



Workplace support and guidance for individuals with additional needs

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Overview

The aim of this booklet is to provide guidance and advice for employers and colleagues in order to effectively support individuals with additional needs in the workplace and in a work-based learning environment.

The range of additional needs that an individual may have can vary hugely from small, simple measures through to more complex needs that may require reasonable work place adjustments. The purpose of this guide is to explain six main categories of additional needs and include:

- Autistic Spectrum Condition
- Physical Disability
- Learning Difficulty
- Mental Health
- Social Need
- Sensory Impairment

We recognise that every individual and their circumstances are unique, this guide is designed to give a few useful hints, tips and background information.

FOREWORD BY ANDREW SIMMONS

Andrew Simmons

Deputy Director, Services for Children and Young People

Hertfordshire successfully support a large number of individuals who have additional needs. Through the work of the Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) Pathfinder Hertfordshire have been trailblazing a number of different initiatives to support more individuals to make the transition into employment and to ensure that this employment is supported and sustained.

More Hertfordshire businesses offer opportunities to young people and adults with additional needs than ever before. This year we have set out a radical vision through our 14+ Learning for Living and Work (LflW) Transition and Progression Pathways Framework that enables all the partner organisations to build on current best practice, and in partnership, secure a wider choice of quality 'destination-led pathways' for young people (14-25) with learning difficulties and/or disabilities (LDD) into adulthood.

We recognise that we need to support Hertfordshire employers to effectively support young people and adults with additional needs so that they can continue to make a positive contribution to our economy. Hertfordshire County Council prides itself on providing opportunities for all individuals to raise their aspirations, inclusive of age, ability and interest.

This guide has been developed by practitioners who work with employers to help to demystify some of the approaches and strategies that could be used in the workplace to ensure that individuals with additional needs can fulfil their role successfully.



A handwritten signature in black ink, which appears to read 'Andrew Simmons'.

AUTISTIC SPECTRUM CONDITION

Definition

Autism is a life-long developmental disorder that prevents people from understanding what they see, hear and otherwise sense. People with Autism experience three main areas of difficulty; social interaction, social communication and social imagination. It is a spectrum condition, which means that, while all people with Autism share certain difficulties, their condition will affect them in different ways. Many people with Autism also have sensory difficulties which means that they can be over or under sensitive to certain sights, sounds, smells, touch or tastes. Autism symptoms can be present in a variety of combinations and may accompany other disabilities/difficulties.

Characteristics and learning implications (an individual may have all, some or none of these - it's just a guide)

- Limited communicative functions
- Difficulty with social interaction
- Difficulty understanding other people's feelings and actions
- Resistance to change/new situations
- Difficulty concentrating
- Repetitive use of language
- Lack of eye contact
- Difficulty organising thoughts/making decisions/formulating plans

Positive attributes

(an individual may have all, some or none of these - it's just a guide)

- Great attention to detail
- Good at following instructions
- Task focused
- Methodical
- Reliable
- Dedicated
- Truthful and honest
- Good memory skills
- High vocabulary

Possible workplace adjustments

- Arrange for help from an external support organisation that offers job mentoring, coaching and general and specific job assistance to the individual with Autism
- Appoint a colleague to act as a mentor to the individual, helping them with any issues that may arise
- Arrange Autism awareness training for staff who work with the individual with Autism
- Introduce and keep to precise start and finish times as well as breaks and lunchtimes
- Be mindful that change within the workplace can upset the individual, e.g. changing where files are kept, changing where people sit or changing shift patterns at short notice

AUTISTIC SPECTRUM CONDITION

Possible learning support ideas

- Re-word exam/assignment questions to make them short and concise
- Extended exam time with allowances for breaks
- Extended time on lengthy assignments
- Regular and brief one-to-one meetings for feedback and monitoring
- Arrange for one-to-one training in addition to group training
- Break tasks into smaller steps as needed
- Help to prioritise and organise tasks and activities into a timetable to introduce a structured routine

Tips for communicating effectively

- Use direct and precise explanations
- Avoid using abstract language or idioms e.g. blow your own trumpet, individuals often interpret language literally
- Avoid asking hypothetical or open ended questions, conceptualising can be an issue
- People with Autism often have difficulty in comprehending and retaining verbal information, avoid giving long verbal instructions
- Give specific and detailed instructions, these can be written to enable the individual to review them
- Check that the individual understands your instructions, asking them to repeat instructions back can sometimes be helpful

- Should the individual approach you with difficulties it is important to listen and allow them to express themselves without interrupting them by offering an opinion
- Ensure all relevant colleagues understand the potential for misunderstandings (if the individual's permission is given to disclose their condition)

Useful websites/Resources



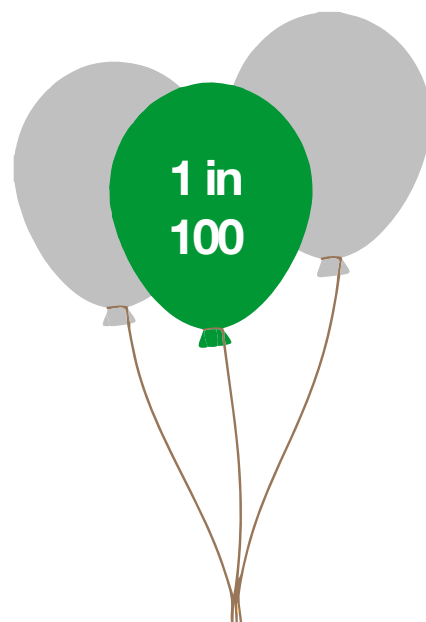
The National Autistic Society: www.autism.org.uk

Disability Rights UK: www.disabilityrightsuk.org

Did you know...

- Autistic Spectrum conditions are much more common than people think. There are over half a million people in the UK with an Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD) - that's around 1 in 100

The National Autistic Society, September 2013, www.autism.org.uk



PHYSICAL DISABILITY

Definition

Physical disabilities involve the partial or total loss of function of one or more parts of the body. Physical disabilities which affect mobility are generally either orthopedic or neurological in nature. Orthopedic disabilities include, but are not limited to, Arthritis, Muscular Dystrophy, Spina Bifida and amputation. Neurological disabilities impacting the ability to move entail the nervous system and include, but are not limited to, Cerebral Palsy, Multiple Sclerosis, head trauma and spinal cord injury. Students with mobility impairments may utilise assistive devices such as wheelchairs, scooters, walkers, crutches, canes or artificial limbs.

Characteristics and learning implications (an individual may have all, some or none of these - it's just a guide)

- Fatigue
- Pain
- Limited physical exertion and stamina
- Limited range of motion
- Poor co-ordination
- Limited muscle strength
- Limited fine motor dexterity
- Limited gross movement
- Muscle tremors
- Paralysis
- Inability to sit in one position for a sustained length of time
- Negative side effects of medication

Positive attributes

(an individual may have all, some or none of these - it's just a guide)

- Good coping strategies
- Adaptable
- Desire to exceed expectation
- Less time off sick
- Determination
- Tenacity
- Ability to set and strive for long term goals

Possible workplace adjustments

- Workstation redesign, provision of appropriate seating, height adjustable work stations etc.
- More frequent and flexible breaks
- Keeping corridors and walkways clear of obstacles
- Providing access to accessible lifts, bathrooms, kitchens, meeting rooms etc.
- Providing a reserved parking space close to the person's workplace, so that they can rely on using their own private transport
- Providing assistive technology to help with computer-based work, such as speech recognition software and/or modified IT equipment such as mouse or keyboard
- Consider becoming an approved 'two ticks' employer which is awarded by Jobcentre Plus to employers who have made commitments to employ, keep and develop the abilities of disabled staff

PHYSICAL DISABILITY

Possible learning support ideas

- Priority seating
- Extended exam time with allowances for breaks
- Extended time on lengthy assignments
- Access to a learning support assistant
- Adjustable tables/adapted seating
- Consideration for absences when disability is exacerbated
- Allow for a longer programme
- Adjust assessment methods according to the individual's needs

Tips for communicating effectively

- Let the individual know that you are keen to work together to find practical strategies that will allow them to perform their work duties and be a part of the workplace
- Keep questions about the individual's disabilities to the affects at work and what supports can be put in place to accommodate the affects, rather than questions about prognosis, how the individual got the disability and/or any other irrelevant personal details
- Remember that there may be aspects of the individual's physical disability that affect them at work that are not 'visible' or apparent to others
- Should the individual approach you with difficulties it is important to listen and allow them to express themselves without interrupting them by offering an opinion

- When meeting together with an individual using a wheelchair, make sure you leave a space free for them to sit at the meeting table
- Offer discretion and protect the individual's privacy
- Make eye contact and speak directly to the individual with a disability
- Where possible, sit down to speak with an individual using a wheelchair so that you are at the same eye level

Useful websites/Resources



United Response: www.unitedresponse.org.uk

AbilityNet: www.abilitynet.org.uk

JISC: www.jisc.ac.uk

Did you know...

- Only 17% of disabled people were born with their disability. The majority of disabled people acquire their disability later in life
- 80% of those who become disabled are in employment at the time they acquired a disability

Papworth Trust, Disability in the UK 2012: Facts and Figures

Papworth Trust, Disability in the UK 2012: Facts and Figures



LEARNING DIFFICULTY

Definition

A learning difficulty is a permanent condition and typically one that is either present from birth or becomes apparent during childhood development. People with learning difficulties may also have physical disabilities or other medical conditions, but many do not. It is not always easy to know whether a person has a learning difficulty or not. Learning difficulty often refers to individuals who have a specific problem with learning as a result of either medical, emotional or language problems. Learning difficulties are varied and depend on the individual, they could include for example dyslexia, dyspraxia and dyscalculia.

Characteristics and learning implications (an individual may have all, some or none of these - it's just a guide)

- Limited communication functions
- Difficulty with social interaction
- Difficulty in understanding extensive and complex instructions
- Over-familiarity if boundaries aren't set or made clear
- Misunderstanding social situations

Positive attributes

(an individual may have all, some or none of these - it's just a guide)

- Dedicated
- Enthusiastic
- Eager to please/impress
- Pride in their role
- Positive attitude to work
- Keenness to partake in overtime
- Less time taken off sick

Possible workplace adjustments

- Use of pictorial aids e.g. flash/prompt cards, to assist clearer understanding
- Flexibility with time constraints
- Adapted user-friendly versions of mandatory training documents to enable clearer understanding e.g. setting a more suitable pace for the individual
- Appoint a colleague to act as a mentor to the individual to help them with any issues that arise
- Introduce and keep clear boundaries with regards to interaction, times of work, contact, clothing/uniform etc

LEARNING DIFFICULTY

Possible learning support ideas

- Break tasks into smaller steps as needed
- Regular and brief one-to-one meetings for feedback and monitoring
- Extended exam time with allowances for breaks
- Extended time on lengthy assignments
- Allow for a longer programme
- Adjust assessment methods according to the individual's needs

Tips for communicating effectively

- Give specific and detailed instructions, written or pictorial aids may be useful
- Give plenty of time and be prepared to repeat information more than once
- Use positive instructions e.g. 'use the pink file' rather than 'don't use the blue file'
- Check that the individual understands your instructions, asking them to repeat instructions back can sometimes be helpful
- Be prepared to demonstrate activities or tasks
- Introduce and keep clear boundaries with regards to interaction, times of work, contact, clothing/uniform etc.
- Face to face communication
- Involve the individual's mentor to give support when providing a substantial level of feedback or sharing information

Useful websites/Resources



Mencap: www.mencap.org.uk

Connexions: www.youthconnexions.org

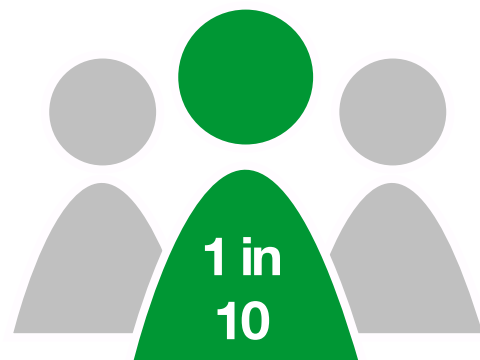
Shaw Trust: www.shaw-trust.org.uk

Access to Work: www.gov.uk/access-to-work

Did you know...

- 1 in 10 individuals in the UK are thought to have dyslexia

Dyslexia Action (2012) Dyslexia still matters



MENTAL HEALTH

Definition

Mental health problems affect the way people think, feel and behave, some of the most commonly diagnosed forms are depression, anxiety, Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder, phobia, Bipolar Disorder, Schizophrenia, Personality disorders, Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) and eating disorders. There are also commonly recognised behaviours that are strongly associated with mental health problems such as self harm, suicidal thoughts and panic attacks. Although certain symptoms are common in specific mental health problems, no two people behave in exactly the same way when they are unwell.

Characteristics and learning implications (an individual may have all, some or none of these - it's just a guide)

- Mood swings
- Absence/non-participation
- Difficulty handling stressful situations/ time demands
- Poor self-esteem/lack of confidence
- Panic attacks/feelings of dread
- Difficulty in managing behaviour
- Difficulty with social interaction
- Difficulty in accepting constructive criticism/praise
- Difficulty organising thoughts/making decisions/formulating plans
- Difficulty concentrating/retaining information

Positive attributes

(an individual may have all, some or none of these - it's just a guide)

- Perfectionist
- Inner strength
- Resilience
- Insight
- Focused
- Empathy towards others
- Reflective
- Creative/artistic
- Like to feel needed and part of a team

Possible workplace adjustments

- Flexible approach to start/finish times and or shift patterns/possibility to work from home at times
- Use of paid or unpaid leave for medical appointments
- Temporary reallocation of some tasks
- Provide a quiet space for breaks away from the main workspace
- Allow the individual to focus on a specific piece of work
- Provide a buddy or mentor to support the individual
- Provide mediation if there are difficulties between colleagues
- Allow for increased personal space
- Move workstation e.g. so that the individual does not have their back to the door

MENTAL HEALTH

Possible learning support ideas

- Provide individual guidance and support through induction process
- Access to a personal counsellor/learning support assistant/external impartial agency
- Consider breaking tasks down into manageable chunks
- Extended exam time with allowances for breaks
- Extended time on lengthy assignments
- Allowance for frequent breaks/time out from periods of concentration
- Regular meetings with mentor to discuss progress and any issues

Tips for communicating effectively

- Should the individual approach you with difficulties it is important to listen and allow them to express themselves without interrupting them by offering an opinion
- If there are constraints on your time whilst speaking with the individual, inform them from the start
- Do not give advice outside the boundary of your role, listen to the individual and encourage them to seek more appropriate help
- Agree how and when you will review the performance of the individual and the process this will follow

Useful websites/Resources



Mental Health Foundation:

www.mentalhealth.org.uk

Mind: www.mind.org.uk

ACAS: www.gov.uk/acas

Did you know...

- Around 10 million people in the UK (1 in 6) are affected by a mental health condition at any one time

Office for National Statistics, June 2010



SOCIAL NEED

Definition

Any person whose situation is classed as one or more of the following is considered as having a social need; those living in hostels and residential centres, those with mental health problems, travellers, those whose statutory education has been interrupted, substance misuse, homelessness, significant changes in personal circumstances e.g. relationship breakdowns, physical, emotional and sexual abuse.

Characteristics and learning implications (an individual may have all, some or none of these - it's just a guide)

- Poor/erratic attendance
- Fatigue/lethargy
- Poor self-esteem/lack of confidence
- Personal hygiene issues
- Lacking pride in appearance
- Lack of concentration
- Anxiety/panic attacks
- Mood swings
- Absence/non-participation
- Difficulty in managing behaviour

Positive attributes

(an individual may have all, some or none of these - it's just a guide)

- Resilience
- Empathy towards others
- Determination
- Eagerness to succeed
- Creative problem solving skills
- Good practical skills
- Goal focused

Possible workplace adjustments

- Provide a buddy or mentor to support the individual
- Use of paid or unpaid leave for medical appointments
- Links to external services such as the Money Advisory Service
- Contribution towards travel costs
- Precise start and finish times
- Flexible approach to shift patterns/possibility to work from home at times

SOCIAL NEED

Possible learning support ideas

- Provide individual guidance and support through induction process
- Access to a personal counsellor/learning support assistant/external impartial agency
- Break tasks into smaller steps as needed
- Extended exam time with allowances for breaks
- Extended time on lengthy assignments
- Allowance for frequent breaks/time out from periods of concentration
- Regular meetings with mentor to discuss progress and any issues

Tips for communicating effectively

- Regular 1:1 contact
- Give precise constructive feedback
- Write down and record agreed actions
- Consider introducing a daily planner of set tasks
- Set weekly time to meet with mentor
- If possible introduce incentives, bonus scheme, opportunities for overtime

Useful websites/Resources



Money Advisory Service:

www.moneyadviceservice.org.uk/en

Citizens Advice: www.citizensadvice.org.uk

Shelter: www.shelter.org.uk

Did you know...

- 282 people are declared insolvent or bankrupt every day (based on Q2 2013 trends). This is equivalent to 1 person every 5 minutes 7 seconds

Credit Action, August 2013, www.creditaction.org.uk

- Paid work is not a guaranteed route out of poverty for single parents, the poverty rate for single parents where the parents works part time is 31% and 17% where the parent works full time

Households Below Average Income (HBAI) 1994/95 - 2011/12, Table 4.5, Department for Work and Pensions, 2013



SENSORY IMPAIRMENT

Definition

Sensory impairment is when one of your senses; sight, hearing, smell, touch, taste and spatial awareness, becomes less accurate. The sensory impairments which have most impact in the workplace are sight and hearing loss. People can experience different levels of impairment, many of which may not be obvious in the first instance. There are various conditions which can cause sight and/or hearing loss. Blindness/partial sight can be affected by the ageing process, disease (such as diabetes), infection (such as meningitis), genetics (such as retinitis pigmentosa), injury/physical trauma, cataract or glaucoma. Deafness/hard of hearing can be affected by the ageing process, disease (such as Ménière's disease), physical trauma, exposure to loud noise or genetics.

Characteristics and learning implications (an individual may have all, some or none of these - it's just a guide)

- If sight or hearing loss is undisclosed it may appear that a person is uninterested, not paying attention or lacking in understanding
- It is important to find out what aids, if any, the person already uses e.g. magnifier or a hearing aid
- Even with appropriate adaptations, a person with sight or hearing problems may take longer to learn and may tire easily
- Possible difficulties in understanding extensive and complex instructions which would not necessarily be related to cognitive ability
- Possible difficulties in social interaction and

misunderstanding social situations

Positive attributes

(an individual may have all, some or none of these - it's just a guide)

- Good coping strategies
- Other senses are often more acute

Possible workplace adjustments

- Initial orientation of working environment
- Clear, uncluttered floor space
- Clear/enlarged signage
- Enlarged text
- Specialist software – enlarged font, voice activated
- Mentor
- Communicator
- Note taker
- Loop system
- Quiet environment – hearing aids amplify all sound including background noise
- Mentor

SENSORY IMPAIRMENT

Possible learning support ideas

- Assistive technology
- Access to Learning Support Assistant
- Communicator
- Use of Braille
- Printed material on coloured paper
- Priority seating
- Longer programme
- Extra time for assignments and assessments
- Adjustment of assessment methods

Tips for communicating effectively

- Always identify yourself and others, even in known surroundings
- Describe what you are doing
- Don't be concerned about using phrases such as "did you see Tom yesterday?"
- Do not use non-verbal communication e.g. pointing in the direction of something
- Establish preferred communication method e.g. communicator, lip reading, note taker
- Face person when speaking
- Use clear speech with normal lip pattern – don't over enunciate
- Don't shout
- Write things down
- Ensure no echo

Useful websites/Resources



RNIB: www.rnib.org.uk

Action for Blind People:
www.actionforblindpeople.org.uk

Deafness Research:
www.deafnessresearch.org.uk

Action Deafness:
www.actiondeafness.org.uk

Access to Work: www.gov.uk/access-to-work

Did you know...

- There are approximately 356,000 people with combined visual and hearing impairment in the UK

Action on Hearing Loss, September 2013,
www.actiononhearingloss.org.uk



More Information

If you would like more information about supporting individuals with additional needs please contact the duty line:

T: 01438 844999

E: LDD.DutyYouthConnexions@hertfordshire.gov.uk

To download a free copy of this booklet please visit:

<http://www.youthconnexions-hertfordshire.org/>

Thank You

With thanks to the following Training Providers for their input to this guide:

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UK Training & Development

