

GOOD WORK

Norfolk

GUIDE 7

Supporting Employees with Learning Disabilities



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Removing barriers and helping people develop their potential

Learning disabilities affect people in different ways and can influence how a person learns, understands information, processes instructions and develops new skills. The right support can help employees build confidence, develop their abilities and work more independently. Employers do not need to lower expectations; instead, they can remove unnecessary barriers, communicate clearly and provide people with the time, tools and opportunities they need to succeed.



How Employers Can Help

- Get to know the individual and discuss what support, adjustments or communication methods work best for them.
- Use clear, straightforward language and avoid unnecessary jargon or complex instructions.
- Break tasks into smaller, manageable steps and provide one or two instructions at a time where appropriate.
- Provide written guidance, checklists, diagrams or visual aids to support understanding and memory.
- Give employees sufficient time to learn new tasks, process information and build confidence.
- Regularly check understanding and encourage questions in a supportive and non-judgemental way.
- Reinforce learning through repetition, practice and regular reviews.
- Recognise and praise effort, progress and achievements to help build confidence and motivation.
- Encourage independence and avoid becoming overly reliant on providing support where the individual can develop their own skills.
- Consider different ways for employees to demonstrate competence, particularly where formal written tasks may create unnecessary barriers.
- Support organisation and time management through the use of diaries, reminders, planners or digital tools.
- Be aware that some individuals may need additional support with decision-making, problem-solving or understanding consequences.
- Create a supportive workplace culture that promotes inclusion, respect and equal opportunities.
- Be mindful that some people may experience anxiety, low confidence or social challenges and may benefit from additional reassurance and encouragement.
- Focus on strengths, practical abilities and workplace potential rather than limitations.

Common Workplace Considerations

- An employee with a learning disability may benefit from support relating to:
- Understanding instructions or workplace procedures.
- Reading, writing or numerical tasks.
- Memory and information retention.
- Organisation and planning.
- Confidence and self-esteem.
- Time management and prioritisation.
- Workplace communication and social interactions.
- Learning new skills or adapting to changes.
- Not everyone will experience these challenges, and the level of support required will vary from person to person.



Keep communication clear, break tasks into achievable steps, encourage independence and build on strengths.

Inclusive workplace practices benefit everyone, not just employees with learning disabilities.



Key principle

Focus on ability, not disability. With clear communication, appropriate support and realistic opportunities, employees with learning disabilities can develop skills, grow in confidence and make valuable contributions to the workplace.