Work placements for young people with a learning disability
Royal Mencap Society wants to see more people with a learning disability in work. Our research shows that just 6% of those known to local authorities, able to work, are in employment.¹

A key part of the journey to employment is to provide valuable learning opportunities for young people with a learning disability whilst they are still in education. Mencap have been funded by the Department for Education to broker work experience placements for schools and colleges working with learners with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities.

We believe that getting real workplace experience whilst still in education, can make a big difference to the ambitions, confidence and skills of young people with a learning disability, and their future job prospects.

How can you get involved?

We are looking for employers who are willing to provide short and long term unpaid work placements for learners with special educational needs and disabilities. Placements are clearly of benefit to young people, giving them real-life experience, new skills and a broader view of job opportunities.

“We’ve gained as much out of our work experience candidates as we hope they have from us. The people who have come to us have performed impressively.”

Cleary Gottlieb Steen & Hamilton LLP
– Raj Panasar, partner

There are also benefits for you as an employer:

- Placements are a risk-free opportunity to work with a learner who may then become suitable to apply for employment within your business
- You’ll get an increased understanding of learning disability and diversity, useful for your workforce but also for understanding needs of your disabled customers
- New ideas and perspectives
- Opportunities to develop the skills and attitudes of staff
- Employing people with a learning disability can add real value to your workplace culture. Employers report benefits that include:
  - a more diverse workplace
  - better co-worker partnerships

How long should work experience last?

For this project we are looking at three different types of work experience placement:

- Short term 1-6 weeks
- Medium term 6-12 weeks
- Long term/Supported Internship 6 months

“Sam is doing superbly in the role and taking on new responsibilities – and the team around him have been buoyed by his success and its impact on their sense of job satisfaction.”
Bespoke Cleaning – Tobias Batkin, managing director

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Mencap is providing training and support to colleges so that they in turn can provide the right support to young people and employers. We only work with colleges who have met (and continue to meet) our quality standards on job coaching and employer support.

Mencap staff will also be on hand to help sort out any issues, and we can provide free learning disability awareness training to you and your staff. We can also help you with any reasonable adjustments or changes you’d like to make. For instance, we have helped employers to streamline their recruitment systems to make them fairer for disabled people.

**Next steps**

Contact Mencap’s employer engagement team to get started.

**Zoey Purdy**

📞 07985 453178  
✉️ zoey.purdy@mencap.org.uk