

An
Employment
Framework

**For people with a
Learning
Disability
in Swindon**

28th February 2003

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Introduction

In 2001 the Government produced a white paper for learning disabilities called Valuing People. In the delivery plan we have been asked to put together a plan on how employment for people with learning disabilities can make the most of their skills and talents to get jobs. Work may not be for everyone, but a lot of people would like to work. Our Partnership Board thought that this framework was ok. They think that it is just the start. Carers in particular feel that we must quickly develop clear priorities and act on them. Until we have these priorities we won't make any real difference and this plan will not achieve anything. We are all committed to making sure that people with learning disabilities get at fair chance to get a job.

What is Already Happening In Swindon

There is a range of services that can help people towards the world of work:

- **Connect – Supported Employment:** Helps people to get paid jobs by offering training in basic skills for work. People will get job advice and guidance, key skills development, training and work experience. People are supported by a job coach who helps people settle into the work place and learn the job. Connect is managed by Swindon Borough Council - Housing and Social Services and is currently funded by Social Services and The European Social Fund. Connect has been working for ten years and has managed to help over two hundred people into paid work.

Unfortunately, it looks like Connect will not receive European Social Fund money after April 2003. So a major action point for this framework will be to find more money for Connect's future.

- **Enterprise Works:** Managed by Swindon Services, Enterprise Works provides work for people with disabilities in their workshop. They make fencing panels, sheds and other garden items. They have a printing service, assembly and packing service.

As part of the government's "Workstep" programme they will try to get their employees into open employment by employing a placement officer. This is seen as a positive way forward from sheltered workshops and will help "social inclusion" where people with disabilities work along side non-disabled people.

- **Workability:** This is a programme to prepare people for work. To use Workability, people have to go to the Job Centre and see the Disability Employment Advisors. This service is also managed by Swindon Services and works closely with Enterprise Works.
- **Taurus Skills Foundation:** This is a centre where people can get a qualification, work experience or open employment. People can get NVQs in Warehousing and other skills. They help get people ready for job interviews, filling in forms and ways to communicate.

- **Shaw Trust and Interwork:** Also help people get work. They provide some training and support to employers who give jobs to people with disabilities. To use these services, people have to go to the Job Centre first.
- **Jubilee Gardens:** This project is a registered charity set up to provide training for adults with learning disabilities. They help with to build people's skill with gardening, literacy, numeracy and help with many other skills. Although it is outside Swindon, there are a lot of local people using the service.
- **Schools and Colleges:**

Swindon College and New College can help with giving people skills that can help people move on to work or join the Connect scheme. Swindon College have special education services, which are set up for people with learning disabilities where basic skills can be learned.

Uplands school is a school for people with special needs up to the age of 19. Staff organise work experience and link in to other schemes in Swindon that can help get people into jobs. Crowdys Hill School also provides special education and many school leavers

are interested in going on into work or learning skill that can get work.

If there was different funding more training could be provided for people leaving school at 16. (At present they have wait until they are 18 years of age.) Working with people at a younger age, means that more people can have more choice about what they want to do in the future.

- **Connexions:** Connexions are soon to be in Swindon to help people move into to adulthood. It says in the White Paper (Valuing People) that they will need to work with disabled young people. Part of the Framework will be to make sure when they are involved with plans to develop work opportunities.
- **Job Centre Plus:** This is the Job Centre and the social security office coming together to provide a better service to people who claim benefits. They are involved in the Learning Disability Partnership Board, are interested in the Person Centred Planning and the Welfare to Work Planning Group. They are keen to help as many people who can or who want to work.

Improvements we can make

Although there seems to be a lot of services that can help people get work, there is still room for improvement:

- The Council, the Health Service and other public services need to increase the number of people with learning disabilities they employ.
- There needs to be more “mainstream” opportunities for people – this is where people can work in ordinary businesses along side non-disabled people.
- Sometimes the way services are funded means they can only take people who they think will be to get paid work in a short time. There needs to be ways where this is more flexible, so people who need longer to learn work skills can have more time.
- There needs to be better links with other organisations that can help people into employment. Connect have started this with holding meetings with service users at Upham Rd to see what help they need to get into work – if they want to work.
- There needs to be somewhere for people that is “half way” between the day centres and organisations like

Connect. People could attend to get ready for working and learn skills that can help: For example: Getting along with other people, Health and Safety, using transport, following instructions. Sometimes this is called “Basic Work Disciplines” – (This means what you need to do to become a worker and stay in work).

- Setting up Social Firms. This is a business that employs disabled and non-disabled people in a workplace where everyone can be supported. A Social Firm could offer training as well paid jobs. This type of project is becoming very popular all over Europe and was talked about in Swindon’s review of day services as another way of giving people more choices. We could also set up “social enterprises”. These are businesses that are seen to be helping the community and employ people with disabilities. Recycling is a good example.
- Making links with the Connexions service through the Learning Disabilities Partnership Board.
- We need to work to make sure there is enough money for Connect to carry on with the work they do.
- We need to work with teenagers while they are still at school to introduce them to work as a life choice.
- While many teenagers have part time jobs, this may not be an option for teenagers with learning disabilities. We will look at ways of making this possible with a job

coaching scheme for teenagers, where people of the same age are the Job Coaches

- Public service like the Council and the Primary Care Trust need to offer more work and training opportunities to disabled people especially people with learning disabilities. We also need to set employment targets in this area. This work needs to be done by the Welfare to Work Group.
- Person Centred Planning will highlight more need for services to help people find jobs.

WHAT WE WILL DO	WHY WE WILL DO IT	How much will this cost	WHO WILL DO IT	WHEN WE WILL DO IT
Meet with Connexions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work together to help younger adults and school leavers into work 	No cost		Once Connexions start work in Swindon
Talk to the personnel departments of Health Service, the Council and Civil Service local offices	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To find out how many people they employ with a disability now • To see what targets can be set 	No cost but will take a lot of time	Welfare to Work Joint Investment Planning Group	Dec 2002
Set targets for disabled people working in Public Sector – (e.g. Council, Health Authority and government offices) in Swindon	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To get more disabled people working in the public sector 	No cost Time	Welfare to Work Joint Investment Planning Group	March 2003
Make sure there is an employment champion on the Learning Disability Partnership Board	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The White paper requests this • So employment is on the agenda for change 	No cost	Learning Disability Partnership Board	Jan. 2003

WHAT WE WILL DO	WHY WE WILL DO IT	How much will this cost	WHO WILL DO IT	WHEN WE WILL DO IT
Connect & Upham Road to Review The meetings with clients about employment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To see if they are working well Decide if they need to change or work differently – or carry on Set up programmes for pre-employment 	No extra cost	Connect & Upham Rd	Dec. 2002
Find the money for Connect to continue to run	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Some of Connects funding ends in April 2003 New money may mean that Connect can offer their service to more people Connect is very popular and is the only service that helps people into employment 	At least £80,000 is needed	Social Services	As soon as possible – but before April 2002
Set up a Social Firm or Social Enterprise business	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This is a good way to help people into work and increase & learn work skills It is a part of the Day Services Review It is sometimes difficult for people to get into open work – in a social firm people still work and get paid the same wages as others, but they still are able to get support 	At least £60,000 to start a small firm	Connect – but other organisations in Swindon may be interested in this area & could be able to get money to set the up.	As soon as money available

WHAT WE WILL DO	WHY WE WILL DO IT	How much will this cost	WHO WILL DO IT	WHEN WE WILL DO IT
Monitor the progress of the Workstep programme	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To make sure people with learning disabilities are able to benefit from this scheme (invite manager of Enterprise Works to Learning Disability Partnership Board?) 	No cost	Welfare to Work JIP group & Learning Disability Partnership Board	Feb 2003
Improve links with other training and employment services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To ensure people with learning disabilities may be able to move on from (for example college to Connect or from Connect into further training) 	No cost	Welfare to Work Group	On going from Jan 2003
Make sure employers know about services to help people into work	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> So employers will employ more people with learning disabilities To ensure employers know about Connect, Taurus etc 	Costs met from Swindon Hidden Deprivation Partnership	Welfare to Work Group	Nov 2002
Develop a work assessment tool	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work out a way of knowing what training people need Find out what work people may be able to do What support people will need when they get into work 	There will be costs, it is about £300 per person	Welfare to Work	Jan 2003

Contacts

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