.

Environmental factors

Significant numbers of people in our sample worked or had worked in cleaning, catering and manufacturing, and these occupations, in particular, could bring with them negative environmental factors, such as noise and mess.

'I had to do it because it had to be done but going down when they did the tanning, the smell was terrible.'

(Woman, 46, Locality H)

'Don't like litter in trolleys, it's disgusting.'

(Man, 49, Locality B)

'Sometimes I have to work in the rain.'

(Man, 34, Locality C)

Social inclusion

While the people in jobs in our sample valued the social aspect of work, some of our information seems to suggest that acquaintanceships are not necessarily being translated into regular friendships, with all of the reciprocity and outside activity that might be implied.

'I wouldn't call them friends exactly, more like colleagues.'

(Woman, 34, Locality H)

We asked people who they met outside work, where they met and when they last met, as an indicator of how deep the relationships were. A minority of people said that they met their friends outside work. The places that they met fell into three categories: occasional formal gatherings, such as Christmas parties; regular meetings, such as the pub or a meal; and irregular chance meetings. Of those who told us when they met, half said they met at Christmas and only a few reported meeting within the last two weeks.

2.4.4 Why people leave jobs

We asked the people we interviewed why they had stopped doing their previous job. The reasons included:

- company closure;
- that they no longer liked their job or the people they worked with;
- they became ill, or could no longer cope physically with the demands of the job;
- being sacked;
- support from services being withdrawn.

The people in our sample lost jobs for reasons not of their own making, and also chose to leave. This indicates that support for this group does not end with finding jobs. Support may be needed to re-place people who had lost jobs or to help people to develop a career. There was a need not only for 'job support' but also for 'career support'.

2.4.5 Work in the future

When we asked the people in our sample what kind of job they would ideally want, some common themes emerged.

The most frequent response was that people wanted a job that paid more money.

'I'd like a job that pays wages. It would be better for me. I want to still work with the children. I've worked in a nursery in the past.'

(Woman, 44, Locality C)

Another group wanted jobs that were more demanding, would help them to progress personally or that might need them to take qualifications.

Many respondents chose their ideal job based on areas of personal interest and experience. Some had the potential to be easily achieved.

'In a flower shop.'

(Woman, 46, Locality E)

'Pub – I think that would be nice.'

(Woman, 32, Locality G)

Meanwhile, some people had very ambitious employment aspirations, which would need to be managed in a positive way.

'A nurse in a hospital – I've done this before when I worked with old people.'

(Woman, 40, Locality C)

'A football commentator.'

(Man, 21, Locality C)

'An electrician – I don't know much about it. I know that you can't see it (electricity) but it can really hurt you!'

(Man, 50, Locality C)

2.5 Summing up

In summary, we can see that people with learning disabilities view work much in the same way as anybody else, with the same important outcomes of money, personal development, providing the day with a purpose and social contact. They also have the same sorts of dislikes as the rest of us. Added factors for people with learning disabilities include the fact that they are more likely to have a limited social network outside of work, and to have low incomes, with issues surrounding welfare benefits being a large area of concern.

The key benefit issue is that if people are in minimum wage jobs they would need to work full time to replace the income they receive from benefits, and this is not realistic. This is a particular problem if the person lives in supported housing and needs high levels of benefit income to pay for the care element of their residential care.

3 The views of carers

3.1 Profile of carers

Carers are very influential in the lives of people with learning disabilities for whom they care. Firstly, carers can shape the attitudes towards employment of the people for whom they care. Secondly, carers are themselves indirect consumers of employment-related services, since their lives can be affected both positively and negatively by the involvement of those they care for in employment. Thirdly, in this research, carers were an important source of information about how day care and other agencies help people with learning disabilities to get employment.

We interviewed 20 carers, and details about their characteristics are given in Table B.3. Over half of the carers were parents or step-parents. Most lived with the person with a learning disability concerned. The time carers spent with the person they cared for varied from four to 100 hours – on average they spent 41 hours per week with the person they cared for. Six carers said that they had given up work or reduced working time in order to care. Half were in full- or part-time employment. Those working included some professional carers. Although the Department of Health definition of carer does not include paid staff, we interviewed four professionals whom people with learning disabilities identified as carers. These people were closely involved as residential care providers, and knew the individuals well.

3.2 Carers' views on employment

3.2.1 Carers' aspirations for employment

It is important to acknowledge that carers' feelings about their role as a carer varied widely and that these attitudes were likely to influence their aspirations for the employment of the person with a learning disability. For example, some carers felt that constant care was a burden, and would welcome employment as a means of respite for their relative and themselves. Meanwhile, others felt that the day service met their needs for time away from the responsibility of caring, in an environment that was relatively low risk, so that they were unwilling to push for change. Some felt

protective towards the person for whom they cared, or did not want to relinquish their closeness to that person to enable them to go into a job. Nevertheless, most carers derived satisfaction from the role and enjoyed seeing the person for whom they cared living life to the full within their own abilities and as independently as possible.

We explored the prospect of work with carers of individuals not currently in paid employment. They were asked about their reservations or concerns, and what effects it might have on their own life. Their attitudes varied widely. Some carers were sceptical about the availability of paid work opportunities. A few carers had low expectations, both of the capabilities and motivation of the person they cared for, and of the availability of appropriate jobs and support, leading them to disregard the possibility of employment. If the person they cared for had previously had a negative employment experience, carers tended to be further discouraged.

'I don't think there are opportunities for youngsters anyway and they are not going to take people who are deaf. He enjoyed going to Tesco's (work placement), cleaning the canteen. He wanted to carry on but they gave him the push. It was a tragedy to him... His name is down for a flat, but he would need help with cooking, washing etc... He wants to get married which I know he can't do... [The effect] would depend on type of work and transport. He cannot use public transport, he's never had the opportunity. Gardening would be OK. I don't think he'd want to work.'

(Parent, relative formerly worked, locality H)

One relative perceived that carers sometimes deliberately obstructed employment options:

'For parents, work placements are seen as a major threat because it might undermine the family income. Our experience from day services in the past is that... parents undermined their efforts by preventing their children taking part in the work preparation schemes.'

(Other relative, relative working, locality C)

However, other carers were more open to the possibility of employment, recognising the potential for a positive effect on their own lives, as well as on that of the person for whom they care. These carers still had some reservations, principal among which was concern about benefits issues.

'My wife and I would have loved him to work. I am sure he could hold a job down. We would like him to live independently, but all accommodation is some distance away. I wouldn't know about the benefit situation. None whatsoever. He would need support to get started, someone he knew. He'd need help initially breaking down what to do... make things easier. I would have time, it would relieve stress on my own relationship.'

(Parent, relative never worked, locality I)

Some carers had high aspirations for employment, but felt frustrated with the lack of opportunities for the person with a learning disability to realise their ambitions.

'I'm sure she can do more than she is doing at the moment. Nothing with a lot of responsibility, but we will not really know until she has tried it. She is very able compared to a lot of the people up there and that's why she gets bored so easily. There are a lot of things she could do and I'd love to see her doing something that makes her happy.'

(Parent, relative formerly worked, locality H)

This carer placed the responsibility for the situation fully with the day centre:

'They are very good people down there at the (day centre), but they have been slow at moving her on to something else.'

Carers of people who were currently in employment were predominantly positive about it, highlighting many benefits to their relative, which we shall consider in Section 3.2.2.

3.2.2 Benefits of employment to people with learning disabilities

Carers identified a range of rewards that came from the person with a learning disability working. These included:

- increased self confidence;
- a sense of purpose and relief from boredom;
- a sense of discipline and responsibility;
- keeping physically active;
- making friends and being accepted;
- forming a connection with the 'real world'.

All these benefits led to the person with a learning disability feeling happier, and were a source of pride to their carer.

'It has built up her self-esteem. Learnt that with work come responsibilities, that she needs to be committed, regular, get up each morning ... She's made friends and keeps physically fit.'

(Staff, person with a learning disability working, locality F)

'I'm really pleased he has tried it. When he was younger I would never have believed he would be working because he was so lacking in self-confidence...'

(Parent, relative working, locality A)

'It keeps him in touch with a changing world. He has a sense of purpose and is doing a proper job.'

(Parent, relative working, locality E)

'It wasn't easy, and I've had breakdowns along the way, but when I see what they have achieved and how people have accepted them, I feel really proud.'

(Parent, relative working, locality A)

'Seeing him happy. Seeing him come home feeling that he's done a good day's work.'

(Professional, person with a learning disability working, locality H)

Conversely, carers recognised the risks of losing a job for people with learning disabilities. Principal amongst these risks was that the person with a learning disability would become withdrawn, de-motivated and inactive – and, by implication, depressed. Carers were also concerned that it would be hard to regain benefit income.

'If he stopped work, we'd go back to the situation before we came here. [When he was not working] he wished he wouldn't get up in the morning, was very withdrawn.'

(Parent, relative formerly worked, now on work placement, locality H)

'If it stopped, it would take time to get benefits put right again. She would feel demoralised. Lack of activity would increase, and she wouldn't have as much money.'

(Staff, person with a learning disability working, locality F)

'If work ceased I would worry because you have to motivate him to do things. When he is here he tends to stay in his room and watch TV. I don't want him doing that every day, but I don't want him going to the day centre doing nothing all day either.'

(Parent, relative working, locality A)

The positive experiences of the carers of people who are in work could represent a significant resource for day centres and employment agencies in helping other carers to consider employment for their relative.

3.3 Carers' views on help received

Most carers felt that the people they cared for had few options on leaving school:

'When he left school he went to the Adult Training Centre. It's called the Social Education Centre now, but it's exactly the same. There were no other choices. He went to the college for two or three days in the early years, but now he just goes to the centre and does his job one day a week.'

(Parent, relative working, locality C)

Most people with learning disabilities went straight from school into day services. Some carers appreciated the work preparation activity the day service provided. This was usually in the form of work experience placement to teach core skills or to establish what people were good at.

However, others were less than satisfied with the employment activity provided by day services. Several thought that day centres should help people learn new skills which are relevant to work, and in some localities they were critical of the perceived shift away from training and towards leisure activities.

'She used to be well supported doing activities. Now there seems to be a lot of sitting around and no emphasis on vocational activity and independence training. Today it's all shopping and having coffees, they used to do this to help people learn about money, but now it's just a 'jolly'.'

(Sibling, relative working, locality F)

There was also dissatisfaction with day centres from carers who felt that the person concerned was not being challenged enough, or that a person was potentially able to work and would be happier working.

'He would like something a little more rewarding. He has been at the day centre for 18 years. It is not challenging, he would like to feel like he is doing something worthwhile.'

(Other relative, relative never worked, locality E)

Some carers felt that they had obtained no help or advice about employment from day services, or a poor response. Some carers felt that day centres were not taking the employment aspirations of those they cared for on board:

'We have asked, and asked, and asked for her to have some work experience because she sees other people getting jobs. Now they say they are working on it. ... They know that she wants to work with children, but she will do anything except going back to work in a shop (refers to person who had bad experience in supermarket).'

(Parent, relative formerly worked, locality H)

'He says he tells people at day centre and his social worker that he wants to get a job. Maybe they're not taking notice of him or not taking him seriously. He envies someone else in the home who has a job. The things he likes, maybe there aren't enough opportunities out there. He'd get support from the residential home, transport, emotional support etc. He could get a lot of support.'

(Staff, person with a learning disability formerly worked, locality A)

Even in areas where day provision was meant to promote employment, this did not seem effective to some carers.

'The personnel officer at the Borough Council is supposed to be helping him find a new job, but I am not convinced that she is doing much. They send out a bulletin every Friday with all the local vacancies, but they are all well-paid jobs, nothing that is suitable for [son] when café closes.'

(Parent, relative working, locality A)

'No one has tried for him. We rely on social services and they don't have any ideas. An employment officer would be a good idea. Even if he only did a day out of the week, I think that would make him happier. There needs to be a smoother transition from day centre to work scheme. Some other service users have started work through the day centre and are now paid for that.'

(Other relative, relative never worked, locality E)

Despite the general reliance on day services to provide the initiative, in certain cases carers were the driving force for the decision to become employed, and dealt directly with specialist employment services, including the Jobcentre, instead of day centres.

'By signing on for normal employment and father's persistence that [service user] needed Supported Employment, someone at the Jobcentre recommended [named] employment services. Has not really ever had any involvement with day services.'

(Parent, relative working, locality E)

The majority of carers to whom we spoke wanted more effective employment support to be available to their relatives, but seemed to think that they had little influence on day provision (no carer mentioned any consultation with day services, any carers' forum or membership of any governing bodies). Where carers and users were keen, it was perceived that there was not always a timely and effective response from day centres, even where others had been placed into employment by the same organisation.

3.4 Barriers and how to overcome them

3.4.1 Barriers to employment

The carers we spoke to identified a number of barriers to employment for people with learning disabilities from their perspective. Some of these were related to the carer's view of the person they cared for and others to views of external services. Carers saw issues surrounding income and benefits as a key barrier.

Individual barriers

The main internal barriers mentioned were a lack of self-confidence, and doubts on the part of the carer as to whether the individual was up to the job either physically or emotionally. These doubts could spring from a feeling of protectiveness.

'If you are being paid a lot more is expected of you, [this] puts a lot of strain on them if they're not up to it.'

(Parent, relative working, locality I)

Carers were also concerned that the person for whom they cared might be vulnerable to exploitation.

'The ones who seem most able are the ones most at risk. It is a really hard world out there and there are so many bad people. Even his own mother only wants to know him when he has money.'

(Friend, person with a learning disability working, locality H)

One other apprehension carers had was that the individual concerned might have unrealistic aspirations or ideas of what employment really entails. This could lead to failure of the placement and disappointment for all concerned.

'He decided he wanted to work at the leisure centre ... wore everyone down after two years, got a chance to go there, one day a week for a year. It ended in tears because he did what he wanted rather than what he was told. Leisure centre got back in contact with day centre. He was upset.'

(Parent, relative working, locality I)

Service barriers

As we saw in Section 3.3, many carers felt that a shortage of appropriate support from day care and employment staff was a barrier to people gaining employment. In addition, many feared that the person for whom they cared would lose access to day services, should a placement fail.

'Be really careful. If didn't work out, especially in day services you would lose that and it may be difficult to get back into.'

(Parent, relative working, locality I)

Some felt that the bureaucracy involved in attaining employment was insuperable.

'I'm getting to a point where I can't be bothered. Get fed up trying to fight the bureaucracy.'

(Parent, relative working, locality H)

Where support was available, it was not always sensitive to, or creative about, the job aspirations people had.

'He is fanatical about railways and was told by someone he might be able to get a job on the steam railway. It took him a long time to realise it wasn't going to happen.'

(Staff, person with a learning disability working, locality H)

For a minority, the quality of work available was a deterrent to working, lack of choice in work being an issue for one in three carers.

Lack of transport provision was another problem commonly highlighted by carers. Some carers were resigned to providing transport to work for the person they cared for, since not all were judged to be able to use public transport.

Financial barriers

One of the most problematic barriers, according to some carers, was that people were concerned that if they took part in paid work, they would be worse off. There was evidence from both family carers and paid carers that the complexity of benefits issues overshadowed work opportunities, and acted as a deterrent. It was even alleged by one paid carer that, if households were reliant on the person with a learning disability's income from benefits, families discouraged them from going to work.

Carers perceived that the issues around loss of benefit did not disappear when a person has a paid job but comes up again at each job change:

'It took an awfully long time to sort out his benefits once he started working – about six months I think. I sorted this out myself. My main worry now is that if he doesn't get another job, then there will be problems about accessing other benefits.'

(Parent, relative working, locality A)

People for whom benefits had ceased to be a problem had got a letter from the GP to authorise employment as therapeutic, had professional help to sort out the benefits issue, or had opted not to earn more than the Income Support disregard. This decision, in itself, was felt by some to lead to problems, as it restricted the hours a person could work.

'Minimum wage makes things much harder, [we] understand that people shouldn't be taken advantage of financially, but also does mean that they can only work for four hours.'

(Parent, relative working, locality I)

'The company felt they had to pay the going rate or they would be exploiting [service user] and if it became public they could receive bad publicity... it was decided [service user] would officially only work 3 hours. In reality he does more.'

(Parent relative working, locality E)

Moreover, earning restrictions meant that most family carers had to support their relative financially.

'You have to look after your own. You have to put money in. The authorities don't support... I support him financially and think I will always have to.'

(Parent, relative working, locality E)

It is worth noting that in some cases the actual barrier to employment appeared to be a combination of the actual difficulties identified and the ambivalent or negative

attitudes of the carer towards the changes that employment might bring. A positive attitude on the part of the carer appeared to be important to the impact of actual barriers.

3.4.2 Overcoming barriers

It was clear from the carers interviewed that their involvement in the process of employment support was important. Carers identified a number of ways in which they could help the person for whom they cared to overcome the barriers identified. Crucial amongst these was getting actively involved at all stages, and taking a strong stand.

'Also, if you feel strongly about something, 'stick to your guns' (in relation to dealing with professionals). When all is said and done it's us that end up with all the worries.'

(Parent, relative working, locality D)

Carers felt it was important to form an interactive relationship with services.

'Help the person to take risks. Make your presence known to the relevant services and keep knocking on the door, develop a good working relationship with them.'

(831 – other relative, relative formerly worked, locality H)

'Keep pushing! Keep on to them all the time. If you sit back, then no one else will do it.'

(Parent, relative formerly worked, locality H)

Once employment activity had been arranged, carers felt they could help by overseeing work preparation and keeping informed as to what was happening in the placement.

'Make sure the person gets trained for the job. Monitor the job. Make sure people are not taken advantage of. Ensure the supervisor reports back to you about what's going on at the workplace.'

(Sibling, relative working, locality F)

'Listen to the people who he/she is going to work with and take notice of what they say.'

(Parent, relative working, locality C)

Perhaps most importantly, carers said that they needed to trust the individual concerned to make their own decisions, and allow them to take risks.

'Let them try it. It might not work out, it's trial and error. If they want to do it, let them.'

(Parent, relative working, locality D)

'You have to learn to let go... Naturally I worry if he is very late, but I've grown to trust him. That's down to the job.'

(Parent, relative working, locality A)

Many carers who were positive in their attitudes about work conveyed that getting a job had been a struggle, requiring single-mindedness from carers as well as from the person with a learning disability. They felt that they had helped towards positive outcomes by 'pushing' services and employers on behalf of the person with a learning disability. They also felt that they had an important part to play in providing moral support and encouraging the person in employment. In addition to shaping positive attitudes, therefore, some carers were strong advocates for employment.

3.5 Summing up

It is clear that to engage carers successfully in the employment process, day centres and employment services need to understand their particular view of the caring role, and the concerns they have about their relative entering work. Carers we spoke to indicated that some of the major concerns can be resolved by services talking to carers, providing transport, putting in place explicit safeguards against exploitation in the placement and by effective monitoring. It was also felt that good benefits advice and offering 'revolving door' places in day centres would help address major concerns.

Much of what we have heard from family carers also underlines the need for their continuing involvement in the employment enterprise – prompting, monitoring and advocating on the part of their relative. If they are seen as partners in helping people get and keep employment, carers can be a rich source of job opportunities, through their own networks and initiatives. They can educate employers, sustain motivation and help to avert problems. Examples of those who succeed in employment can be disseminated through carers' networks and act as an inspiration to many more people.

The carers we interviewed wanted to see consistency in the availability of employment advice and support, whether it be from day centres or other agencies. While some were primarily concerned to secure a safe and stable environment, more wanted to see their relative develop while attending day centre, and the attainment of skills relevant to employment was particularly valued. Many carers would value a coherent strategy for day centres to prepare people for work, as well as clear routes for obtaining paid work outside traditional day services.

4 The employment role of day centres and other organisations

4.1 Background

4.1.1 Introduction

Valuing People promotes employment opportunities for people with learning disabilities who attend day centres. We have already heard from people with learning disabilities and their carers that some day centres and their partner agencies play an important role in helping people decide to go to work, in their work preparation, and in some cases their support at work. The research set out to analyse from the services' perspective how they assess, train and prepare, and support people to work. We were keen to understand what day centres viewed as the capacities needed by people with learning disabilities to become employed. We also wanted to know to what extent day centres worked with a wide range of Government and other employment-related services, and how their partnerships furthered getting people into work. Finally, we wanted to understand barriers to employment from the perspective of day centres and how employment opportunities for people with learning disabilities can be extended

4.1.2 Profile of services

This section provides a description of the day centres and services involved in the study. Research was carried out with 27 day services, eight linked Local Authority work training or work preparation services, eight LA Supported Employment services, and 13 independent other employment agencies across nine localities. This involved interviews with 33 day centre staff, eight LA training services staff, 11 LA employment services staff, and 13 staff members from other employment agencies. A brief description of these localities follows. Further information and full descriptions

can be found in Appendix B.1. Profiles of the day services and other employment agencies can be found in Tables B.4 and B.5.

Case studies

Locality A

Locality A is an urban, unitary authority with low poverty but high unemployment levels, and a low proportion of non-white ethnic minority residents. It is a coastal retirement area with an older average age for the population. At the time of the study there was a clear division between day services and mainstream employment services. The single large day centre was being reorganised into three smaller ones. Interviews with two of the three new day services revealed a small amount of direct employment:

- One centre did not carry out training before finding a job, but supported a small number of people in jobs at Tesco and B&Q using Supported Employment techniques.
- The second centre had found only one job, but was exploring work experience placements at cafes and garden centres. They also intended to run courses on dressing for interviews and practising interviews.

The day centres commonly referred people on to two café projects within the Local Authority that offered training opportunities in catering. These were mainly seen as work placements that offered only a few paid hours per week, and throughput to jobs was reported to be low. A Community Employment Team had been set up to help place more people in community jobs in the future. Day centres also referred to an LA social enterprise offering training in its manufacturing and assembly operations and some community job finding for people with a range of disabilities.

Locality B

Locality B is an urban, unitary authority with low poverty and high unemployment levels. A large proportion of its residents belong to minority ethnic groups.

Locality B had three large day centres. The area was running a pilot resource centre with a view to a shift from day centres to resource centres, which would provide employment opportunities. The Locality was also exploring social enterprises as a way of providing jobs. Interviews with staff in the three day centres revealed some direct employment preparation, but there were few people with learning disabilities in employment:

- One centre had a shop, a caretaking team, a canteen and a garden centre where people were able to learn transferable skills, including till use.

Continued

- The second centre did little training before people went into work, preferring to concentrate on social activities. This day centre referred interested people to partner employment agencies, while acting as the link between the person and the employment agencies involved.
- The third centre said it developed general skills by using community activities, while again referring people to more specialist agencies if they want a job. A toy making project, a garden centre, and manufacturing activity at the centre had all closed due to day centre modernisation.

Day centres referred people to one Local Authority Supported Employment agency. The area also had a local voluntary sector Supported Employment agency, and an LA *WORKSTEP* provider, who it referred people to for placement in community jobs.

Locality C

Locality C is an urban area run by a metropolitan borough council, with low levels of poverty and unemployment. An average proportion of its population belongs to ethnic minorities. There were five traditional social education centres in the locality, which provided little direct employment preparation. Interviews with four of the day centres revealed that relatively few people with learning disabilities were in paid work:

- One centre offered accredited courses training relevant work skills, such as what people need to take to work, travel, getting on with people, and working in a team. Mostly this was run at a college.
- A second centre provided some work preparation by taking people to visit workplaces, and talking about jobs with them.
- Another two day centres did little direct work preparation, offering a range of social, sport, education and leisure that taught independence, and better communication.

Most day centres referred people to a relatively new Local Authority work placement team, which served a small number of individuals, mainly in unpaid settings. An Employment Preparation Unit also received people interested in employment and offered experience of light manufacturing and assembly work. A social business partnership had been organised to foster the establishment of social firms. This had set up a number of workshops (printing, horticulture, joinery etc.) that catered for people with all kinds of disability, including some with learning disabilities. In addition, MENCAP Pathway and Shaw Trust offered community job placement.

Locality D

Locality D is an urban area with high levels of poverty and unemployment. People from ethnic minorities comprise an average proportion of its population. There were two large Local Authority day centres. Interviews with the two day centres revealed some employment-related activity:

- One day centre invited colleges, and outside agencies offering accredited training, to come in and work with day centre staff to deliver employment-related training courses.
- The second day centre had staff identify people's skills, and then find appropriate training, usually from outside agencies.

The day centres referred people needing a job to a Local Authority community employment opportunity service. A Local Authority café project and a print workshop, both offered training placements. Shaw Trust and SCOPE also provided community jobs in the locality alongside Remploy Interwork.

Locality E

Locality E is a large, rural county with low poverty and unemployment. Its population is widely dispersed and a low proportion of residents belong to non-white ethnic minorities. There were five day centres of different sizes across the locality. Interviews with three day services highlighted that there were significant numbers of people in work, relatively few in paid work, with more in work experience or voluntary work. There were differences in day centre involvement in employment:

- One day centre gave people experience in specific social enterprise projects, such as running buffets, printing and horticulture. People's experiences included production, delivery and order filling.
- Another day centre offered placement in its work unit where people received literacy and numeracy training and undertook simulated work.
- A third centre concentrated on fostering people's social skills, and making them independent using other centre and community-based activities, and did little employment preparation.

There was significant referral from day centres to more specialist employment agencies, including a social service's run Supported Employment agency, and two Local Authority employment agencies offering *WORKSTEP* and Supported Employment placement.

Locality F

Locality F is an urban, unitary authority with high levels of poverty and unemployment. Its economy has been heavily affected by the decline in manufacturing. It has a relatively high proportion of residents belonging to ethnic minorities. The locality was divided into three areas, each with a day centre linked to a network of 'outreach' bases. Interviews took place with two day centres, which found that there were relatively few people with learning disabilities in paid employment, but substantial employment preparation activity:

- One day centre offered work-based activity on a voluntary basis through allotment and greenhouse projects. Other projects helped older people in the community, provided a shop with café run for a community centre. All of these provided learning experiences.
- The second day centre offered taster sessions at its outreach bases in activities such as a recycling and an allotment project.
- One day centre supported people in voluntary jobs in play groups, baby support groups, charity shops, and old people's homes.

The day centres referred people to a well-established Local Authority Supported Employment agency for paid employment, which carried out most of the direct employment placement activity in the area. The area was also served by Remploy and numerous other vocationally orientated and community-based projects.

Locality G

Locality G is an urban, unitary authority with high levels of poverty and unemployment. A relatively low proportion of its population belongs to ethnic minorities. There were two large and two smaller Local Authority day centres, which provided little employment activity. Relatively few people with learning disabilities were in paid work, but larger numbers were in voluntary work, work experience and vocational training. Interviews with two day centres revealed:

- Both day centres directed people in the direction of other employment providers. One felt it was very limited in offering employment preparation because they catered for many people with individual needs.

The day centres referred people on to two voluntary sector employment agencies. These agencies provided work placements and training, and included MENCAP Pathways, which ran a café where people could gain work experience.

Locality H

Locality H is a large rural county with low poverty and unemployment. Only a small percentage of the population belongs to ethnic minorities. The locality was divided into four areas, each with a community team responsible for adults with learning disabilities. All four areas separated work preparation from care-and-support services, although some employment preparation courses were run in day centres. There were significant numbers of people with learning disabilities in paid work, some in voluntary work, and many more in work experience or work training placements. Interviews took place with six day and resource centres:

- In one division there was a sheltered work unit that offered parts assembly work.
- In another, there were high levels of open employment, and initial try outs for six weeks are used to establish training, skills and interests
- A third had a horticultural unit.
- A fourth service referred on to another provider for assessment, training and employment placement.
- There was a wide use of community-based job try out and work-based training of specific skills

Effectively, there is a separate employment system within social services that people are referred to and spend some time in, with other time spent on wider activities with day centres. There is also a Local Authority social enterprise that offers work placement and training in its manufacture and assembly work.

Locality I

Locality I is a large rural county with low poverty and unemployment, and only a small percentage of the population belong to ethnic minorities. This locality had three large, traditional day centres for people with mild to moderate levels of disability, which provided little direct employment preparation.⁵ A significant number of people with learning disabilities were in employment and voluntary work, but fewer in work experience and work training. We interviewed three day centres and found:

- One day centre did little directly to prepare people for employment, trying to teach independence, communication and social skills in the context of activities such as sport, arts, crafts, independent living and other.

Continued

⁵ People with severe impairments tended to go to special needs units.

- A second centre offered a foundation course for work that dealt with health and safety, vocational topics, appropriate manners and dress. Placements were offered in the centre's café, greenhouses, ground maintenance team, and furniture repair workshop.
- A third centre offered people contract work packing components and recycling airline bags, giving people experience of factory type work and helping people learn work-related skills. They referred to other employment agencies for placements.

The Local Authority funded job placement through a major Supported Employment agency, with help from the European Social Fund, and also funded an agency to provide voluntary work placements. There was also a thriving independent and voluntary sector, providing employment opportunities, with national providers Remploy Interwork, MENCAP Pathway and SCOPE operating in this area.

4.2 Day services

4.2.1 Views on employability requirements for people with learning disabilities

The perceptions of those who are responsible for services of the capacities needed by people with learning disabilities to enter employment guides the way they approach work preparation and the extent to which they promote employment as an option. We asked day service staff what characteristics people with learning disabilities need in order to become employed. They expressed a wide range of opinions, the following being the most common:

- Personal skills, such as adaptability, responsibility and risk awareness.
- Social skills, such as communication, understanding the norms of behaviour within the workforce and not going over any line of acceptability or appropriateness.
- Practical skills, such as basic literacy and numeracy and skills specifically related to the job (the latter were seen by some as a prerequisite to employment).
- Cognitive skills, such as concentration and the ability to learn.
- An ability to recognise and adhere to the routines and rules of a working environment, including punctuality and discipline.

In addition, some mentioned the need for people to be independent in travelling, particularly in rural areas, where distances were large and staff availability to provide transport was limited.

4.2.2 Assessing employment needs

If services are to find people appropriate jobs, they need to know a significant amount about the person to match a job to his or her needs. We asked our day centre respondents how they found out important information about people in respect of employment. Approaches fell into three broad categories:

- Information from social workers and service package reviews.
- Observation of placements in work activity.
- Formal scales and employment-related data collection tools.

Information from social workers and service package reviews

This approach involved day centres using basic information that is generated by social workers when they are setting up services for newly referred clients, or reviewing their service packages.

The material included community care assessments, personal care plans and referral forms from social workers. Some day centres included wider assessments from colleagues, such as nurses. For younger clients, some centres may do exchange visits with the person's school to find out more about them and their needs. There were some day centres that were also starting to take on board the ethos of *Valuing People*. They were using Person Centred Planning approaches to explore employment as well as other life domains, such as supported living, relationships and leisure. These approaches tended to assess an individual by looking at the current places the person uses, the people they know, and their activities, and by asking the person and others to 'dream' about where the person might live, how they might occupy themselves and build more relationships and identify the help they need to achieve this.

Some day centres reported that assessment of need was a more general process and that individual preferences for activity, including employment, flowed out of longer-term informal discussions with the person. It was common for services using this approach to refer someone to their partner employment service for a full assessment of people's employment needs.

'We work with care plans and ongoing knowledge of people to agree five major outcomes. If one of these outcomes has a job, we would look at their timetable and refer them on to (County Employment Team).'

(Service C)

Observation in work activity

Day services following this approach placed people into their own specific work units or workshops, and in activity departments, and observed their progress as a means of establishing employment needs. These placements included: packing screws and wall plugs; building in wood such as bird feeders and chairs; shop selling craft work and furniture; sandwich maker services; newsletter production using

computers; recycling; garden centre; grounds maintenance; and furniture repair. Day centres using this approach did not generally have a formal process of assessment to draw experiences together, although one provider used National Proficiency Training Certificate standards (a pre-NVQ style assessment of core work skills or attributes) and others NVQ units of assessment.

'Over the trial period we spend time asking about the above (work likes, needs etc). They then make a decision about what they want to do from a set programme of taster activities. We run a flexible system around the individual's needs and desires.'

(Service I)

Some day centres mentioned observing people in more general contexts, such as trips to cafés and centre-based meetings as a means of identifying relevant skill needs and gaps.

Formal employment data collection tools

A small number of day centres made assessments by using formal employment-related data collection tools, in addition to using community care assessments. These types of assessment usually tried to assess a person in relation to a set of relevant dimensions or core skills, such as their level of numeracy, or their attention span, and use the assessment to predict people's need for support or even the type of job that may best suit them.

'We will already have an assessment from the social worker. Now we are going for a person-centred approach. Everyone has a Whelan and Speake assessment that is done at home.'

(Service B)

A small number of day centres said they used a 'vocational profiling' approach to establish people's needs. A vocational profile looks at a wide range of social information about an individual, including their employment aspirations and characteristics of jobs and workplaces they would like; any key job skills they have; and their support needs. This information would lead to a description of an ideal job and provide a profile of job and workplace characteristics necessary to ensure a suitable match. This can take several visits to build up, and can take information from seeing people in different settings. Vocational profiling has been highlighted as a positive approach within the *WORKSTEP* programme as part of its modernisation process.

4.2.3 Preparing people for work

With a large proportion of services providing work experience inside day centres, the way they approach training people in employment-related skills is important to the overall prospects of people with learning disabilities entering the labour market. We asked day centres how they trained relevant employment skills.

Social skills

A significant number of day centres said that their service did not carry out any employment-related training. In the main training focused on basic social skills and other fundamental training. Day centres were aiming to teach people to be assertive, to have good personal hygiene and better communication. Many claimed that all their activities contributed to employability in this way.

'Some activities teach skills such as being assertive. Through some activities tutors can identify areas where people might need relevant training. We work in a roundabout way. e.g. We set up a sports group which people were interested in and as part of this group we addressed issues around personal hygiene. We identified the skills, and teach it to people in an area where they are interested.'

(Service I)

Work experience

For those day centres that did undertake employment-related training, one of the common approaches was to place in an in-house work training unit. Day centres were not detailed in the methods they used to train, other than exposure to activity. The activities themselves tended to be narrow in content and the skills learned either specific to the task in hand, or basic core skills (e.g. taking instruction, going to and from breaks on time). Some of the opportunities being offered by day centres were sophisticated, and included:

- allotment, garden centre and horticultural projects;
- café projects, canteen work, cafés in day centres and coffee clubs for groups;
- buffet enterprises;
- shops;
- caretaking and ground maintenance work;
- community action project with the elderly;
- workshops such as a furniture repair workshop;
- contract packing and light assembly tasks.

A small minority of centres used community employers to offer work experience or job tasters. In their most developed form, these were supported by day centre staff, or job coaches, at the workplace. One approach said to be successful was to *'fit the job to the person, not the person to the job'*, taking care to understand the person's abilities and interests and finding a job try out to suit them. Employers also played their part:

'Work placements - employer gives training to people who are a long way from being ready.'

(Service E)

Employment-related training

There were a number of employment-related training packages offered through day centres. Course topics mentioned included:

- dressing for interviews and practising interviews;
- communication, getting on with people at work, use of telephones;
- food hygiene, food technology and health and safety at work;
- working in retail outlets;
- use of computers;
- numeracy, literacy, telling the time, handling money;
- travel skills.

In a few cases, these work topics were brought together into training packages that covered a number of areas. A few day centres offered training courses themselves, but more tend to be run by partner agencies (see Section 4.3.4) or by colleges.

4.2.4 Helping people to find work

Only a few day centres found work for people themselves. Where they did they used a range of approaches including:

- 'cold calling' companies to see if they have openings;
- following up jobs advertised in newspapers;
- through personal staff contacts and word of mouth;
- approaching the host Local Authority and Primary Care Trust to take people on.

A very small number of day centres did offer staff to provide on-the-job support, while a small number offered continuing support on problem solving or regular review of jobs placements.

'At the beginning of a placement we give 100% support with mobility (transport) and on-the-job supervision (job coaching). This is gradually withdrawn and replaced by three-monthly meetings to review progress and sort any problems.'

(Service A)

The majority of job finding in the areas we studied was done through partners of day centres, rather than by day centres themselves (see Section 4.3.5).

4.2.5 Barriers and how to overcome them

We found that certain common themes emerged when exploring with day centre staff what they thought hindered their ability to move people with learning disabilities into employment:

- The changing nature of day services.
- Shortage of staff and resources.
- Working with carers.
- Benefits issues.
- Internal barriers.

The changing nature of day services

There was a strong theme running through discussion of barriers with day service staff, suggesting that finding employment was becoming a specialist activity that required dedicated and experienced teams. The transition involved in this shift left some staff feeling confused and lacking in direction.

'The lack of strategic direction – spent two years not knowing if we should be finding jobs for people. Lack of staff to support people in the community.'

(Service C)

Ironically, there were a few day centres that felt that the *Valuing People* modernisation agenda had moved day centres away from vocational preparation, as it had forced a broadening of remit to pursue wider social goals.

'Modernising day services has made it that it's no longer our remit to help people into work. There are specialist agencies that are better equipped than us. We are not able to focus on employment.'

(Service A)

However, this thinking has underpinned the increasing use of partnership working with specific allocated roles. Some day centres see their role as preparing people, and that of specialist employment agencies as finding jobs and having the skills and resources to place and maintain people in jobs.

'The fact that we've only just gone back to being an employment team. Employment for people with disabilities is becoming quite specialist. We are not job finders, we want them to access (Agency Name) service. They have better access to job opportunities. We have pre-training support to use other services role.'

(Service D)

Shortage of staff and resources

A lack of staff resources within the day centre team was another reason given for not pursuing employment. Employment preparation, in particular job placement, was seen as labour intensive, often requiring one-to-one support. This, combined with high levels of unemployment in some of the areas, restricted the day centres' ability to move towards employment as a goal.

Intensive staff support was needed in other associated areas, such as independent transport training. Many, particularly in rural areas, saw transport as a major barrier; lack of staff and vehicle availability can make employment placement from a day centre base almost impossible.

There was a view amongst respondents that, if employment is to increase, there has to be a shift in staffing from social care activity to employment placement.

Working with carers

Day service staff identified resistance from carers as one barrier to individuals entering employment. This resistance was largely based on concerns that the person with a learning disability would be unable to cope or come to harm in some other way, that through entering employment the individual would lose access to day services, and thus the carer would lose an important source of respite, or that the individual's benefit entitlement would be affected.

Staff felt that working closely with carers and recognising their concerns was key to overcoming their resistance.

'We try to understand what their concerns are and reply directly to them ... it's about maintaining credibility with parents so they are confident we are doing the best for their son or daughter.'

(Locality A)

Respondents suggested engaging successfully with carers would involve listening and being available; sharing information; involving carers in the care planning process, in carers' forums or consultation groups; taking things 'one step at a time'; and being realistic about expectations for the person with learning disabilities.

'Where we have been most successful getting people into jobs it has been where we have supported the carers too. Like the employer, this is all about building up trust and confidence through a personal relationship.'

(Locality C)

Staff suggested that carers' concerns for the welfare of the individual could be addressed by highlighting the benefits and age appropriateness of work, anticipating the questions that might come up and, crucially, by being able to point to success stories.

'Try and help parents/carers to see the benefits of work... involve parents/carers in Person Centred Planning and help them to understand their individual's capabilities and aspirations.'

(Locality F)

Several day centre staff described how they managed to allay fears over losing access to services by helping people to alter attendance patterns to maximise funded days, and to increase hours of work slowly to build confidence of all concerned.

Benefits issues

Benefits issues were seen as a major barrier to employment by day service staff, both in actual terms and in terms of carer resistance.

In actual terms, the inability to move smoothly from benefits into paid employment without losing money was reported as a problem to the individual, particularly if the person is in residential care and dependent on a high rate of benefit income to sustain his or her home.

In some cases, whole households were perceived to be dependent on income from Income Support, Housing Benefit and Council Tax Benefit. One day service manager reported that, in such cases, carers might actively discourage the person they cared for entering employment.

As a result, staff highlighted the availability of accurate and accessible benefits advice as a key factor in overcoming barriers to employment. Day centres with significant involvement in employment still tended to use other people for case related benefit advice, such as LA Benefits Advisors, Care Managers, Citizens Advice Bureaux and the Benefits Agency.

Individual barriers

Finally, day centres reported a number of sources of constraint coming from people with learning disabilities themselves – for example, people understandably want to maintain their friendships from the day centre, many of which have been built up over many years. This acts as a brake on change unless friendships can be maintained outside of work. A small number of respondents felt people with learning disabilities had restricted lives, leading to a poor attitude to employment, lacking the desire to work, and having little confidence. Some felt that people had not been given the experiences to make a judgement about what work they might want to do.

4.3 Partner agencies

4.3.1 Profile of partner agencies

Two basic types of partner employment organisations were working with day centres. The first type was either part of social services, or part of the wider Local Authority, and provided a more focused approach to employment than was available within the main day centre structure.

Within this there were Supported Employment agencies, work preparation services, and sheltered units offering employment and training. While Supported Employment services or teams did provide paid jobs in the community, a significant number of these services had work experience and training placements as a major element of their activity.

The second type of partner agency was in the voluntary sector and were mainly affiliated to large, well-established national charities. They tended to have established support structures and a track record of achievement. These larger services potentially offered access to Government programmes, such as the *WORKSTEP* programme and Job Broker services. The services they offered included access to sheltered workshops, café projects, and access to community jobs with staffed support. All voluntary sector agencies had paid employment as their main goal.

All the partner agencies were generally well established, some having been in existence for 10 years or more and the majority having two to five years' experience. At the time of the research the agencies catered for between 21 and 654 clients with an average of 170. In all, they were supporting 1,698 clients of whom the great majority were people with learning disabilities. Where agencies catered for all disabled people, people with learning disabilities comprised a significant minority of their caseload, and so all were very experienced in working with people with learning disabilities.

4.3.2 Views on employability requirements for people with learning disabilities

We asked partner employment services what characteristics they felt were important for people with learning disabilities if they were to enter employment. Views tended to be very similar to those expressed by day service staff. The main difference was that specialist employment providers did not talk about specific work skills as prerequisites as much as their day centre colleagues. They tended to favour the need for motivation, willingness to work, and having some basic social skills to work with. The individual's own '*desire to do it*' was key to success. This is clearly not a trainable characteristic, but one born out of a clear understanding of the real requirements of workplaces, and an appreciation of the benefits having a job brings.

4.3.3 Assessing employment needs

For Local Authority employment service partners there were two main preferred routes for establishing people's needs. One group of services, mainly those approaching community jobs, described using a 'vocational profile' to establish people's needs and to begin to construct an action plan. Some mentioned trial periods of work tasting, or work experience, if required by the vocational profile.

A second group of services, mainly those offering work preparation, used observational approaches, putting people through either a varied programme of work placements within their workshop structure, or using one placement as a basis for establishing people wider training or job needs. There were no descriptions given of how work placement information was linked to developing a plan for subsequent job finding.

Managers of voluntary agencies tended to describe their initial assessments as 'vocational profiling' and used a range of standard tools, often based on a Supported Employment approach. Their working assumption was that everyone was potentially employable and had some skills or capabilities that could be developed and used in an employment situation. This was usually followed by a process of 'job matching', matching the person's skills and interests to particular jobs available in the area. Once some possibilities had been canvassed and discussed with the individual and their carer and/or support worker the process of job finding could begin.

4.3.4 Preparing people for work

Partner employment agencies in our research tended to use different approaches to preparing people for work than did day centres. These centred around courses, training packages, and 'on-the-job' training.

Courses

Those services involved in work preparation tended to provide courses for people with learning disabilities to develop their employability. Some dealt with specific topics, such as interview training, whereas other courses were longer-term programmes dealing with a whole range of issues in employment, including in one case, accreditation. Courses were often carried out in collaboration with other organisations such as colleges, both inside and outside of the day centre.

Courses run by partners with a work preparation focus were more commonly linked to accreditation or qualification, including NVQs, and vocational certificates such as food handling awards.

Training packages

Some partner employment services were characterised by a coordinated approach to training, based on individual need. Agencies saw themselves as facilitators ensuring that a package of work training, work placement, and surrounding social

activity came together for the client, often sourcing training from other providers in the local area. In one case, attendance on this kind of integrated course was a *'prerequisite'* to going on any work placement. Some saw the advantage of linking vocational work and training, particularly as it distances learning from 'school' to more adult environments.

'All work is vocationally based, supported by (Named) College. Numeracy and literacy courses designed around what goes on at the bases, e.g. counting trees. This is very successful. Some people did not want to study numeracy at college but are happy doing it as part of their vocational work and don't see it as school.'

(Service H)

Job training/Job coaching

Independent partner organisations talk more than day centres about the techniques that can be used to train new jobs effectively. Having found a 'job match' and come to an agreement with an employer, agencies would then commence the process of preparation and job coaching. On the whole, agencies used 'place and train' principles with most of the learning and support being 'on-the-job'. This applied to both permanent posts and work experience placements used to enable clients to get to grips with real life working situations. Work experience was sometimes a precursor to a permanent post, though this was not usually part of the initial agreement to minimise the sense of failure if a placement did not work out.

A number of partner employment services, Local Authority and independent, used job coaching approaches. Coaching was, in some cases, carried out by the support worker, in others by a specialist job coach. It began with the worker analysing the job and breaking it down into manageable tasks. There might also be technical or social 'adjustments' to the work situation that need to be negotiated with the employer. This was then followed by a period where the job coach worked alongside the employee (some mentioned using 'Training through Systematic Instruction') to ensure that the employee could do the job. At the same time the job coach would be looking at how s/he could safely withdraw and would look out for what managers described as 'natural supports' i.e. colleagues and supervisors who would help the employee to adjust to the workplace and provide ongoing support. These organisations also had training courses at their disposal, including courses on time management, health and safety, travel and work awareness.

4.3.5 Helping people to find work

Our research found that partnership agencies tended to take the lead in placing people with learning disabilities in work.

While a few of the Local Authority partner organisations did have dedicated job finders as well as job support staff, the independent partner agencies participating in the research did not tend to have specialist 'job developers' i.e. staff whose job it is to go out and meet with employers and market the skills of the clients. The task of

job finding was in the main done by support workers, although all agencies had a number of employers on their books whom they knew to be prepared to employ their clients.

The main principle of employer engagement was that employer satisfaction is as important as client satisfaction. Therefore, staff marketed not only the skills, reliability and loyalty of their client, but also the whole support package that the employer would be offered on an ongoing basis while the client was employed. Partner agencies generally had a sophisticated understanding of the nature of employer concerns and the strategies needed to overcome employer resistance. These included: ensuring support was available when needed by the employer; the use of trial periods to let employer and employee get to know each other; the use of face-to-face meetings; and a clear sense of the business case for employing a person with a disability.

There is an emerging understanding, evidenced by the widespread existence of the partnership arrangements described, that obtaining and supporting jobs is a full-time, skilled occupation.

4.3.6 Barriers and how to overcome them

Interviews with partner employment services raised a similar range of barriers as did those with day services. Benefits issues, employer ignorance, parental concern, bureaucracy, inadequate, short-term or inflexible funding, unreasonable target setting were all mentioned by our respondents. However, some of the difficulties cited by day centre managers, such as lack of time, staff shortages and staffing for transport, were notably absent. Where staffing was mentioned it was in the context of the difficulty of getting sufficiently skilled staff.

Employment agency staff highlighted similar difficulties in working with carers as did their day centre colleagues.

'We know there are some people who are not being referred to us because their parents prevent it.'

(Locality H)

One person mentioned that carers were not always involved because in some cases people with learning disabilities did not want them to be. While all stressed the importance of understanding the carer's point of view and being open, honest and reliable, employment agencies were more likely than day centres to keep carers at arms length.

'.. it's not really appropriate [to involve carers]. That is for the social workers to deal with, but we do liaise with them and we always seek to reassure families if they are concerned about something.'

(Locality H)

'Our relationship is through the candidate but we ask the candidate to involve the support network.'

(Locality B)

Some employment agency staff used very structured, planned approaches to resolving the concerns of carers. They mentioned 'days for parents to discuss things strategically', invited them to reviews, and provided information that presented success stories and guidance.

Most respondents, particularly those in Supported Employment, felt they would do better with more, consistent and longer-term funding. Some were also looking (cautiously) to the Joint Investment Plans and *Valuing People* to improve aspirations and to reduce barriers. One mentioned that the universal adoption of Person Centred Planning could transform service providers' attitudes more generally and give them more focus on clients' aspirations.

On the whole, managers of these partner employment services felt reasonably optimistic about the future but could not see any immediate end to the annual struggle for funds, which they regarded as a distraction from their main business of getting people into work.

4.4 Who were day services and their partner employment agencies working with?

As partnership in offering employment to people with learning disabilities was so important for many day centres and partner employment services we interviewed, we explored which other organisations centres worked with, and how these relationships worked.

Schools

A large majority of day services had contact with schools. Their joint work tended to be focused around school leavers and the new transition process, including finding work experience placements, and joint work on activities across the school and adult divide. The specialist employment agencies were keen to work more closely with schools and some expressed disappointment that they were not able to offer more help with work experience and placement. Several mentioned wanting to take direct referrals – rather than having to wait for people to pass through college and into adult day services. Connexions was too new at the time of the research for partnerships to have developed fully but most respondents thought it would be important for introducing employment as an option at the point of transition to adult services.

Further education and training providers

We asked about links with further education and other training providers. Here there were differences between the day centres and the specialist employment providers. Most of the day centres had links with FE Colleges and voluntary training providers and used them to offer additional activities such as horticulture, and cookery – sometimes leading to pre-vocational qualifications. These were regarded as important, but some did express disappointment that courses did not appear to lead more often to careers.

Specialist providers seemed to use the training sector more commonly than day centres to address issues such as confidence building, life skills and individual skills training linked to specific jobs. The great majority commented positively on their relationships with colleges and training providers. One or two respondents mentioned Learning and Skills Councils, indicating that they recognised the strategic role of these bodies and were seeking to influence them to promote the interest of people with learning disabilities.

Voluntary and independent organisations

Around half the respondents underlined for us that they partnered with voluntary or independent organisations as providers of employment for their clients. One type of partnership was with voluntary sector social enterprises that acted as a source of placements for people with learning disabilities. Another was with voluntary organisations that offered volunteer placements in charity shops.

There was also recognition of the importance of home-grown partnerships, where employment services had been established within the day centre and subsequently become independent of social services. Most respondents were very positive about the relationships with their partners, including the specialist agencies themselves who also worked together where it broadened the range of options for their clients.

'We are rivals, but we get along well.'

(Day Centre, Service H)

However, the relationship between day centres and voluntary sector or independent partners may not always be effective. While the majority appeared to be working well, there were a number of respondents who pointed to some problems. Problem areas were responsibility for providing transport, consultation over clients with whom both parties were working and reliability of follow-through on decisions.

'Some failures on trying to get people to follow-through on promises. Often day centre staff have to be pushy. No-one has got a job through (Named Employment Agency) in the past year.'

(Service H)

Mainstream employment programmes

When asked about mainstream employment programmes, only a minority of respondents in day centres mentioned having partnership links with *WORKSTEP* providers, Job Brokers, or Jobcentre Plus Disability Employment Advisors. The relationships that did exist were primarily with community placement providers, and, therefore, were with agencies such as Remploy Interwork, Shaw Trust, and Local Authority *WORKSTEP* providers. Relationships with Jobcentre Plus were often distant.

'We don't know much about how it works – we leave it to (Name of specialist agency).'

(Locality A)

We asked our day service respondents whether any links they had made with the agencies and programmes above had in fact led to participation in the programmes, and thence to people becoming employed. The numbers actually making use of schemes were very low – most schemes having had only one or two people involved. A minor exception was *WORKSTEP* where there were a few more placements made, but still very few in comparison with the numbers attending the centres. Awareness of what the programmes had to offer was poor among the majority of the day services. When we asked people if they knew what specific programmes had to offer, knowledge was limited.

Local Authority and independent employment service providers tended to place more emphasis on partnership with 'mainstream' agencies and programmes both in day-to-day working and providing funding. Several were very positive about the relationship with Jobcentre Plus describing it as '*excellent*' and '*a part of our life.*'

There was a small minority of respondents that were less positive about Jobcentre Plus, with concerns that new arrangements were fragmenting existing connections between providers and DEAs.

'In terms of Disability Services, Jobcentre Plus has removed disability focus and mainstreamed Disability Employment Advisors. Communication now with Disability Employment Advisors is at the 'whim' of the Jobcentre managers.'

(Service D)

'There was concern from a few specialist providers that, as services move away from having a regional manager leaves no focus for disability development and liaison issues.'

(Service D)

Most mentioned and appeared to understand the role of *WORKSTEP*, *Work Preparation*, *Access to Work* and *NDDP Job Brokers*. However the Job Brokers did not feature as being particularly helpful. The few staff that had made links commented unfavourably on the scheme as a source of job placement opportunities for this client group.

'They are more interested in sending people to us rather than taking them from us!'

(Service D)

The specialist agencies were also more linked in to area-based initiatives such as Neighbourhood Renewal and the Single Regeneration Budget schemes. Some made use of European Social and Regional Development Funds available to their localities. Other links mentioned were with the Association for Supported Employment, Action Teams, the Circles Network and Social Firms UK.

4.5 Summing up

4.5.1 A profile of the service models we identified

We identified three basic approaches to providing employment for people with learning disabilities from the information we were given on services.

The first model might be described as ***'Hands-on Services'***. In this model, day services are characterised as having reformed to provide their own specialist teams or units to help people with learning disabilities move towards employment, while staff in day centres or resource centres concentrate on a range of other activities. Three localities, A, E and H fell within this model.

The second model might be described as ***'Hands-on Partnership Services.'*** In this model, day centres pointed people to employment through partner specialist employment services, but continue to provide work preparation training from their own resources. Their own input could include training in specific employment skills or in work-related skills through placement in work units within their centres. The day centres can be characterised as being *'hands-on'* in terms of training to develop people's work skills, but work with *'partners'* to place people in community jobs. The partner specialist employment services may be Local Authority run, possibly dealing with a range of disabilities, or they may be voluntary sector providers independent of the Local Authority. Four localities B, D, F and I fell within this model.

A third model might be described as ***'Hands-off Partnership Services.'*** In this model, day centres provided general activities and experiences that they felt contributed to people's employment potential, through gaining confidence or a sense of timekeeping, but not directly to skills or work experience. They tended to redirect people to specialist employment service partner organisations if they had a real interest in employment. The day centres can be characterised as *'hands-off'* in terms of work preparation, but work with *'partners'*, which may again be run by the Local Authority or the voluntary sector. Two localities, G and C, fell within this model.

4.5.2 Views on employability requirements for people with learning disabilities

Daycentre and employment agency respondents set out a wide range of characteristics that they felt are required for people to enter work. They differed as to how specifically they targeted the acquisition of skills.

4.5.3 Assessing employment needs

Despite all agencies surveyed having employment placement as an aim, only a minority had particular arrangements in place to establish these needs. Even the day centres and Local Authority partner services offering work experience or placement in work units do not commonly report any systematic processes for establishing needs and developing a path to open employment.

4.5.4 Preparing people for work

We have seen that there are qualitative differences in the approaches taken by day centres and partner services in pursuing employment-related training.

Partner organisations that specialise in employment do seem to be more sophisticated as to the types of course they run, and the relationship between the experiences they offer and discrete skill development. There appears to be more attention to the content of training experiences here than is common for day centres, which tend to focus on work placement itself as the main driver for learning. However, a question remains as to how powerful overall pre-vocational training can be, given the difficulties many people with learning disabilities have in applying their learning in new environments. The amount of pre-vocational training being provided by partner organisations still does not seem to be translated into people moving on to paid jobs.

4.5.5 Links with mainstream employment programmes and Government programmes

It would appear from our findings that the *Valuing People* aspiration for *WORKSTEP* and other mainstream programmes to be a route for significant numbers of people in day centres to get into employment has a way to go before it is realised.

The information we have on partnerships tends to suggest that employment service providers make greater use, and have greater knowledge, of mainstream employment agencies and programmes than day centres. These findings underline the distance that needs to be travelled if links are going to be made between learning disability services and mainstream employment programmes.

5 Supporting people into employment: Conclusions

5.1 The importance and benefits of work for people with learning disabilities

People with learning disabilities in our study liked (and disliked) work for much the same reasons as everybody else, including money, social contact, making a contribution to other people, and having something to do. The advantages of working outweighed the disadvantages. People liked paid work best of all, and career progression is sought by most people already in work.

People want to work even if they are not working at present. Over half of this group said they would like to enter paid work. Those not yet employed recognised they will need substantial help in most aspects of deciding on a job, finding a job, and being supported in a job. Many also understand that a job can have implications for their welfare benefits, and this remains, for some, a significant barrier to moving forward.

5.2 The situation of people with learning disabilities

There appear to be significant numbers of people with learning disabilities who do work training, work preparation, volunteering, or work experience, for some part of their week. Existing evidence shows the numbers of people in paid jobs, even on a part-time basis, is low.

Those with high-level support needs are less likely to be working. Information on the numbers of people not working who may consider doing so is encouraging. However, this is in the context of information that suggested that people in the 'never worked' category have not commonly received help to think about work. If day services are to give help to people who have 'never worked' this would represent a significant extension of job promotion activity from that already carried out by day centres and specialist employment officers.

The kind of work preferences some people express can seem unrealistic. However, if people's motivation is to be built upon, services need to explore what elements of these idealised jobs people really like. They then need to see whether these elements can be woven into a job option that can be realistic for the person to do. Transforming aspirations into employment goes to the heart of the capacities that day centre and employment agency staff need. It will be important for services to maximise positive employment impacts by obtaining a good match between the person's motivations, aspirations, likes and abilities with the tasks and the workplace. This will need to be based on a realistic understanding of what will be involved in a particular job.

5.3 People in work

People with learning disabilities who are working are likely to:

- work low hours;
- receive low pay;
- have little chance of earning a living wage even if paid the National Minimum Wage.

It is apparent there was a potentially real, or perceived, fear that by taking part in paid work which paid above the Income Support disregard of £20, people would not gain, or would lose income.

The part-time nature of many jobs can have practical implications, as well as implications for income and quality of experience. For many people with learning disabilities, it is difficult to learn a job. Short hours can mean it takes longer to learn a job. A part-time job with low hours can take the same amount of time to find and obtain as one that is full-time, and where a person might, in the right circumstances, earn more money. The situation people with learning disabilities find themselves in is constraining their potential earning capacity, their learning, and their personal development, and works against the efficient use of day centre and employment agency resources.

The information we have shows that there is a stable workforce, many of whom are happy to stay in their job. Significant numbers do look to the future, however, and may be looking for help from services to move on in their career. Finding a new job is often as demanding on services as finding the original job and represents a pool of further work. It also underlines the fact that no job is a job for life, and that services are likely to be supporting people, all be it intermittently, over the whole course of their career.

Some people want to earn more, and this may have welfare benefit implications. There is a continuing need for welfare benefit advice throughout people's careers.

Real social inclusion is an important employment outcome. There is evidence from research (Chadsey and Beyer, 2001) that assisting people to become more socially competent in the workplace helps them to keep their jobs as well as fit in better. Assisting people to become more socially competent and supporting people with learning disabilities to take part in the social events that surround work should be a key aim for services.

5.4 The role of carers

Carers play a key role in the employment process, both as advocates for, and inhibitors of, employment. Some carers recognised that they could enable employment, for instance, by allowing the person they cared for to take risks, and so they themselves had to tolerate a measure of anxiety over the experience of the individual working. Many carers who were positive in their attitudes about work conveyed that getting a job had been a struggle, requiring determination and single-mindedness from the carer as well as from the person with a learning disability. They felt that they had helped towards positive outcomes by ‘pushing’ services and employers on behalf of the person with a learning disability. They also felt that they had an important part to play in providing moral support, encouraging the person in employment. In addition to shaping the attitudes of potential workers positively, therefore, some carers were strong advocates for employment.

Carers and people with learning disabilities may pursue employment independently if a day centre is not involved or not supportive of work. It would seem, therefore, that it is important to provide information on the pros and cons of employment and where to obtain support to carers, people with learning disabilities, residential care providers, social workers, and those involved in Person Centred and Community Care Planning, if the option of employment is to be satisfactorily considered.

There was evidence from both family carers and paid carers that the complexity of benefits issues was acting as a deterrent to work opportunities. Some professional respondents reported that, if households were reliant on income from benefits, families discouraged people with learning disabilities from going to work. Some day care staff also said that carers fear losing day care provision if the person with a learning disability was not occupied at work full time, or if the placement failed, and so they were reluctant to permit them to try job opportunities.

Carers need to be seen as consumers of employment support as well, taking into account any potential conflicts of interest. To successfully engage carers in the employment process, day centres and employment services need to understand their particular view of the caring role, and the concerns they have about their relative entering work. Some of the major concerns can be resolved by services talking to carers, providing transport, putting in place explicit safeguards against exploitation in the placement and monitoring effectively. Good welfare benefit advice, and offering ‘revolving door’ places in day centres, will also help address major concerns.

In engaging carers, services need to be clear about the purpose of planning and the meetings they involve people in, ensuring that they are effective in reaching and executing decisions, rather than what carers perceive as ‘going round in circles.’

5.5 Help provided by day centres

Day centres are a major instigator of discussions regarding work. They are close to the client group and to carers.

Their awareness of employment varies from slight to considerable and their understanding of how best to move people into employment varies widely. They have tended to do more work preparation themselves and less job placement and support.

From the information provided, it would appear that, despite all agencies surveyed having employment placement as an aim, only a minority had particular arrangements in place to establish people's employment needs effectively.

There is a wide range of pre-vocational training and partnership approaches in place, but this is not leading to large numbers of people with learning disabilities getting jobs. It is important that effective instructional strategies are used if people are to obtain the benefit from the learning time. This research suggests that not all day centres are geared up to train any but the most able.

Day centres and employment agencies had a long list of characteristics they felt people needed to be successful in employment. If these are the real requirements of work, then it is important that either services are geared up to teach these abilities effectively before people enter work, there is effective teaching on the job for some of these qualities, or that there is a clear strategy for matching people and jobs in such a way that the impact of any lack of ability is minimised.

An explicit, structured approach to employment is needed by day centres. Where pre-vocational training is being used, it needs to be more clearly focused on paid employment with a clear exit strategy to paid work, related to the real job market, and be effective at meeting the needs of people with learning disabilities.

Day centres that are more focused on employment tend to have a wider range of partners and to use the approach developed in Supported Employment. Partner employment services in general were more commonly found to have well documented procedures such as Vocational Profiling in use to determine people's needs. Supported Employment has been researched in the US since the 1980s and a significant body of literature demonstrates that it is an effective method of finding people with learning disabilities jobs with better outcomes than sheltered forms of employment in terms of wage and other economic outcomes, engagement in meaningful activity, cost: benefit, social inclusion and employer satisfaction (Hill, *et al.*, 1987; Rusch *et al.*, 1993; Storey & Horner, 1991; Kilsby & Beyer *et al.*, 1996; Shafer, *et al.*, 1988). The use of Supported Employment by some day centres and employment agencies in the study suggests that Supported Employment techniques merit wider examination by other Local Authorities.

5.6 Help provided by other agencies

- Some other agencies work mainly with employers and concentrate on support in the workplace.
- Some concentrate on providing work preparation and work experience.
- Successful agencies appear to link work preparation activities to employers' needs and to the skill needs of the local labour market.
- Vocational profiling, job matching and job development, placement in work and on-the-job support are common elements for those agencies that have a clear employment focus.

We have identified a significant trend for day centres to approach employment through creating specialist teams themselves, or in partnership with agencies started by others. It would seem that where effort has been put into harnessing partnerships that focus on community placement, numbers in paid work are higher. The long-term effectiveness of work preparation on numbers in paid work has, in our opinion, yet to be demonstrated.

The implications for policy makers seem to be that ways need to be found of strengthening and resourcing partnerships across the country to increase community-based employment. Where work preparation is emerging, it should be organised in as professional and effective a way as possible, making use of the initiatives seen here, mainly by partner organisation, to involve key agencies in teaching, to make preparation relevant, and to gain qualifications wherever possible. However, it still seems clear that there will be little progression even from the best work preparation services without effective community job-focused Supported Employment linked to it.

Networking is important to all the agencies we interviewed but does not, on its own, appear to improve the numbers of people going into employment. Specialist employment providers felt effective networking should involve a sharp focus on shared goals and jointly agreed outcomes.

5.7 Barriers to work

Barriers to work at an individual and carer level include:

- attitudes to work, confidence and level of skills;
- fear about loss of benefit.

Barriers at a local partnerships level include:

- transport problems;
- lack of awareness among employers.

Barriers at a systemic level include benefits/tax system disincentives for people in part-time work:

- Effectively, the permitted number of working hours for Income Support is incompatible with the number of working hours needed to qualify for Government employment schemes.⁶
- People in residential care are systematically disadvantaged, since the need to retain their entitlements to relevant benefits effectively deters them from working for more than the Income Support disregard and so they can only earn £20 in addition to their benefit, even if they are capable of earning more

These disincentives can only be overcome when a realistic possibility of retaining income increases exists.

5.8 Suggestions for change

- Consideration should be given to whether the Income Support disregard could be increased to allow people to keep their earnings for more hours work, say eight hours' work (at present it permits about five hours work) to encourage more people to feel that work is an option or that it is worth increasing.
- Local Authorities should ensure that their charging policies for residential care and housing benefit are consistent with the principles of *Valuing People* and Welfare to Work (i.e. that work has to pay), and enable individuals who are working to retain some earnings.
- Availability of support into work needs to be increased. This could be achieved by reducing the minimum number of hours worked to qualify for *WORKSTEP*, *Access to Work* and Working Tax Credit from 16 to, say, eight hours. This would help people to better test work and would act as a stepping stone for more people to consider taking on work for over 16 hours and moving off of benefit.
- The Income Support disregard would need to be increased to permit an individual to work for eight hours at the National Minimum Wage without losing their benefit entitlement.
- The research has highlighted the need for information about employment for people with learning disabilities and carers. Information should include examples of individual pathways and show that work can improve income, integration and quality of life. Clear information about benefits is also needed.

⁶ Five to 16 hours work at the National Minimum Wage affects people's Income Support and Housing Benefit with each pound earning over £20 (effectively four to five hours' work) being deducted from benefits. *WORKSTEP* and *Access to Work* only come into play if more than the 16 hours limit is worked.

- Information for employers should be clearer regarding the National Minimum Wage and their duties under the Disability Discrimination Act, and provide guidance on how to adapt working practices.
- Local Authorities should ensure that a route directly into employment is available for people with learning disabilities at the transition stage after school and college. The responsibility for funding this transition process should be clarified, as not all individuals are immediately eligible for Local Authority social services support. Local Authorities concentrate on the most disabled group. The rest can, therefore, only obtain support from the Connexions service that currently channels many people towards Further Education without employment planning. Support services may be needed to enable people with learning disabilities to take advantage of Connexions, and to broaden the opportunities offered by Connexions to include work for this group.
- Partnerships should be fostered between specialist agencies and day centres to assist them in making the link to employment.
- Colleges have a part to play in facilitating the transition from education to employment. To achieve this, they need to work closely with the Local Authority and Connexions, as well as with specialist providers of employment support.
- Either the day centre or a partner service should provide opportunities for work skills training and preparation. This should have employment as a clear target, and be evaluated in terms of success in this respect.
- Services may find it effective to apply evidence-based employment practice, using the Supported Employment model (i.e. vocational profiling, job matching and in-work support for an indefinite period of time).
- Review of jobs and provision of opportunities for training and career development should be provided either by the day service, a specialist agency or the employer.

5.9 Development activities

- Implementation plans should be evidence-based following the principles of Supported Employment, and should include:
 - transition from education to employment;
 - liaison with employers;
 - work preparation;
 - vocational profiling;
 - job matching;
 - support in work (non-time limited);
 - career review and progression.

- Partnerships with specialist services or teams who are experienced and competent to deliver employment outcomes for people with learning disabilities seem to be the best way to establish the full range of provision for employment support.

There is a need to demonstrate the efficacy of this approach on a locality basis. Demonstration projects are, therefore, recommended along two possible models.

The focus for the proposals below is the local provider with responsibility for learning disability services.

1 Build employment capacity within day services

There are already well-established and comparatively large specialist organisations in the field with a proven track record of successfully supporting people with learning disabilities in open employment – some of which participated in this study. In some areas of the United States such organisations are treated as potential resources to smaller, less expert organisations in their local areas, which have neither the funding nor the management skills to develop employment programmes, but who none the less have good relationships with clients and carers. These intermediaries are given help to develop their own capacity and are accredited and funded to offer support to other smaller organisations, thus raising capacity in the field as a whole and expanding their own businesses. One way forward might be to develop a pilot with organisations with a good track record in the learning disability field. The pilot should include education, Connexions and Jobcentre Plus as well as specialist agencies in a given locality.

2 Enable specialist services to address the employment needs of day centre users

A more direct form of intervention could be to pay (accredited) organisations with a proven track record to offer vocational profiling, action planning and support into employment to a limited number of people in day centres that have no employment programmes. This would need to be done carefully with volunteer services and would need to involve both carers and key workers. Some incentive might also be offered to the day centre to cover the time of key workers. Initially there would have to be a limited number of 'pioneers' to ensure that a record of successful outcomes starts to build. It is possible to envisage a process that would feed on success by building up living examples of what people can do if given the right support. It would also not threaten in the short term the number of attendees for the day centre's other activities.

5.10 Further research

This research has highlighted several areas where further research may be useful:

- Further information about the benefits people with learning disabilities receive and how they use them to project the impact of recommendations such as those made here.
- Work preparation is fundamental to employment for people with learning disabilities. However, the wide range of approaches we have seen suggests that research is needed to provide guidance on best practice for what constitutes effective work preparation that gets people into employment.

Appendix A

Research methods

A.1 Overview of research methods

The study included nine case studies that involved interviewing people with learning disabilities, carers, day centre managers and staff, and organisations involved in supporting people in employment.

- In Stage 1, of sampling, a purposive sample of nine Local Authorities was drawn. There are 150 authorities with social services function in England. We combined data on Local Authority 'clusters' relating to common levels of unemployment, with information on the day and employment services for people with learning disability derived from Joint Investment Plans to stratify the sample. Once the authorities were selected, and participation was agreed with the social services departments concerned, we compiled a more detailed profile of each, generating basic information about organisational structures and policies, but also providing information for the second stage sampling.
- In Stage 2, we selected day centres and services for inclusion in the study, based on the size of the area and the number of centres and descriptions of the centres provided by our Local Authority contacts. A total number of 50 centres was our target – five to six centres in each area. Subsequently, a small number of providers of employment within the Local Authority were included, where they represented a Local Authority partnership with the day centre to provide employment.
- In Stage 3, we interviewed the managers of day centres or services identified, and staff (or units) directly involved in employment work, to establish their role in the training and employment of people with learning disabilities. Twenty-seven day services, and eight linked work training or work preparation units, took part in this stage of the study, and 41 interviews were achieved.

- In Stage 4, we created a purposive sample of other employment organisations. The sample was based on those organisations, within the Local Authority and outside, with which day services reported partnerships in getting people into employment, and organisations that operated in areas that could help us to investigate the full range of models of employment, including social enterprises and Supported Employment agencies. Twenty-one services were involved and 24 interviews were achieved.
- In Stage 5, a sample of people with learning disabilities was selected from the participating day centres, stratified by whether people were in a work, had had a job in the past, or had never had a job. People were approached through keyworkers for their permission to take part, and then interviewed. One hundred and fifty people with learning disabilities were targeted, 50 from each group, and 158 interviews were achieved.
- In Stage 6, we contacted a sample of family and some professional carers based on our sample of people with learning disabilities, with the permission of the person with a learning disability. Fifty carers were our target, although the number who agreed to be interviewed was 20.
- In Stage 7, we held nine focus groups to establish the views of people placed in employment through other employment organisations involved in the study. Members of the focus groups each came from one of seven organisations. Organisations were again purposively selected, largely based on information from user reference groups in day centres.

A.2 Sampling and selection

A.2.1 Day services

We selected nine Local Authorities in England. We screened out a large number on the basis of their published performance indicator, relating to the percentage of people with learning disabilities known to the Local Authority and in employment. We selected only localities where this indicator was 10 per cent or greater. We also wanted to explore provision in contrasting Local Authorities. We therefore selected areas with high and low unemployment (top or bottom third of ranked unemployment rates nationally); high and low deprivation levels (top or bottom third of ranked Index of Multiple Deprivation scores nationally); rural and urban areas; and different types of Local Government: county councils, metropolitan boroughs, and unitary authorities. The sample was also structured to cover the north, midlands, south-east and south-west of England. These details are omitted from the locality profiles to protect anonymity.

A.2.2 People with learning disabilities using day services

Participating day centres were asked to draw up lists of their service users with learning disabilities, identifying who was in paid employment, who had worked in the past, and who had never worked. The lists were number referenced to protect identities, and researchers used random numbers to select people for interview. Eighteen people were identified in each of the nine study areas, to establish a sample of 162 people, of which a sample of 158 was achieved.

A.2.3 Carers

Carers were approached via the people we interviewed who had learning disabilities. They were told that we were *'talking to lots of other people with learning difficulties as part of this project. However, the Government would also like us to talk to some families, to find out what they think. For example, here is a picture of a man with his mother. We would like to talk to both of them... If you say OK, we will ask the people at your day service to send a letter to your family telling them about the research, and asking them if they would be happy to talk to us. We will show staff this paper to show you think this is OK.'* Carers could then agree to be interviewed, or decline.

A.2.4 Other employment providers

We interviewed managers in the main specialist agencies in each area. These included:

- specialist supported employment agencies;
- *WORKSTEP* contractors;
- other employment service contractors, e.g. offering work preparation;
- social enterprises;
- other miscellaneous work orientated provision.

We set out to include a sample of 40 such organisations across the nine Local Authorities selected, reflecting both local partnership working, and also the full range of options mentioned above. Necessarily, we contacted and interviewed organisations that were not working directly with day services, but all worked with people with learning disabilities at one level or another.

A.3 Fieldwork issues

Despite providing information leaflets and forms to collect wage and welfare benefit information from home or residential homes prior to interview, very few of those people interviewed could provide any information on hourly rates, weekly wage or benefit income levels.

People with learning disabilities were asked to 'opt in' to their carer being interviewed. Although many said yes, many carers did not wish to be interviewed,

and it was difficult to achieve 20 out of a target of 40 carer interviews. It was also reported that the attempt to collect information on wages and welfare benefits contributed to difficulties in achieving our target number of carer interviews, carers confusing the study with a benefits review despite clear information being provided.

While Social Service Departments formally agreed to their services being involved, some day centres failed to return statistical information on their client numbers. Many were unable to provide wage, hours and welfare benefit information on the people they supported in work. Some 'other providers' interviewed also failed to return statistics on their service and the numbers of people they served. This made it difficult to provide comparative commentary on the employment outcomes achieved by different providers.

A.4 Interviewing people with learning disabilities

Key workers within services were asked to explain the research to the selected individuals, and to establish whether the individual was willing to participate. When that consent was forthcoming, we asked the member of staff to assist the individual in making an appointment with the interviewer, and where possible to make the introductions. Carefully developed information was created for staff, so that they understood both the nature of the research, and what they were being asked to do. This information also included guidance on assessing whether someone was able to consent.

Some individuals included in the sample were unable to provide consent, or did not have the receptive language skills to answer questions in any form or format. An amended form of the questionnaire was developed for use with a key worker or member of staff who knew the individual best. In each case the interview focused on the nature of the services used, what was known about the individual's preferences, and how they might respond to the opportunity to spend time in various work settings.

We anticipated that some individuals would find it difficult to provide specific pieces of information (for example, what their rate of pay was, what benefits they received etc). We helped the individuals with learning disabilities gather information they needed to answer the questions from others by providing everyone involved, in advance, with a list of the key questions that would be asked.

A semi-structured questionnaire was developed, which was administered through a face-to-face interview. This included a range of question formats, as well as incorporating pictures and symbols. The physical questionnaire was designed to be 'shared' between interviewer and interviewee, itself useful in ensuring that individuals do not feel they are being 'tested.' The questions and formats used were developed in partnership with Swindon People First, a group of self-advocates with significant experience in assisting in making research studies accessible to people with learning disabilities.

A.5 Interviewing carers

Carers were interviewed using a topic guide designed for the study, which focused on the experiences of, and barriers to, employment for the individual with learning disability.

A.6 Interviewing day centre staff

We interviewed the key staff directly managing day services in each locality, along with any staff who had a designated role in relation to employment within these services. These individuals were likely to be the critical ‘gatekeepers’, and also likely to be aware of the attitudes to employment amongst the wider staff group. Overall, we set out to interview around 50 members of staff. However, the number of staff we interviewed in each location was proportionate to the size of the authority, and due to the purposive nature of selection, 35 interviews were needed in the end.

Managers of day centres included in the study were sent a pre-interview questionnaire, asking them to provide quantitative information on the number of people they worked with, and on the work of their centre. This was followed up with interviews that focused on five broad sets of issues:

- the nature of the day service, and the extent to which employment support was a feature of its work;
- awareness of employment avenues;
- perceptions of employability;
- perceptions about barriers to employment and the role day centres can play in helping people become employed;
- awareness of, and support for, local and national policies.

A.7 Surveying the contribution of other employment providers

The focus of interviews with senior managers of other employment providers was:

- the form and function of the organisation, how it was organised, and what kinds of support it provided;
- the extent of the services provided by the organisation to people with learning difficulties;
- the links the organisation had with social care and mainstream employment services;
- perceptions of employability;
- perceptions about barriers to employment;
- awareness of, and support for, local and national policies.

Appendix B

Profiles of study populations

B.1 Profile of localities

This section provides an overview of the areas surveyed for the study. The area codes relate to Table B.1, which summarises the population size, poverty levels, unemployment and ethnicity characteristics of the areas.

Table B.1 Profile of study areas

	Study areas								
	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I
Urban/Rural	U	U	U	U	R	U	U	R	R
Population - 1000s	163	330	305	259	569	217	248	498	754
Poverty- IMD rank ¹	Low	Low	Low	High	Low	High	High	Low	Low
General population unemployment rate	High	High	High	High	Low	High	High	Low	Low
Non-white residents %	3.3	29.8	6.3	6.9	1.5*	13.9	3.1	1.5*	2*

* Estimate

¹ Index of Multiple Deprivation Rank

B.1.1 Locality A

Description

An urban, unitary authority, with low poverty yet high unemployment levels. Locality A has a population of about 160 thousand people, of whom about three per cent belong to non-white ethnic minorities. A coastal, retirement area, the authority is characterised by high levels of residential provision and an older average age for the population. The number of people with a severe learning disability is about 500, with a further 4,000 having mild or moderate learning disabilities. Nearly 600 of these people are known to care services, and about 300 need 1:1 support at times.

Organisation

A day services review was carried out in 2000, and this outlines modernisation plans for day services, citing as objectives: the development of opportunities in mainstream leisure, education and employment provision; the setting up of social firms; and the development of services for specific groups (e.g. people with autism, challenging behaviour). A review group carried forward this plan and developed a day services strategy. The Learning Disability Joint Investment Plan (LD JIP) 2001-2004 stresses a need for greater integration between health, social care, housing and other agencies, with fuller involvement of the voluntary sector. One aim of the JIP is to have responsive day care covering a range of needs, including employment opportunities.

Provision

The local NHS trust provided 47 day care places according to the LD JIP, complementing the 136 funded by the Local Authority in three Social Education Centres. There was a clear division between day services and mainstream employment services at the time of the study. In-house provision centred on café projects where people could get experience in catering, but progression seemed rare. At the time of the research, the day services strategy was in the process of implementation, and the services in Locality A were changing. The single large day centre, formerly a sheltered workshop, was being reorganised into three smaller day services. Three cafés had been reduced to two, and there was an intention to make these more independent of social services. A Community Employment Team had been established to implement these changes.

Local policy objectives

Targets specified in the JIP in relation to these developments include a modest increase in the number of people in employment year on year, a reduction in the number of people attending day centres, and the setting up of an occupational skills course by April 2003, with the setting up of social firms a little later. This JIP also recognised the need for people to have sound benefits advice so that lack of reliable information did not restrict their opportunities to work for pay.

Views of people with learning disabilities

A questionnaire about work and employment was circulated in preparation for the JIP, to which 111 people replied, but it is not clear whether people with learning disabilities or their carers completed the questionnaires. The report of the survey notes a need to bridge *'what people with a learning disability aspire to, and the skills which employers may wish for a post.'* It concludes that *'the lack of official pathways, of staff devoted to finding work opportunities, and of consistent monitoring of any developing work-skills through discussion of work-related issues in Person Centred Planning means that the scope of work-related choice is very limited.'*

Comment

There were clearly plans for incremental developments in this locality, and an awareness of the need for day service modernisation, but no coherent strategy for the development of employment opportunities as such.

B.1.2 Locality B

Description

This locality is an urban, unitary authority with low poverty levels but is classed the highest third of the country for unemployment. It has a population of about 0.33 million people, 30 per cent of whom belong to non-white ethnic minorities. Its social services expenditure on learning disability is 15 per cent above the standard spending assessment. Administrative prevalence of adults with learning disabilities is estimated to be 1,305. Care packages for 900 adults with learning disabilities were purchased in 2002, with a further 120 people being supported by Independent Living Officers.

Organisation

A joint commissioning group was set up in 2000 by the NHS Trust, social services and the body that became the Primary Care Trust (PCT). In 2002, a pooled budget for learning disabilities was created, with social services taking the lead commissioning role. The commissioners see themselves as responding to the wishes of a learning disability forum, which is described as a representative group of key stakeholders that steers local strategy.

Provision

Locality B has three large day centres, serving over 350 individuals, where people are grouped according to ability and need. It also has two principal Supported Employment services, one 'in-house' and one independent agency that also deals with people with mental health problems. Locality B is also developing a social enterprise as a spin-off from the day service. A shift is planned from day centres to resource centres, with the aim of providing employment opportunities for all who want them. A pilot resource centre with a high staff to user ratio was running at the time of the study. From user and staff accounts, this has been successful in providing social and leisure facilities. The commitment to this shift to resource centres is underwritten by sufficient funding from the Learning Disability Development Fund to run both types of provision in parallel for two years until 2003.

Local policy objectives

A five year service improvement plan, launched in 2001, included an intention to consolidate one gardening project as a social business, and set up four more. The assessment, dated in July 2002, states that this plan is not viable, due to income generation limitations. A separate goal, to increase the number of people with learning disabilities in Supported Employment to 50, with an average of two days per week employment per person, was judged to be on target in July 2002.

The LD JIP was compiled jointly by the local NHS Trust, the social services and the PCT. It puts forward '*equal access to employment*' as one of the basic principles of the JIP. Day service reform, which is one objective of the JIP, is clearly pivotal to expanding opportunities in all forms of employment. The five-year plan includes resource allocation to increase the provision of Supported Employment. Other objectives pertaining to work include: development of closer working between relevant mainstream and specialist agencies; and the promotion of employment opportunities in the public sector, which is to be monitored by the existing employment forum.

Views of people with learning disabilities

Younger people who have been to college seem to have higher expectations in relation to employment, and the JIP's emphasis on good transition planning takes this into account.

Comment

In relation to the JIP's objective of expanding work opportunities in the public sector, our understanding is that operation of the equal opportunity policy in the local council appears to have created a barrier to job candidates with learning disabilities. The position appears to be that '*no concessions are made*'. This suggests that the recruitment process has been standardised in some respects to meet equal opportunity criteria, but that falls short of inclusion of people with learning disabilities.

B.1.3 Locality C

Description

This is an urban area, run by a metropolitan borough council, with low unemployment, and high poverty. It has a population of about 0.25m, with an average proportion of people from non-white ethnic minorities (7.0 per cent). In November 2002, about 900 individuals with learning disabilities were known to the Local Authority and 500 were receiving community-based services. Twenty-two people (2.4 per cent) were in paid employment, and 56 (6.2 per cent) were in some form of work. These figures appear to have fallen from a total of 10 per cent in employment in 2001, possibly due to a more stringent definition of 'in work'.

Organisation

As in most localities, the Local Authority social services department largely takes the lead in developing services for people with learning disabilities.

Provision

There are five traditional, social education centres, serving about 400 people in the locality. An (in-house) Employment Preparation Unit does contract work for local firms, but few people progress from here to other forms of employment. There is

also a work placement team, which moved relatively recently from being centre-based to being a borough-wide resource and serves 25-30 individuals, mainly in unpaid settings. A social business partnership has been established to foster the establishment of social firms. This has set up a number of workshops (printing, horticulture, joinery etc.), which cater for people with all kinds of disability, not only learning disabilities.

Local policy objectives

An employment strategy was drawn up following the publication of *Valuing People*, citing its goals pertaining to work, and referring to other relevant policy guidance and service developments. This document states that '*modernising day services is a major priority and is to be achieved by 2006... emphasis will be on individualised and flexible services... to enhance skills and employability*'. Five goals were identified:

- Simplify the route into work.
- Educate and inform all stakeholders about work prospects.
- Raise the profile of work in individual plans.
- Identify more suitable jobs in health and social services.
- Concentrate on people in transition, leaving school or college.

The strategy advocated the appointment of an employment liaison worker.

Views of people with learning disabilities

The consultation process for the JIP in 2002 took in the views of the local user forum, the LD Partnership Board, the provider forum and local Jobcentre Plus. It confirmed that there was a demand from people with learning disabilities for more opportunities to work, but also recognised a lack of confidence and anxiety about the 'benefits trap' on the part of people with learning disabilities. According to the consultation, most agencies appeared to be focused on training and work preparation rather than getting people jobs and giving them support in work. Employers needed more information about the benefits of employing people with learning disabilities and the support available.

Comment

Service providers were frustrated at the reluctance of local employers to take on people with learning disabilities. Person Centred Planning is also in a developmental phase in this area.

B.1.4 Locality D

Description

Locality D is an urban area, with high levels of poverty and unemployment. It has a population of about half a million people and at seven per cent the proportion of people from ethnic minorities is about the national average.

Organisation

This locality is characterised by a high level of Local Authority social services-based provision. Rather than contract out employment for people with learning disabilities, this locality has become a provider of a range of opportunities, including being a *WORKSTEP* contractor.

Provision

Two large (>100) day centres are run by the Local Authority, which also provides a high level of integrated education, training and employment projects. The *Valuing People* implementation plan includes a strategy for skill development in terms of progress from day services, through the authority's own education, training and job experience opportunities, to Jobcentre Plus provision, such as *WORKSTEP* and *New Deal*. People can enter the process at any stage and do not need to go through all stages.

The mapping exercise conducted for the Welfare to Work Joint Investment Plan (WtW JIP) indicates that social services have extensive connections with providers of training and employment support in the locality. They provide Supported Employment and education and run a café and print workshop, and are *WORKSTEP* contractors.

Local policy objectives

Work is one of the 16 priorities of the locality's LD JIP: '*all people with learning disabilities will have the chance to try real work if they want to...real work is being involved in a work experience where people feel valued and where they are doing something that needs to be done. Real work can be paid or unpaid*'. A post has been created to make this happen.

Views of people with learning disabilities

The WtW JIP included the results of a consultation involving people with learning disabilities, whose experiences were mixed. Some said they were happy without a job, doing other things they enjoy. A number felt that their requests for employment had not been heard. Being valued at work was important for everyone. This was not necessarily related to monetary reward.

Comment

This authority is unusual in having a relatively high level of provision for support into work 'in-house.' It is interesting to note that while Shaw Trust operates in this town, it has very few clients with learning disabilities – the needs of these people are largely met by social services, together with one or two voluntary organisations, including Remploy Interwork, and Scope and one local voluntary organisation.

B.1.5 Locality E

Description

Locality E is a large, rural county with low poverty and low levels of unemployment. It has a population of over half a million people and a relatively small proportion of residents belonging to ethnic minorities (estimate of 1.5 per cent). The LD JIP notes that the low population density presents challenges to ensuring access and equity of health and social services. Based on the 'administrative prevalence' estimate of five per 1,000 people with LD, 1,718 adults with learning disability were likely to be in the locality. 1,095 were known to services (1998).

Organisation

The large number of partnerships implied by the presence of numerous PCTs, health trusts and housing authorities makes liaison and co-ordination complex, and the JIP likewise represents the views of various stakeholders. It mentions that the closure of large Learning Disability Long Stay Hospitals in the last 15 years has led to services being developed specifically to meet the needs of the people who were being discharged rather than looking at the wider picture.

Provision

776 individuals were using day services, at an average rate of 3.5 days per week (March 2000). Twenty-three per cent of these places were provided by the voluntary or independent sector, the rest by the Local Authority.

According to the LD JIP, 126 people with LD were supported 'in open and/or paid employment', 23 people were working a total of 297 hours per week, 103 of these hours were unpaid. It appears that only one person with learning disability was using Direct Payments, while a generic advocacy service was available across the locality.

The profile of day care and employment opportunities is characterised by disparity. Two small day centres (<25) and three larger ones (30-100) operated in the towns scattered across the county. The differences between areas are reflected in the variety of provision. In one PCT, an employment development service was working with 60 people to support them in employment. This project had clearly enjoyed considerable investment in development in recent years, but lacked long-term funding and was indeed under threat at the time of the study, whereby its resources appeared likely to be diverted to Person Centred Planning. Another had several sheltered employment schemes, including a social enterprise, following the traditional

themes of printing and horticulture. A third had a Supported Employment steering group.

Local policy objectives

The LD JIP action plan includes two objectives relevant to this study: *'move from traditional centre-based day services to individual programmes'* and *'Supported Employment'*. Implementation focused on reviewing existing services and their potential for change. Action plans included the promotion of more individualised day activity plans, and more 'meaningful' day activities.

Views of service providers

No views from people with learning disabilities were available, so we present here the providers' perspective, as indicated by the gap analysis given in the LD JIP. This states that staff implemented life planning to some extent, but not Person Centred Planning. The end of a *New Deal for Disabled People* pilot in the locality left a gap in provision for people who could not work more than 16 hours per week. Access to Supported Employment was not consistent across the locality; according to social services there was a need for more job coaches, and for more investment in work-based activities, which should reduce demand for day services. A few PCTs in their contribution to the JIP saw a need to develop pre-employment training and to help people to obtain recognised vocational qualifications. High local unemployment and the benefits trap were seen as obstacles by two PCTs.

Comment

Employment services were seen in this JIP as an adjunct to day services, not a substitute, and only incremental change was planned. There may have been a lack of awareness in some areas of the successes in placing people in open or supported work that had been achieved in other areas.

B.1.6 Locality F

Description

Locality F is an urban, unitary authority with both high poverty and high unemployment and a local economy heavily affected by the decline in manufacturing. It has a general population of 0.217 million people with an ethnic minority population of 14 per cent. Prevalence estimates indicate that there are 884 people with learning disabilities aged over 15 in the area, and service records show 656 requiring some form of service input. Ninety-one people were in paid work according to the 2001/02 Learning Disability JIP.

Organisation

The town is divided into three divisions with roughly equal populations, each having a day centre linked to a network of 'outreach' bases. This form of organisation is designed to promote integration with a wide range of local mainstream services. Some specific services for women and for people from ethnic minorities are available.

Provision

In addition to the three day centres serving 212 people, there is a well-established in-house Supported Employment agency in this locality, which is the key agency for people with learning disabilities who are interested in paid employment. This agency receives more than half of its funding from European Social Fund and Single Regeneration Budget grants. The area is also served by Remploy and numerous other vocationally-oriented and community-based projects aspiring to become social enterprises (recycling).

Local policy objectives

The learning disability service mission statement includes access to employment opportunities as one of the forms of support that the service will provide. The needs analysis in the LD JIP, among various gaps or opportunities for service provision, identifies a need for improved access to employment opportunities. In addition to the existing level of paid work, provided by the department's own Supported Employment scheme, and the volunteering opportunities provided through the day services, the action plan states the Local Authority will: fund and develop Supported Employment services; develop two drop-in centres; support the development of local social firms; and develop work-based day centres. It also states that a day service development group is exploring new ways for people to gain meaningful paid employment, and that there is a plan to develop better links with the department's own scheme. Linking to the WtW JIP to avoid duplication is one milestone of the LD JIP, another is establishing a service level agreement with the department's scheme. Finally, there is a milestone to develop alternatives to day care provision by using day service outreach budgets.

Views of people with learning disabilities

The JIP states that several consultations with people with learning disabilities, carers and staff took place in the year leading up to its production (2001). Two of these consultations related to day services. In one case, a planned closure was averted by carers, who suggested the day centre become, instead, an inclusive community centre. As a result, some of the former users now work in the centre's café. The LD JIP distils several themes from all the consultations undertaken: people want services as close to home as possible; they are more concerned with the quality of the service than who provides it; they want competent staff to deliver services; families need to feel they are being heard; families want to be included in the planning process, to be kept informed and have decisions explained to them; and they want individual

needs, including issues of sexuality, gender and culture, to be considered in planning and implementing services.

Comment

While day service reform appears to be on the agenda in this locality, and users' voices have been heard about employment, effective change management will be needed to overcome the apparent resistance to day centre reconfiguration.

B.1.7 Locality G

Description

Locality G is an urban area, a unitary authority, with relatively high levels of unemployment and poverty. It has a population of about 0.25m, of which the ethnic minority population constitutes 3.1 per cent. Its LD JIP needs analysis identifies a total of 699 adults with learning disabilities on the register, 60 of whom were in paid employment, according to the WtW JIP.

Organisation

Locality G is unusual in the sense that it has a joint health and social services learning disability team. Their joint strategy espouses the following objectives:

'to make services user-focused, accessible and locally-based; and to offer continuity of support between social services, education, housing, voluntary and independent providers.'

Provision

Two large day centres (>100) and two smaller ones (<20) were provided by the Local Authority. In addition to locally provided services, according to the LD JIP, in 2001, MENCAP Pathways provided support to 70 people (not all in paid work). Pathways provided a café where people could gain work experience. Work placements and training were provided by the voluntary sector. There was a self-advocacy group, working particularly with people with learning disabilities. This was seen as promoting confidence, which would in turn facilitate employment.

Local policy objectives

The LD JIP's action plan has seven objectives, including *'Objective 4 – We will actively encourage people with learning disabilities to access ... work and leisure.'* This three-year action plan includes a fairly extensive list of targets relating directly or indirectly to employment:

- Implementation of specialist community transport.
- Improve work experience/work preparation.
- Improve progression between and within agencies.

- Increase self-esteem and assertiveness training.
- Consider using social firm model.
- Increase supported work placements.
- Increase use of home-based work/learning.
- Training for employers on disability awareness.
- Extend Direct Payments to people with learning disabilities.
- Increase on-site learning and links to employment for people attending day centres.
- Develop Supported Employment projects.
- Develop multi-agency transitional arrangements that maximise opportunities for training and employment.

Views of people with learning disabilities

A survey of people with learning disabilities was undertaken for the WtW JIP, but it is not known whether people with learning disabilities themselves responded to this survey. Results indicated widespread dissatisfaction with the Direct Payments scheme, largely through lack of information about it, and a possible lack of access to Direct Payments for people with learning disabilities. The survey also indicated some dissatisfaction with the lack of a central source of benefits advice. Both of these factors could influence people's access to employment.

Comment

In the documents seen, there was no clear acknowledgement by planners of the difference between paid and unpaid work. There was, however, an implicit recognition of the need for a spectrum of opportunities, ranging from building confidence through training and work preparation to work experience and permanent Supported Employment. Appreciation of the need for monitoring and progression is also indicated. This was one of the most comprehensively work-oriented JIPs.

B.1.8 Locality H

Description

A rural county, this locality has low unemployment and low poverty. It has a population of about half a million people, with fewer than two per cent of the population belonging to non-white ethnic minorities. Day service users in 1999 numbered 176, with an average age of 40 years, and 35 per cent of these people were considered to be candidates for Supported Employment and training '*within ten years*'.

Organisation

This large locality is divided into four areas, co-located with the PCTs, and each having a distinctive community team responsible for adults with learning disabilities. A joint commissioning team has overall responsibility for learning disability services. An independent advocacy service is provided to promote participation in services. All four areas separate work preparation from care-and-support services. Some clients divide their week between the two types of provision, and although staff are assigned to one or the other, both types of provision are managed by the same service manager.

Provision

In May 2002, over 800 individuals were participating in some kind of organised day activity, training or employment. About half received at least one day's work preparation per week. In one division, there is a sheltered work environment based on a light industrial model. In another, there are high levels of open employment, and a third has a horticultural unit. Some integration between work preparation and care and support provision is evident in the fact that some employment preparation courses are run in the day centres. However, the 2002 JIP advocates a separation of employment support and day services.

Local policy objectives

The 2002 JIP aims to:

- enable work in integrated settings;
- co-ordinate with the WtW JIP;
- provide work preparation and training;
- increase the number of people in work by 10 per cent.

Views of people with learning disabilities

The measures of performance put forward in the LD JIP in relation to work preparation recognise the 'soft' (difficult to quantify) benefits to people with learning disabilities, such as gains in confidence, improvements in work-related skills, communication, self-advocacy and social skills.

Comment

This large locality has a relatively well established employment support service, although, due to the sharp division between this and care and support, it is difficult to identify whether people in care and support day services are enabled seamlessly to access employment support.

B.1.9 Locality I

Description

This large rural county has low unemployment, and low poverty with a population of nearly 0.75 million people and a low percentage of residents from ethnic minorities (less than two per cent). Over 15,000 people with learning disabilities are estimated to live in the area and, in 1999, over 700 were known to the council, although this may be a somewhat unreliable estimate, as the database is awaiting replacement.

Organisation

The Local Authority, responsible for social care services, is organised into seven localities, which mirror the seven District and Borough Councils. Specialist learning disability services are organised around three community teams. Two NHS Trusts are in the process of creating a single, Learning Disability Trust.

Provision

This locality has three large, traditional day centres serving about 300 people doing contract work, and which appear to cater for people with mild to moderate levels of disability. People with severe impairments tend to go to special needs units. About 100 people with learning disabilities were in employment at the time of the latest JIP, with staff estimating that a further 70 individuals would benefit from work opportunities if more of these were available. The dispersed nature of work opportunities across the locality means that independent travelling is a prerequisite of paid employment. There is a thriving independent and voluntary sector, providing both day and employment opportunities, with national providers Remploy Interwork, SCOPE and MENCAP Pathways operating in this area, as well as two local agencies providing work/employment. One of these only provides voluntary work. The other is funded by the Local Authority and the European Social Fund to facilitate paid work opportunities. Parents have been instrumental in the establishment of some of the voluntary provision.

Local policy objectives

The 2001 LD JIP (accessible version) states that the plan is to help more people find a job, and to do this a person who is also a board member will be placed in charge of employment. The council itself will examine how it employs disabled people, and links between local Supported Employment provision, Jobcentre Plus and colleges will be strengthened. In 2001, about 0.9 per cent of the learning disability budget was spent on Supported Employment, and the JIP action plan indicates an increase by 2003 to 1.8 per cent. The aims for 2001 were to develop: Supported Employment services; two drop-in centres; local social firms; and work-based day centres.

Views of people with learning disabilities

Debates about the joint learning disability strategy were held. A consultation for the JIP interviewed 71 people with learning disabilities. Over 300 parents and carers were invited to contribute, of whom 73 completed questionnaires and 20 were seen individually.

Comment

The extensive experience of employment support in this Local Authority is reflected in its ambitious local policy objectives.

B.2 Profile of people with learning disabilities

Table B.2 Profile of people with learning disabilities interviewed

	Number of people
Age range¹	
20-29	20
30-39	51
40-49	45
50-59	27
60 and above	8
Gender	
Women	72
Men	88
Employment status²	
Employed now	60
Employed in the past	40
Not employed	57
Ethnicity³	
White British	146
Asian British	2
Black British	1
Guyanese British	1
Caribbean	2
African	1
Level of support⁴	
Need someone with me all the time	32
Need someone around day and night just in case	20
Need support every day not during the night	21
Just need support every week but not every day	7
Need support sometimes	44
Do not usually need support at home	25

¹ Missing 7, Base 158

² Missing 1

³ Missing 5

⁴ Missing 9

B.3 Profile of carers of people with learning disabilities

Table B.3 Profile of carers interviewed

	Number of people
Age range	
Less than or equal to 19	1
20-29	2
30-39	8
40-59	6
60-69	3
Employment status	
Parent	11
Sibling	1
Partner	0
Friend	1
Other relative	3
Paid carer	4
Ethnicity	
White/white British	17
Non-white	2
D/K	1
Marital status	
Married	11
Widowed	4
Single	2
Divorced	3
Employment status	
Retired	9
Unemployed	1
Working part-time	4
Working full-time	6

Continued

Table B.3 Continued

	Number of people
Change in work status	
Gave up work to care	2
Reduced work to care	4
No change	12
N/A	2
Service user	
Working	13
Worked in past	4
Never worked	3
Attends day care	15
Formerly attended	1
Never attended	4

B.4 Profile of day centres and services interviewed in the study

Table B.4 Profile of day services

	Number of services
Size of service¹	
1-50 people with learning disabilities	2
51-100	12
101-150	4
151-200	1
Deprivation status of area	
Urban	15
Rural	12
Poverty – High	6
Poverty – Low	21
Gen. pop. unemployment rate – High	15
Gen. pop. unemployment rate – Low	12
Non-white residents % – High (>10%)	5
Non-white residents % – medium (5-9%)	6
Non-white residents % – Low (<5%)	16

Continued

Table B.4 Continued

	Number of services
Service description	
Day centre	15
Community day service	2
Social education centre	5
Resource centre	5

¹ Missing 8

B.5 Profile of other employment organisations

Table B.5 Profile of other employment organisations

	Number of services
Size of service – all people with disabilities¹	
1-50	1
51-100	5
101-150	0
151-200	1
200+	3
Size of service – people with learning disabilities²	
1-50	4
51-100	3
101-150	0
151-200	2
200+	1
Sector	
Local Authority	22
Voluntary body	11
Private sector	1
Service description	
Supported employment agency	11
<i>WORKSTEP</i> provider ³	6
Social enterprise	5
Work preparation or training service	2

¹ Missing 3

² Missing 3

³ There may be some overlap between SE Agencies and *WORKSTEP* where LA SE providers also have *WORKSTEP* contracts. This was not always clear from the data provided. Shaw Trust

Appendix C

Research instruments

The research project used a number of interview schedules.

For people with learning disabilities we used questionnaires which contained pictures and a large-scale layout to help people understand the questions and to aid response. All research instruments are reproduced here in text only formats.

(Electronic copies of the full questionnaires are available from the principal researcher beyer@cardiff.ac.uk on request).

C.1 Core questionnaire for people with learning disabilities

Thinking about work

Core questions

Work and day services: what do you think?

Work and Day Services: What do you think?

This project is being funded by the Department for Work and Pensions and the Department of Health.

The people doing the project are from:

The Welsh Centre for Learning Disabilities, University of Wales

The Institute for Applied Health and Social Policy, King's College London

The Institute of Social Policy, University of Durham

Norah Fry Research Centre, University of Bristol

Thinking about work

This page tells you a bit more about the project.

The Government has published a report called '*Valuing People*', which has lots of ideas for improving the lives of people with learning difficulties. The Department of Health are working on this, along with the Department for Work and Pensions, who are in charge of work and benefits. Together, they want to find out what they can do to support people who want to work. They have asked us to find out about day services and work, and how they link up together.

A lot of people like you use day services. We want to find out:

- What do people think about day services?
- What do people think about jobs and work?
- What helps people get a job?

We will go and talk to lots of people. The more people we talk to the better. This is why we wanted to talk to you. I will go through the questions with you, you can tell me what you think, and I will write it down. If you don't understand something, just ask, and I will try and explain it. However, before we start, there are some things I wanted you to know.

We are interested in what YOU think. You can say what you want.

This is not a test.

There are no right and wrong answers.

Its ok to say 'don't know'.

Also I promise:

- I will not write down your name and address.
- I will not tell *anyone* what you have said. I will keep this a secret.
- When we write about what happens to people, I will not use real names.
- I will only keep going while you say it is OK. If you tell me to I will stop. You can also say if you want a break.

Are you happy to go on?

Yes No

We want to include all kinds of people in our study. I want to start by finding a bit about you. I can already see the answer to one of these questions, so we will start there.

Are you a man or a woman?

Man

Woman

How old are you?**How would you describe yourself? Here are some choices:**

White British

White Irish

Other white background

White and black Caribbean

White and black African

White and Asian

Any other mixed background

Bangladeshi

Indian

Pakistani

Caribbean

African

Any other black background

Chinese

Any other background.

Where do you live (what kind of place)?

Who else lives there with you? Do you live with:

Your family?

Other people with learning difficulties?

A friend or partner?

On your own?

Some other people?

We wanted to make sure people who need lots of support do not get left out. How much support do you usually have at home? Tell me which of these is nearest to you.

I need someone with me all the time, including someone who is awake at night to support me.

I need someone around day and night, just in case.

I need support every day, but not during the night.

I just need support every week, but not every day.

I just need support sometimes.

I do not usually need support at home.

None of these. Please can you say what support you do get?

Some people need support going to places outside the home. How much support do you need? Tell me which of these is most like you.

I always need someone with me all the time, every time I go out.

I need someone with me most of the times I go out.

I go out without support most of the time.

I never need support when I go out.

None of these (can you tell me about the support you need?)

How do you manage using buses and trains?

I can use buses and trains without any help.

I can use buses and trains without help if I know the journey.

I usually need help with buses and trains.

I always need help with buses and trains.

None of these (please tell me how much help you need using buses and trains).

How do you normally get to your day service? Do you:

Walk

Go on centre bus or van

Go on an ordinary bus

Use a taxi or dial-a-ride

Some other way (tell me how you get there).

What do you do during the week?

In this bit of the questionnaire, I want to find out where you go and what you do each week. I have got a diary here and we can fill it in.

So what did you do last Monday morning?

Is this what happens every week?

If not, what other things do you do?

People do lots of things at their day service. Which of the things you do at the day service are important to you? I will write them in the table below.

What I do at my day service

Why I do it

We would like to know why you think you do these things. We will write in by each one what you think. Is it for:

Learning?

Work?

Fun and friends?

Other?

Don't know?

People also go out from their day service to do things. If you go out, could you think of the three things you do that are most important to you? I will write them in the table below.

What I do outside my day service

Why I do it

We would like to know why you think you do these things. We will write in by each one what you think. Is it for:

Learning?

Work?

Fun and friends?

Other?

Don't know?

Have you done any of these things at your day service?

Finding out about jobs

Visiting workplaces

Talking about what you can do well

Writing your CV (things about yourself)

Practising interviews

Tried work experience

Anything else that has helped you think about jobs

Thinking about all the things that you do inside and outside the day centre what is the best thing you do?

Again thinking about all the things that you do inside and outside the day centre, what is the worst thing you do?

Is there anything you would like to change about the day centre, or things you do outside?

Yes

No

Don't know

If yes, tell me what you would change, and how you would change it?

Some people have told us how they feel about their day service. What do you think? Tell me if you agree or disagree with each thing that people said.

1: 'At day service you feel good about yourself.'

What do you think?

Yes

Not sure

No

Can you think of an example of when you feel good about yourself at the day service?

2: 'At the day service you get stressed and worried.'

What do you think?

Yes

Not sure

No

Can you think of an example when you were stressed and worried at the day service?

3: 'At the day service you can decide things for yourself.'

What do you think?

Yes

Not sure

No

Can you think of an example of when you could decide things for yourself at the day service?

4: 'At the day service you get on with the people who go there.'

What do you think?

Yes

Not sure

No

Can you think of an example of how you get on with the other people at the day service?

5: 'At the day service you get good support to do things.'

What do you think?

Yes

Not sure

No

Can you think of an example of good support you had at the day service?

6: 'You go to the day service because you have to.'

What do you think?

Yes

Not sure

No

Can you think of an example of when you went to the day service because you had to?

7: 'You feel under pressure at the day service.'

What do you think?

Yes

Not sure

No

Can you think of an example of when you felt under pressure at the day service?

8: 'You get upset by some of the people who go to the day service.'

What do you think?

Yes

Not sure

No

Can you think of an example of when you were upset by the other people at the day service?

9: 'At the day service you learn new things.'

What do you think?

Yes

Not sure

No

Can you think of an example of new things you learnt at the day service?

10: 'You get treated like a child at the day service.'

What do you think?

Yes

Not sure

No

Can you think of an example of when you were treated like a child at the day service?

11: 'At the day service, because you see your friends.'

What do you think?

Yes

Not sure

No

Can you think of an example of when you get to see your friends at the day service?

12: 'You get bored at day service.'

What do you think?

Yes

Not sure

No

Can you think of an example of when you were bored at the day service?

13: 'At the day service you feel part of real life.'

What do you think?

Yes

Not sure

No

Can you think of an example of how being at the day service helps you feel part of real life?

14: 'At the day service you get bossed around.'

What do you think?

Yes

Not sure

No

Can you think of an example of when you get bossed around at the day service?

15: 'At the day service you do the same things all the time.'

What do you think?

Yes

Not sure

No

Can you think of an example of why you feel nothing changes at the day service?

16: 'At the day service, you have a good time.'

What do you think?

Yes

Not sure

No

Can you think of an example of why you have a good time at the day service?

Do you go to college, or to class?

Yes

No

If yes, can you tell us a bit about it?

What do you do at college or your class?

Reading, writing or maths

Computers

Work skills

Something else

If you said 'something else', can you say here what classes you go to?

Do you get a certificate or qualification at the end of your course?

Yes

No

If yes, can you say what the name of the qualification is?

What will happen when you finish your course?

Another course

Back to day centre

Job

Don't know

Other (tell us what)

Have you done any of these things at your college or course?

Finding out about jobs

Visiting workplaces

Talking about what you can do well

Writing your CV (things about yourself)

Practised interviews

Tried work experience

Anything else that has helped you to think about jobs

This bit is about friends and going out

Think of all the people you know at your day service OR at college.

Who are the people you are friends with?**Do you ever meet any of these people outside?**

Yes

No

If yes, where?

When did you last see them outside?**Benefits**

Having money to do things is important. We wanted to find out about the kind of benefits that people get.

C.2 Questionnaire for people with learning disabilities in work now

Thinking about work

Questions for people who have a job now

In this bit we talk more about work.

How many jobs do you have at the moment?

Just one job

More than one job

If more than one job can you tell me what you do?

If it is OK, I am now going to ask you some questions about each of your jobs.

Questions for jobs 1, 2 and 3

Tell me a bit more about your job. For example:

What things do you do in your job?

How many hours do you work each week?

Who do you work for?

Do other people from the day service work at ...?

Yes

No

Don't know

Are there many disabled people where you work?

Yes

No

Don't know

How do you get to work? Do you:

Walk

Go on work bus or van

Go on an ordinary bus

Use a taxi or dial-a-ride

Some other way (tell me how you get there)

What difference do you think having a job makes to people's lives these days?

What do you think is the best thing about having a job now?

What do you think is the worst thing about having a job now?

Relationships in the workplace

Do you work on your own or with other people?

On own

With other people

If other people who are these other people?

Who tells you what to do in your job (who is your boss?)

Do you get to meet people from outside work as part of your job? (This might include customers or the general public)

Yes

No

Don't know

If yes, how do you meet these people?

How do you get on with all these people you meet at work?

For example how well do you get on with your bosses?

For example do you get on well, or do you get on badly, or is it somewhere in the middle?

My boss People I work with public/customer

Good

In the middle

Bad

Don't know

If bad for any group...

You said you do not get on with.... Why is this?

This bit is about friends and going out

Think of all the people you know at work

Who are the people you are friends with?

Do you ever meet any of these people outside work?

Yes

No

If yes, where?

When did you last see them outside work?

This bit is about getting paid

Some people get paid for their work, some people are still trying out a job and do not get paid yet (this is sometimes called work experience) while others work as a volunteer and do their work for nothing.

Which are you?

If you get paid work included: how much do you usually get paid? For example:

In an hour

Each week

Each fortnight

Each month

How do you feel about your pay?

Is it good

Bad

In the middle

For people who are not paid

How do you feel about not being paid?

Is it good

Bad

In the middle

For people who also get benefits

Some people have problems with working and claiming benefits.

Have you had problems with benefits and work?

Yes

No

If yes what were these problems?**What do you know about the rules of working and claiming benefits?****What would happen if you worked more hours?****This bit is about the help people get to find and keep jobs****Who suggested you might start looking for a job?**

Here is a list of people that might have made this suggestion to help you. There might have been more than one person.

It was my own idea

Someone from my family

My social worker

An employment officer

I saw someone else get a job

Someone from the day service

Someone from where I live

Can't remember

Someone else (please say who)

Some people need help to find and keep jobs. We have made a list of people who might be a help and the things they might help with.

For example:

Out of these choices.....

I did it myself

My family

Day service

Employment officer

Person I work with

My boss at work

Job coach

Other

... who has helped you do the following things:

Thinking about the kind of job you want

Finding some jobs to try

Applying for my job

Learning my job

Making my workplace suit me (adaptations)

Being a good worker

Getting on with other people

Sorting out benefits

Sorting out other problems

Other kinds of help (what)...

Do you still get help from any of the above people?

What is the best thing about the help you get?

What is the worst thing about the help you get?

Did you have too much help, too little or was it about right?

Too much

Too little

About right

Are there any other things you would like help with?

This bit is about how you feel about work

These are things that people have said about work (just like the things people have said about the day service). See whether you agree with each thing.

1: *'At work you feel good about yourself.'*

What do you think?

Yes

Not sure

No

Can you think of an example of when you feel good at work?

2: *'At work you get stress and worried.'*

What do you think?

Yes

Not sure

No

Can you think of an example of how you feel stressed or worried at work?

3: *'At work you can decide things for yourself.'*

What do you think?

Yes

Not sure

No

Can you think of an example of when you feel able to decide things at work?

4: *'At work you get on with the other people there.'*

What do you think?

Yes

Not sure

No

Can you think of an example of how you get on with people at work?

5: 'At work you get good help to do things.'

What do you think?

Yes

Not sure

No

Can you think of an example of when you get good help at work?

6: 'You go to work because you have to.'

What do you think?

Yes

Not sure

No

Can you think of an example of when you go to work because you feel you have to?

7: 'At work you feel under pressure.'

What do you think?

Yes

Not sure

No

Can you think of an example of when you feel under pressure at work?

8: 'You get upset by some people you work with.'

What do you think?

Yes

Not sure

No

Can you think of an example of when you get upset by people at work?

9: 'At work you learn new skills.'

What do you think?

Yes

Not sure

No

Can you think of an example of when you learn new skills at work?

10: 'At work you get treated like a child.'

What do you think?

Yes

Not sure

No

Can you think of an example of when you are treated as a child at work?

11: 'You see your friends at work.'

What do you think?

Yes

Not sure

No

Can you think of an example of how you see your friends at work?

12: 'You get bored at work.'

What do you think?

Yes

Not sure

No

Can you think of an example of why you feel bored at work?

13: 'Being in work helps you feel part of 'real life.'

What do you think?

Yes

Not sure

No

Can you think of an example of how being at work makes you feel part of real life?

14: 'At work you get bossed around.'

What do you think?

Yes

Not sure

No

Can you think of an example of when you are bossed around at work?

15: 'At work you have to do the same things all the time.'

What do you think?

Yes

Not sure

No

Can you think of an example of why you feel you do the same things all the time?

16: 'At work you have a good time.'

What do you think?

Yes

Not sure

No

Can you think of an example of why you feel you have a good time at work?

This last bit is about the future

Will you want to do any of these things over the next few years?

Get a better job?

Yes

Not sure

No

If yes what kind of job?

Give up work or retire?

Yes

Not sure

No

If yes why is that?

Stay in the job I have now?

Yes

Not sure

No

C.3 Questionnaire for day centre managers

The research team from the Learning Disability Employment Research Partnership have been commissioned by the Department of Health and the Department for Work and Pensions to carry out research in day centres:

- to assess the advice and employment preparation activities undertaken by day care staff;
- to explore the extent to which day care centres interface with local employment related services (of all forms); and
- to uncover and explore the key facilitating and inhibiting factors in enabling people with learning difficulties to engage in work related activities.

Your local authority have agreed to take part in this project, and your centre has been selected as part of the national sample for the research. You will be interviewed about the service and the way it approaches employment for its service users. However, there are a number of questions that will take time to answer, mainly to do with numbers, and these are contained here.

We would be grateful if you would complete this part of the survey to the best of your ability and return it to the LDERP interviewer when you meet in a few weeks time. If you have any queries on the questions, please contact the appropriate person for your area below:

Anna Heyman (Research Associate), CASS, University of Durham, 0191 374 1952, anna.heyman@durham.ac.uk

Paul Swift (Research Fellow), Institute for Applied Health and Social Policy, Community Care Development Centre, King's College London, 0117 927 6979, pswift@ic24.net

Steve Beyer (Deputy Director), Welsh Centre for Learning Disabilities Applied Research Unit, Department of Psychological Medicine, University of Wales College of Medicine, 02920691795, beyer@cf.ac.uk

Details of the person interviewed

1. What is your name?
2. What is your job title?
3. What are your main responsibilities within the organisation?
4. What is your contact telephone number should the researchers have any queries later on the information you have given us?

Details of service contact

5. What is the name of the service you represent?
6. What is the address of the service?
7. If the service is part of a larger organisation, please give the name of that organisation

Pen picture of your service

8. What are the main aims of your service?
9. What are the main activities of the service?
10. To what extent are training people with learning disabilities for employment and finding people paid jobs something your service does?

About the extent of service provision and resources

In this section we will ask questions about the numbers and types of people helped by the service, and some figures on the outcomes achieved for them. We also will ask for information on the structure and staffing of the organisation, and on its funding. This will help us to compare day centre and other services and what it costs to deliver particular outcomes.

11. How many people with learning disabilities do you currently support in all situations?
12. How many people with learning disabilities do you currently support in paid work?
13. What other situations do you service currently support people with learning disabilities apart from paid work?

Voluntary Work

Work experience

Vocational training

Other (please state)

14. How would you describe the people you support, in terms of the severity of their learning disability and the level of support they need?
- 15a. What is the gender balance of the people with learning disabilities you support?
- 15b. What is the age distribution of the people with learning disabilities you support?
- 16 – 24 yrs
 - 25 – 34 yrs
 - 35 – 44 yrs
 - 45 – 54 yrs
 - 55 – 64 yrs
16. Considering only the people with learning disabilities who you support in paid work:
- a) what are the highest, lowest, and average number of hours they work per week?
 - b) what is their highest, lowest, and average hourly rate of pay?
 - c) what is their highest, lowest, and average weekly gross earnings?

If you do not have these figures please provide an estimate

17. Considering all the people with learning disabilities who you support, what percentage receive the following welfare benefits, tax credits, and earnings disregards:
- Jobseeker's Allowance
 - Income Support – Disability Premium
 - Income Benefit
 - Severe Disablement Allowance
 - Disability Living Allowance
 - Housing Benefit
 - Council Tax Benefit
 - Disabled person's Tax Credit
 - Supported Permitted Work above £20 disregard
 - Supported Permitted Work at or below £20 disregard

If you do not have these figures please provide an estimate

18. Can you outline the organisational structure of your Day Centre, beginning with top management, moving down through operational units?
- 19a. What categories of staff do you have within the organisation?
- Senior Managers
 - Middle Managers
 - Administrative
 - Senior Day Care Staff
 - Day Care Staff
 - Auxiliary staff/Cooks etc
 - Vocational Trainers
 - Job Finders
 - Employment Officers
 - Job Coaches
 - Other (please state)
- 19b. How many staff do you have in each category that are full- and part-time?
- 19c. How many of these staff support people in paid work?
- 19d. How many of these staff support people with learning disability?

The funding of the organisation

We are interested in the funding your Day Centre receives from Social Services and from other sources (e.g. European Funding, income from sales or contracts, special project funding) to do their work.

- 20a. What are the main sources of funding for your Day Centre?
- 20b. What is your budget for the financial year 2002/03?
- Salaries
 - Vehicle costs
 - Transport (Service Users)
 - Premises
 - Travel & expenses (staff)
 - Administration
 - Equipment
 - Training
 - Management Charges
 - Material/consumable goods
 - Sale of goods/profit on sales
 - Other costs (state)
 - Total costs

Perception of the employability of people with learning disabilities

We are interested in your experience of the strengths and barriers that people with learning disabilities face in becoming employed.

21. What characteristics do people with learning disabilities need to have, to become employed – in order of importance, most important first?
22. What characteristics of people with learning disabilities would mean they would be unable to move into employment – in order of importance, most important first?
- 23a. In your experience, what impact has losing a job had on people with learning disabilities who have been employed?
- 23b. How have any negative impacts been overcome in the long-term?

The process through which your organisation supports people in employment

We are interested in the process through which you are able to provide people with paid employment. We start with referral.

24. How do people access your service?

We are also interested in what you do to find out about people, equip them for a job, place them, and support them in a job.

- 25a. How do you find out their interests, abilities and needs?
- 25b. How long does it normally take to do this?
- 26a. How do you give training of relevant employment skills?
- 26b. How long does it normally take to do this?
- 27a. How do you provide suitable try-outs, work experiences or simulated work?
- 27b. How long does it normally take to do this?
- 28a. How do you find suitable job placements?
- 28b. How long does it normally take to do this?
29. Please look at this list of employer types and tell me which you have used to provide paid jobs, and which for work experience or job trial placements and give examples where possible.
 - a. Departments in your own authority?
 - b. Commercial employers?
 - c. Public authorities?
 - d. Voluntary organisations?
 - e. Other 1 (State)?
 - Other 2 (State)?
 - Other 3 (State)?

30. What types of support do you offer to the employers you work with?
31. What has been your overall experience of the willingness of employers to employ people with learning disabilities?
32. What strategies are key to successfully working with employers so that they will provide and sustain jobs for people with learning disabilities?
- 33a. How do you support people in jobs through work-based training, practical support, or working with employers and their staff?
- 33b. How long does it normally take to do this?
34. Who provides benefits advice for the people with learning disability you support?
35. What types of support do you offer to the parents, or family carers, of the people who are interested in paid employment?
36. What has been your overall experience of the willingness of parents, or family carers, to support their relative entering paid employment?
37. What strategies are key to successfully working with parents, or family carers, in support of people with learning disabilities entering paid employment?
38. What hinders your organisation in being effective in helping people with learning disabilities get, and keep, paid employment?
39. What changes would help your organisation be more effective in helping people with learning disabilities get, and keep, paid employment?

The agencies you work with

We are interested in the other statutory agencies you work closely with to achieve good employment outcomes for people with learning disabilities

40. Can you look at this list of agencies and tell me which you work with to get people with learning disabilities into paid employment, providing examples.

Independent/Voluntary sector SE agencies?

- a. If Yes – nature of collaboration
- b. Effectiveness of relationship
- c. If No – help think they could give or 'DK'

Adult learning disability services (Not Day)?

- a. If Yes – nature of collaboration
- b. Effectiveness of relationship
- c. If No – help think they could give or 'DK'

Local Authority Day Centre/Service?

- a. If Yes – nature of collaboration
- b. Effectiveness of relationship
- c. If No – help think they could give or 'DK'

Jobcentre +/Employment Service?

- a. If Yes – nature of collaboration
- b. Effectiveness of relationship
- c. If No – help think they could give or 'DK'

WORKSTEP Contractors?

- a. If Yes-nature of collaboration
- b. Effectiveness of relationship
- c. If No – help think they could give or 'DK'

New Deal for Disabled People Job Brokers?

- a. If Yes – nature of collaboration
- b. Effectiveness of relationship
- c. If No – help think they could give or 'DK'

Training Organisations?

- a. If Yes – nature of collaboration
- b. Effectiveness of relationship
- c. If No – help think they could give or 'DK'

Voluntary Organisations (not SE agencies)?

- a. If Yes-nature of collaboration
- b. Effectiveness of relationship
- c. If No – help think they could give or 'DK'

Learning & Skills Council?

- a. If Yes – nature of collaboration
- b. Effectiveness of relationship
- c. If No – help think they could give or 'DK'

Further Education Colleges?

- a. If Yes – nature of collaboration
- b. Effectiveness of relationship
- c. If No – help think they could give or 'DK'

Schools?

- a. If Yes – nature of collaboration
- b. Effectiveness of relationship
- c. If No – help think they could give or 'DK'

ConneXions Service?

- a. If Yes – nature of collaboration
- b. Effectiveness of relationship
- c. If No – help think they could give or 'DK'

Other Services?

- a. If Yes – nature of collaboration
- b. Effectiveness of relationship
- c. If No – help think they could give or 'DK'

41b. For those agencies you do currently work with, what is the nature of the collaboration?

41c. How would you describe the effectiveness of your relationship with the agencies you currently work with?

41d. For those agencies you do **not** currently work with, can you tell us what help you think they could give to place people with learning disabilities into paid employment?

Enter responses under those agencies ticked NO above

Enter 'DK' if they are not aware of what agencies do

Use of programmes that support employment

We are interested in the Government funding and support programmes that you might use to help people become employed

42a. Can you look at this list of funding and support programmes and tell me which you make use of in supporting people into employment?

New Deal for young or older people

- a. If Yes- How many of the people with learning disability who you support in employment made use of this programme in the last year?
- b. If No- Do you know what the programme offers?

Job Introduction Scheme

- a. If Yes- How many of the people with learning disability who you, support in employment made use of this programme in the last year?
- b. If No- Do you know what the programme offers?

Work Preparation

- a. If Yes- How many of the people with learning disability who you, support in employment made use of this programme in the last year?
- b. If No- Do you know what the programme offers?

NDDP Extension/Job Brokers

- a. If Yes- How many of the people with learning disability who you, support in employment made use of this programme in the last year?
- b. If No- Do you know what the programme offers?

WORKSTEP

- a. If Yes- How many of the people with learning disability who you, support in employment made use of this programme in the last year?
- b. If No- Do you know what the programme offers?

Work based learning for adults

- a. If Yes- How many of the people with learning disability who you, support in employment made use of this programme in the last year?
- b. If No- Do you know what the programme offers?

Work based learning for young people

- a. If Yes- How many of the people with learning disability who you, support in employment made use of this programme in the last year?
- b. If No- Do you know what the programme offers?

Access To Work

- a. If Yes – How many of the people with learning disability who you, support in employment made use of this programme in the last year?
- b. If No – Do you know what the programme offers?

Other?

- a. If Yes – How many of the people with learning disability who you, support in employment made use of this programme in the last year?
 - b. If No – Do you know what the programme offers?
43. If you have worked with *WORKSTEP* providers, what have been the major outcomes of working with them?

(Prompt – In terms of clients placed, wage or placement outcomes achieved for clients, outcomes for the day centre or its staff)

44. If you have worked with *WORKSTEP* providers, what do you see as the major strengths of their service for clients with learning disabilities?
45. If you have worked with *WORKSTEP* providers, what do you see as the major weaknesses of their service for clients with learning disabilities?
46. In what way could the effectiveness of collaboration with *WORKSTEP* be improved to help place people with learning disabilities more effectively?

Your views on the factors which help and hinder people with learning disabilities entering employment

47. What do you consider to be the most important barriers people with learning disabilities face in entering employment – in order of importance, most important first?
48. What do you consider to be the most important factors enabling people with learning disabilities entering employment – in order of importance, most important first?
49. What do you consider to be the most important barriers your organisation faces in supporting more people with learning disabilities into employment – in order of importance, most important first?
50. What do you consider to be the most important factors helping your organisation to support more people with learning disabilities into employment – in order of importance?

Your views on local and national policies

51. Are you aware of the local Joint Investment Planning process?
52. What implications have the Learning Disability and Welfare to Work JIPs had for your service?
L.D. J.I.P.?
Welfare to Work J.I.P.?
53. What are your opinions of the proposals for Day Centre reform set out in Valuing People?
54. What are your opinions of the way proposals for Day Centre/Day Service reform are being implemented locally?
55. What implications do you feel the proposal will have for getting people with learning disabilities into employment?
56. What implications do you feel the proposal will have for the Day Centre or Service as a whole?
57. What implications do you feel the proposal will have for your day service staff?
58. What do you understand the impact of introduction of Permitted Work rules will have on people in work or seeking paid employment?
59. What impact has the National Minimum Wage had on the people you support in employment?

THANK YOU VERY MUCH FOR YOUR HELP

C.4 Questionnaire for day centre staff involved in employment

Details of the person interviewed

1. What is your name?
2. What is your job title?
3. What are your main responsibilities within the organisation?
4. What is your contact telephone number should the researchers have any queries later on the information you have given us?

Details of service contact

5. What is the name of the service you represent?
6. What is the address of the service?
7. If the service is part of a larger organisation, please give the name of that organisation

Pen picture of your service

8. What are the main aims of your part of the service?
9. What are the main activities of your part of the service?
10. To what extent are training people with learning disabilities for employment, finding people paid jobs, and supporting people in jobs, something your part of the service does?

About the service you offer

In this section we will ask questions about your role in the service and the numbers and types of people you help.

11. What is your role within the service in relation to preparing people for employment, finding jobs, or supporting people in jobs, and what are your main activities?
12. How many people with learning disabilities do you personally support on a daily basis in paid work?
Comments?
13. How many people with learning disabilities do you personally support on a daily basis in voluntary work?
Comments?

14. How many people with learning disabilities do you personally support on a daily basis in work experience?
Comments?
15. How many people with learning disabilities do you personally support on a daily basis in vocational training?
Comments?
16. In what other activities do you personally support on a daily basis people with learning disabilities, apart from those we have mentioned?
17. How would you describe the people you support in **paid employment**, in terms of the severity of their learning disability and the level of support they need?
18. What characteristics do people with learning disabilities need to have, to become employed – in order of importance, most important first?
19. What characteristics of people with learning disabilities would mean they would be unable to move into employment – in order of importance, most important first?

The process through which your organisation supports people in employment

We are interested in the process through which you are able to provide people with paid employment. We start with referral.

20. How do people access your part of the service?

We are also interested in what you do to find out about people, equip them for a job, place them, and support them in a job.

- 21a. How do you find out their interests, abilities and needs?
- 21b. How long does it normally take to do this?
- 22a. How do you give training of relevant employment skills?
- 22b. How long does it normally take to do this?
- 23a. How do you provide suitable try-outs, work experiences or simulated work?
- 23b. How long does it normally take to do this?
- 24a. How do you find suitable job placements?
- 24b. How long does it normally take to do this?

25. Please look at this list of employer types and tell me which you have used to provide paid jobs, and which for work experience or job trial placements with examples if necessary.
 - a. Departments in your own authority?
 - b. Commercial employers?
 - c. Public authorities?
 - d. Voluntary organisations?
 - e. Other 1 (State)?
Other 2 (State)?
Other 3 (State)?
26. What types of support do you offer to the employers you work with?
27. What has been your overall experience of the willingness of employers to employ people with learning disabilities?
28. What strategies are key to successfully working with employers so that they will provide and sustain jobs for people with learning disabilities?
- 29a. How do you support people in jobs through work-based training, practical support, or working with employers and their staff?
- 29b. How long does it normally take to do this?
30. Who provides benefits advice for the people with learning disability you support?
32. What types of support do you offer to the parents, or family carers, of the people who are interested in paid employment?
33. What has been your overall experience of the willingness of parents, or family carers, to support their relative entering paid employment?
34. What strategies are key to successfully working with parents, or family carers, in support of people with learning disabilities entering paid employment?
35. What hinders you in being effective in helping people with learning disabilities get, and keep, paid employment?
36. What changes would help you be more effective in helping people with learning disabilities get, and keep, paid employment?

The agencies you work with

We are interested in the other statutory agencies you work closely with to achieve good employment outcomes for people with learning disabilities

37a. Can you look at this list of agencies and tell me which you work with to get people with learning disabilities into paid employment, providing examples.

Independent/Voluntary sector SE agencies?

- a. If Yes – nature of collaboration
- b. Effectiveness of relationship
- c. If No – help think they could give or 'DK'

Adult learning disability services (Not Day)?

- a. If Yes – nature of collaboration
- b. Effectiveness of relationship
- c. If No – help think they could give or 'DK'

Local Authority Day Centre/Service?

- a. If Yes – nature of collaboration
- b. Effectiveness of relationship
- c. If No – help think they could give or 'DK'

Jobcentre +/Employment Service?

- a. If Yes – nature of collaboration
- b. Effectiveness of relationship
- c. If No – help think they could give or 'DK'

WORKSTEP Contractors?

- a. If Yes – nature of collaboration
- b. Effectiveness of relationship
- c. If No – help think they could give or 'DK'

New Deal for Disabled People Job Brokers?

- a. If Yes – nature of collaboration
- b. Effectiveness of relationship
- c. If No – help think they could give or 'DK'

Training Organisations?

- a. If Yes – nature of collaboration
- b. Effectiveness of relationship
- c. If No – help think they could give or 'DK'

Voluntary Organisations (not SE agencies)?

- a. If Yes – nature of collaboration
- b. Effectiveness of relationship
- c. If No – help think they could give or 'DK'

Learning & Skills Council?

- a. If Yes – nature of collaboration
- b. Effectiveness of relationship
- c. If No – help think they could give or 'DK'

Further Education Colleges?

- a. If Yes – nature of collaboration
- b. Effectiveness of relationship
- c. If No – help think they could give or 'DK'

Schools?

- a. If Yes – nature of collaboration
- b. Effectiveness of relationship
- c. If No – help think they could give or 'DK'

ConneXions Service?

- a. If Yes – nature of collaboration
- b. Effectiveness of relationship
- c. If No – help think they could give or 'DK'

Other Services?

- a. If Yes – nature of collaboration
- b. Effectiveness of relationship
- c. If No – help think they could give or 'DK'

37b. For those agencies you do currently work with, what is the nature of the collaboration?

37c. How would you describe the effectiveness of your relationship with the agencies you currently work with?

37d. For those agencies you do **not** currently work with, can you tell us what help you think they could give to place people with learning disabilities into paid employment?

Use of programmes that support employment

We are interested in the Government funding and support programmes that you might use to help people become employed

38a. Can you look at this list of funding and support programmes and tell me which you make use of in supporting people into employment?

New Deal for young or older people

a. If Yes – How many of the people with learning disability who you support in employment made use of this programme in the last year?

b. If No – Do you know what the programme offers?

Job Introduction Scheme

a. If Yes – How many of the people with learning disability who you support in employment made use of this programme in the last year?

b. If No – Do you know what the programme offers?

Work Preparation

a. If Yes – How many of the people with learning disability who you support in employment made use of this programme in the last year?

b. If No – Do you know what the programme offers?

NDDP Extension/Job Brokers

a. If Yes – How many of the people with learning disability who you support in employment made use of this programme in the last year?

b. If No – Do you know what the programme offers?

WORKSTEP

a. If Yes – How many of the people with learning disability who you support in employment made use of this programme in the last year?

b. If No – Do you know what the programme offers?

Work based learning for adults

- a. If Yes – How many of the people with learning disability who you support in employment made use of this programme in the last year?
- b. If No – Do you know what the programme offers?

Work based learning for young people

- a. If Yes – How many of the people with learning disability who you support in employment made use of this programme in the last year?
- b. If No – Do you know what the programme offers?

Access To Work

- a. If Yes – How many of the people with learning disability who you support in employment made use of this programme in the last year?
- b. If No – Do you know what the programme offers?

Other?

- a. If Yes – How many of the people with learning disability who you support in employment made use of this programme in the last year?
 - b. If No – Do you know what the programme offers?
39. If you have worked with *WORKSTEP* providers, what have been the major outcomes of working with them?

(Prompt – In terms of clients placed, wage or placement outcomes achieved for clients, outcomes for the day centre or its staff)
 40. If you have worked with *WORKSTEP* providers, what do you see as the major strengths of their service for clients with learning disabilities?
 41. If you have worked with *WORKSTEP* providers, what do you see as the major weaknesses of their service for clients with learning disabilities?
 42. In what way could the effectiveness of collaboration with *WORKSTEP* be improved to help place people with learning disabilities more effectively?

Your views on the factors which help and hinder people with learning disabilities entering employment

43. What do you consider to be the most important barriers people with learning disabilities face in entering employment – in order of importance, most important first?
44. What do you consider to be the most important factors helping people with learning disabilities entering employment – in order of importance, most important first?

45. What do you consider to be the most important barriers your organisation faces in supporting more people with learning disabilities into employment – in order of importance, most important first?
46. What do you consider to be the most important factors helping your organisation to support more people with learning disabilities into employment – in order of importance?

YOUR VIEWS ON LOCAL AND NATIONAL POLICIES

47. Are you aware of the local Joint Investment Planning process?
48. What implications have the Learning Disability and Welfare to Work JIPs had for your service?
L.D. J.I.P.?
WtW J.I.P.?
49. What are your opinions of the proposals for Day Centre reform set out in Valuing People?
50. What are your opinions of the way proposals for Day Centre/Day Service reform are being implemented locally?
51. What implications do you feel the proposal will have for getting people with learning disabilities into employment?
52. What implications do you feel the proposal will have for the Day Centre or Service as a whole?
53. What implications do you feel the proposal will have for you as a staff member?
54. What do you understand the impact of introduction of Permitted Work rules will have on people in work or seeking paid employment?
55. What impact has the National Minimum Wage had on the people you support in employment?

THANK YOU VERY MUCH FOR YOUR HELP

C.5 Carers' Questionnaire

Section 1: Background information

1.1 Carer's age:

19 or under

20-29

30-39

40-59

60-69

70+

1.2 Carer's sex:

Male

Female

1.3 Carer's marital status:

1.4 Carer's ethnic group:

1.5 Carer's employment:

Retired

Unemployed

Part-time

Full-time

1.6 Have you reduced your working time (including early retirement, fewer hours) to look after the cared-for person?

Gave up work/retired to care

Reduced working hours to care

No change

1.7 Relationship to cared for person:

Parent

Sibling

Partner

Friend

Other relative

1.8 Service user's employment status:

Working now

Previously

Never worked

1.9 Service user's day care status:

Current user

Former user

Never used

1.10 Approximately how many waking hours do you spend together?

1.11 Carer lives with cared for person:

Yes

No (If 'No' skip next two questions)

1.12 How many other adults (aged over 16) live in the household?

1.13 How many children live in the household?

Section 2: Open questions

I am now going to ask about some of the services you may have received

Day Care Has [name] ever been offered or used day care?

Yes

No

2.1 If No, tell me what happened at the end of X's formal education and since
(Prompts: What choice were offered at the time? How does he/she occupy him/herself?)

2.2 If Yes, tell me about the move to day care **(Prompts: What choices were offered? How did the move take place?)**

2.3 (All respondents) How satisfied are you with this transition?

Very satisfied

Satisfied

Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied

Dissatisfied

Very dissatisfied

2.4 What obstacles have arisen in relation to day care?

- Transport difficulties
- Problems with other people attending
- X's lack of confidence/experience
- Physical health problems
- Quality of activities offered
- Lack of availability/lack of choice
- Other (please specify)

2.5 What is your opinion of day care in general?

Work opportunities

2.6 Has [Name] ever been offered employment opportunities?

(Use prompt card from local service provision profile showing employment options)

(If No, go to question 2.12)

2.7 If Yes, tell me about this **(Prompts: What choices were offered? Did you ever help X to find a job? If applicable, how did the move take place?)**

2.8 (If applicable) Please describe X's current work/last job

- Setting
- Tasks
- Pay
- Support received
- X's level of satisfaction
- Employer's level of satisfaction

2.9 What obstacles have arisen?

- Benefits issues
- Transport difficulties
- Problems with colleagues at work
- X's lack of confidence/experience
- Physical health problems
- Quality of work offered
- Lack of availability/lack of choice
- Other (please specify)

2.10 Who has dealt with each of these problems and with what results?

2.11 (All respondents) How satisfied are you with this situation?

Very satisfied

Satisfied

Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied

Dissatisfied

Very dissatisfied

2.12 What help or advice did you receive from day services regarding employment opportunities?

General questions

If X is not working:

2.13 What do you think about the prospect of X working?

2.14 What concerns would you have if X were offered work?

2.15 How would X's being in employment affect your life?

If X is working:

2.16 What do you think about X working?

2.17 What concerns would you have if X stopped work?

2.18 How has X's being in employment affected your life?

All respondents:

2.19 What changes would you like to see in daytime activities for the person you care for?

2.20 What changes would you like to see in work opportunities for the person you care for?

2.21 What advice would you offer to carers of people who require help into work?

2.22 What, for you, is the most difficult thing about being a carer?

2.23 What, for you, is the most rewarding thing about being a carer?

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