Employment for people with disabilities.

Plan to improve how people with disabilities in Northern Ireland get a job.

Easy read version
November 2015
Introduction

This document is about the plan that The Department for Employment and Learning has to make it easier for people with disabilities to get a job and learn new job related skills.

People with disabilities experience barriers when they try to get a job.

People with significant disabilities feel left out from some employment opportunities.

This should not happen.

Who are The Department for Employment and Learning?

The Department for Employment and Learning is a government department in Northern Ireland.

They help people with disabilities to find a job and keep a job.

They do this by:

- offering job training before and after people get a job
- supporting people to find work placements and schemes
- supporting people to access further education
- working with jobcentres and employment service advisors
- offering advice to employers
- offering advice on employment rights.
Why people with disabilities find it hard to get a job

The Department for Employment and Learning do a lot to support people with disabilities.

People with disabilities need specialist support so they are ready get a job – unpaid, paid, or self employment.

People also need support to develop in a job so they can do their best in a job.

But there is still a problem because disability services do not always work together.

This plan will help to improve what The Department for Employment and Learning and other organisations do to support people with disabilities.

How this plan has been made

In 2012 a group of people from the disability sector was put together.

The group was made so that experts could decide the best way to improve how people with disabilities in Northern Ireland get a job.

There have also been events with people with disabilities, support workers, disability organisations and employers to find out what they think.
The plan

The group came up with 5 five key topics for the plan.

1. Supporting people to get a paid job.
2. Keeping a job and developing in a job.
3. Working with employers.
4. Research and development.
5. Strategic partnership and engagement.

Topic 1 - Supporting people to get a paid job

The Department for Employment and Learning want to have a disability service that will help people with disabilities get a job.

This could be an unpaid job, a paid job or self employment.

People with disabilities take part in different activities to help them get the right skills for a job.

This plan will help to link these services together.

So that people with disabilities get extra support to get a paid job.
What they will do more of:

The Department for Employment and Learning already help people with disabilities to get paid jobs.

To make sure this is done better they will improve what they already do, for example:

- Make sure programmes and services are flexible.
- Develop the working partnerships they have so more people can get pre employment support and support in work.

Other things they will do:

To get more people with disabilities into paid jobs
The Department for Employment and Learning will do more, for example:

- Have supported employment officers.
- Work towards the ‘Supported Employment’ model for people with significant disabilities who are trying to find and keep a job.
- Have a ‘Pathway to Employment’ so there is a clear sign posting and referral service for people with significant disability related barriers.
- Have a good system that will track the progress of people who are being supported.
- Set targets for the number of disabled people who get a job.
Topic 2 - Keeping a job and developing in a job.

It is important that people with disabilities get support when they get a job.

It helps people to keep their job.

Sometimes people with disabilities do not get this support.

The Department for Employment and Learning want to make sure this happens.

If employers are supported to support disabled people they will give more jobs to people with disabilities.

What they will do more of:

The Department for Employment and Learning already help people with job support.

To make sure this is done better they will improve what they already do, for example:

- Have a campaign to promote the services and programmes they have.
- See if existing programmes and services could support disabled people in part-time employment.
- Share examples of employers who have employed people with disabilities.
Other things they will do:

To give more on the job support The Department for Employment and Learning will do more, for example

- Have a new part of the ‘review’ process for everyone who is getting job support. And make sure there is a focus on developing in a job.

- Work with disability organisations to find out where there could be new jobs in areas that are growing.

Topic 3 - Working with employers

It is important that there is a good relationship with employer.

An employer needs to know about:

- what it is like employing people with disabilities
- the benefits of employing people with disabilities
- what they have to do by law

The Department for Employment and Learning will talk to different types of employers to find out:

- what they want if they employ someone with a disability
- if they have any worries about employing someone with a disability
- what their experiences of employing people with disabilities are.
The Department for Employment and Learning and other organisations will look at what employers say and build relationships with employers.

**What they will do more of:**

The Department for Employment and Learning already work closely with employers.

To make sure this is done better they will improve what they already do, for example:

- Work with the Equality Commission and other organisations so they know what an employer has to do by law.
- Give people who have significant disability related barriers more opportunities by using ‘social clauses’ with employers.
- Develop stronger links between the disability sectors.
- Go to more job fairs and recruitment events.

**Other things they will do:**

To make sure they work closer with employers The Department for Employment and Learning will do more, for example

- Develop a best practice recruitment support model that employers can use if they want to give people with disabilities a job.
• Run a large annual event for employers to find out information.

• Have a website and helpline for disability employers.

• Have disability advocates who can help change the attitudes and actions of employers.

• Have a boss who already employs people with a disability to talk about what it is like.

**Topic 4 - Research and development**

The Department for Employment and Learning want people to think that Northern Ireland is good at encouraging employment of people with disabilities.

**What they will do more of:**

The Department for Employment and Learning will make sure people think they are good, for example:

• Do a minimum of 1 big research project a year to find out more information on disability employment issues and share all disability research reports.

• Use information they have to make sure that any decisions made do not affect people with disabilities who are not ready for a job.

• Look at how much money can be saved by doing what this plan says.
Topic 5 - Strategic partnership and engagement

Disability organisations and disability user groups have said they are not always asked for their thoughts on disability employment topics.

And that they are not given enough time to say what they think.

The Department for Employment and Learning want to make sure people are part of any of their plans.

The Department for Employment and Learning used to have a disability liaison group. The group stopped in 2010.

The Department for Employment and Learning will look into creating a new group with a wider section of people and organisations.

What they will do more of:

The Department for Employment and Learning already to try include people.

To make sure this is done better they will improve what they already do, for example:

- Talk to more supporters and disabled people who want to get a job.
Other things they will do:

To include more people The Department for Employment and Learning will do more, for example:

- Make a new disability liaison group.

Have your say

If you would like to say what you think about this plan you can answer the consultation questions.

The questions are on page 13 and 14 of this document.

You must send your answers to us by:

5pm on Friday 27th November.

You can email your answers to:

des@delni.gov.uk

You can post your answers to:

Disability Employment Service
2nd Floor, Gloucester House
57-63 Chichester Street
Belfast
BT1 4RA
Freedom of Information

The Department for Employment and Learning will share the answers when the public consultation finishes.

Individual answers might be shared if someone asks to see them.

The Department for Employment and Learning can only not share personal answers in special circumstances.

The Department for Employment and Learning look after your personal information in accordance with the Data Protection Act (1998).

More information

If you have any questions about this plan contact:

Marina Smyth

Phone number: 02890 252 085
Consultation questions

1. Is it a good idea to have supported employment officers?
   YES ☐  NO ☐

2. Should there be targets for the number of disabled people who get a job?
   YES ☐  NO ☐

3. Is it a good idea to promote the disability employment services and programmes?
   YES ☐  NO ☐

4. Would an employer event help promote opportunities for people with disabilities?
   YES ☐  NO ☐

5. Is it a good idea to do research to find out more about disability employment issues?
   YES ☐  NO ☐

6. Do you think it is harder for people with disabilities to develop in their job?
   YES ☐  NO ☐

   Why do you think it is harder?
   ………………………………………………….
   ………………………………………………….
   ………………………………………………….
7. What support do you think would help disabled people have better opportunities in their job?


8. How should people be told about plans?


9. How can we represent disabled people in the new disability liaison group?


10. Any other comments or ideas that you have to help the employment of people with disabilities?


