

# Making it Work action plans

The section provides a summary of the key points of each part of the Making it Work book and places them in an action plan format. The action plan is set out in the following sections:

- Listening to learners
- Changes in the structure of the Learning and Skills sector
- Supported employment
- The supported employment process
- Person-centred approaches
- Developing a supported employment model
- Curriculum development and a supported employment approach
- Collaborative working
- Working with parents and carers
- Working with employers

This action planning section can be used as a basis for work to develop the supported employment approach in vocational provision for people with learning difficulties.

## Listening to learners

It is important to be guided by the aspirations and interests of an individual, when considering the type of a job in which they will flourish. Listening to the experiences of people with learning difficulties who are in paid work could be a good way of raising the awareness of learners about working and getting a job.

<b>What action do you need to take?</b>	<b>How will this be done?</b>	<b>Who is responsible?</b>	<b>When will this be done?</b>
Create systems for talking to your learners about their dreams, goals and past experiences of work, and what is important to them in a job.			
Invite people with learning difficulties who have found fulfilling work to talk to your learners about this.			

## Policy developments and changes in structure of the learning and skills sector

The policy context has never been so favourable for promoting employment opportunities for people with learning difficulties. However, it is a time of considerable change in the structure of post-16 education and training.

<b>What action do you need to take?</b>	<b>How will this be done?</b>	<b>Who is responsible?</b>	<b>When will this be done?</b>
Identify structures and practices you have in place to address current strategies and imminent changes.			
Decide which practices you might need to review and change to develop the supported employment approach in your provider.			

## Values and principles of supported employment

The support employment process is rooted in the social model of disability and is underpinned by a clear set of principles. These principles will have an impact on teaching and learning.

<b>What action do you need to take?</b>	<b>How will this be done?</b>	<b>Who is responsible?</b>	<b>When will this be done?</b>
Carry out an appraisal of the extent to which your vocational provision for people with learning difficulties incorporates each of these principles (see page 26).			
Ensure that all aspects of the development of your vocational provision are based on the assumption that learners with learning difficulties will be employed.			
Identify changes in approach that need to be made in order to develop a supported employment approach in your provision.			

## The supported employment process

The supported employment process follows a series of well-defined stages. Supported employment organisations will work to this staged process and will have expertise in the techniques used to support people with learning difficulties into and in work.

<b>What action do you need to take?</b>	<b>How will this be done?</b>	<b>Who is responsible?</b>	<b>When will this be done?</b>
Find out if there is a supported employment organisation in your locality and investigate the possibility of joint working.			
Identify which of the elements of the supported employment process are covered by your current vocational provision for learners with learning difficulties (see page 29).			
Assess how effectively your vocational provision for people with learning difficulties incorporates the supported employment process.			
Identify any stages of the process that are not effectively covered decide how you will change this and who would be best placed to do this.			

## Person-centred planning and approaches

The term 'person-centred planning' refers to a particular way of working that uses a specific set of tools and approaches. Supported employment incorporates this approach.

<b>What action do you need to take?</b>	<b>How will this be done?</b>	<b>Who is responsible?</b>	<b>When will this be done?</b>
Review your knowledge of person-centred working and, if you need to know more, find some support and training.			
Look at how you can develop the use of person-centred approaches and tools in your practice.			
How will you involve learners in all the stages of the assessment and planning cycle using person-centered approaches.			

## Developing a supported employment model

There is no set template for a supported employment model in vocational education and training. The way providers develop vocational provision in order to embed a supported employment approach will depend on their individual situation in terms of experience in this area of work, and whether there is a supported employment organisation they can work with.

<b>What action do you need to take?</b>	<b>How will this be done?</b>	<b>Who is responsible?</b>	<b>When will this be done?</b>
Decide what kind of 'model' would suit your situation.			
Investigate whether local supported employment services are available and, if so, whether you can work together.			
Talk to partners with whom you currently work about what they could offer.			
Approach potential new partners about their involvement.			
Audit the skills and experience of staff and consider how this could contribute.			
Take stock of other resources such as accommodation you have available.			

## Curriculum development and a supported employment approach

There are a number of factors that need to be taken into account when developing a curriculum that embeds a supported employment approach.

<b>What action do you need to take?</b>	<b>How will this be done?</b>	<b>Who is responsible?</b>	<b>When will this be done?</b>
Audit your current curriculum against the list of points on pages 66 and 67. Discuss what needs developing and what needs to change.			
Decide how you will develop a flexible curriculum that supports the 'place and train' model (see page 28).			
Plan how travel training will be part of the curriculum offer.			
Look at how you will link the curriculum to support learners on work experience placements.			

## Collaborative working

A range of partners need to be involved in developing a supported employment approach for vocational training and courses for people with learning difficulties. There are certain aspects of joint working that need particular attention to help partners work well together.

<b>What action do you need to take?</b>	<b>How will this be done?</b>	<b>Who is responsible?</b>	<b>When will this be done?</b>
Develop existing and new networks to support your work.			
Develop procedures with partners that ensure: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• you understand each other's language and terminology</li> <li>• that sector-specific language does not become a barrier to collaborative working</li> <li>• that clear, accessible language is used with learners</li> </ul>			
Develop ways to collect learner data that can be effectively shared by all partners.			
Work with learners to develop forms and information for learners that are accessible.			
Target information at key players whom you want to involve.			

## Working with parents and carers

Parents and carers have an important role to play in supporting their son or daughter into work.

<b>What action do you need to take?</b>	<b>How will this be done?</b>	<b>Who is responsible?</b>	<b>When will this be done?</b>
Listen to parents' and carers' expectations and anxieties and act on them.			
Decide how you will engage and involve parents and carers early on in the process and plan how to do this.			
Develop links with the local carers' association.			
Identify colleagues in other organisations it would be good to work with to support parents and carers.			
Ask parents with experience of their son or daughter working to talk to other parents who are new to this situation.			

## Working with employers

Raising the awareness of employers about the potential of people with learning difficulties to work and to be valuable employers is essential to ensure people have employment opportunities.

<b>What action do you need to take?</b>	<b>How will this be done?</b>	<b>Who is responsible?</b>	<b>When will this be done?</b>
If you have a local supported employment service, find out about their work with employers and if the service can effectively support your needs.			
Identify other staff in your organisation who can help with employer engagement, e.g. an employment placement officer or marketing staff.			
Investigate and build on the ideas used by other providers to develop employer contacts.			
Use the step-by-step section on working with employers outlined in this book if you decide to make direct approaches to employers.			
Establish links with Connexions, IAG and Jobcentre Plus staff and find out about specialist DWP programmes.			
Develop or adapt materials which describe the key features of Supported Employment and the benefits for the employer.			
Approach potential new partners about their involvement.			