



SDEF
Scottish Disability
Equality Forum



Breaking Barriers

Disability in Employment



Scottish Disability Equality Forum
Leading Disability Equality in Scotland

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Executive Summary

To achieve the Scottish Borders Social Enterprise Chambers' vision of a society that welcomes and benefits from the skills, experience and unique perspectives disabled people bring to the workplace; we need to look seriously at breaking barriers to employment. This way we ensure that disabled people have access to the same employment opportunities as other citizens in Scotland.

To move forward, we need to be realistic about the work ahead, understand the challenges faced by disabled people, and then, most importantly, take the first steps to make change happen.

...we need to look seriously at breaking barriers to employment...

Across Scotland many of us wake up every morning and go out to work. Once in the office, the factory or the shop, we build friendships, contribute to the economy, take home a pay packet and perhaps also enjoy the feeling of being accepted and valued in our working environments. Disabled people are part of this picture; however opportunities for sustainable, meaningful employment remain thin on the ground.

Disabled people are still too often seen as 'high risk' and lose out on job opportunities in the towns and villages where they live. Once in work, there is often limited support and adjustment to help them stay in work. The impact of this is profound: 10% of unemployed disabled people have been out of work for five years or more, compared with 3% of non-disabled people (*Source: Office for Disability Issues*).

The majority of disabled people can work and want to work but without a change in policy, practice and public attitudes, there will continue to be too few opportunities for them to achieve their aspirations.

The benefits to be realised from this are understated, with the potential for substantial growth in the economy if many more disabled people were to achieve long term, sustainable employment.

This report highlights how small adjustments made by employers and employees can make a huge difference and help us to achieve our goals.

***Susan Grasekamp, Chief Executive Officer,
Scottish Disability Equality Forum***

***Margaret Simpson
Scottish Borders Social Enterprise Chamber***

Introduction

This document aims to provide helpful and supportive information for those who would like to know more about employing or working with a disabled person.

Through real life case studies, this document highlights the challenges that disabled people can face, and how an informed approach and open mind towards employing a disabled person can create a stronger, more diverse workforce based on the principles of equality.

Whilst this document offers helpful information on relevant legislation, it does not attempt to advise on all aspects of education and employment in terms of law or human rights. It aims to provide a more practical overview of the typical physical, psychological and social barriers which can prevent disabled people from gaining and retaining employment.

The case studies contained within this document provide honest and candid accounts which articulate the reality of the challenges that can be encountered by disabled people.

Whilst many of the barriers to employment are around the physical access to buildings and financial arrangements, we often discard the 'softer' elements which can have a detrimental impact. The case studies illustrate how attitudinal barriers can have as significant an impact on a disabled person as a physical barrier. Through an understanding of the social model of disability, this document seeks to demonstrate how attitudes in the workplace can change quickly to create a positive working environment.

This document is underpinned by one key aspiration of our society – to provide employment for all. For this reason, we ask that all employers and employees alike open their minds, assess the potential and opportunity, and most of all respect and treat themselves and other people as individuals.

The Purpose

The purpose of this document is to promote and mainstream independent living principles, which include access to education and employment for disabled people, providing equality of opportunity, and enabling them to participate as full and equal citizens in all aspects of life.

The intention of this document is to raise awareness amongst employees and employers of the positive aspects to be derived through the employment of a disabled person. It is also to inform of the differing experiences of employers and employees in the employment of disabled people in 'real life' case studies.



Independent living means:

“disabled people of all ages having the same freedom, choice, dignity and control as other citizens at home, at work, and in the community. It does not mean living by yourself or fending for yourself. It means rights to practical assistance and support to participate in society and live an ordinary life.”

The Objective

Disabled people should be provided with the same opportunities to achieve an education, have access to paid employment, and training that is equal to other citizens. They should have the chance to be active and valued at work, and the ability to access an appropriate income.

A society where:

- Disabled people have equal opportunities to access the labour market and educational opportunities
- Educators, employers, service providers and disabled people have greater awareness and understanding of issues and available support

What do we mean by Education and Employment for disabled people?

Inclusive employment refers to, and aims to promote, employment which enables an individual to gain access to decent remunerated work and not voluntary (unpaid) social activities. Although such may be an occupational activity for the individual they are considered as a social service rather than inclusive Employment.

The notion of decent work is defined by the following six principles:

1. Opportunity to work: every individual who wishes to work should be in a position to find employment
2. Voluntary work: it must be freely chosen
3. Productive work: adequate remuneration for the worker
4. Fairness at work: no discrimination at work or when seeking employment
5. Safety at work: health, social protection
6. Dignity at work: respectful treatment of disabled workers

Why is Education and Employment for disabled people important?

The aspirations of disabled people are the same to those of non-disabled people. They want to go on to further/higher education, get a job and to live independently.

Education can help to overcome some of the barriers to employment that young disabled people experience, whilst employment for all can assist in overcoming poverty and other barriers preventing disabled people's full participation in community and social life. Employment also has a positive effect on disabled people's feelings of self-worth, promoting health and well-being.

Promoting the principles of improved Education and Employment:

The UNESCO Salamanca Statement Framework for Action states, 'inclusion and participation are essential to human dignity and to the enjoyment and exercise of human rights.' In the field of education this is reflected in bringing about a 'genuine equalisation of opportunity.'

The partnership involved in the development and co-production of this document is committed to equality of opportunity in education and employment for all.

Why promote and encourage disabled people and employers to increase access to education and employment?

The following statistical information provides evidence that the employment rate of disabled people remains less than non-disabled people, and disabled people are less likely to be economically active. Similarly, disabled people are less likely to have access to gaining qualifications. This is fact as opposed to desire. Disabled people are equally keen to contribute to society, but this can only be achieved with the adoption of the Social Model (detailed on page 10) and a real change to attitudinal behaviours.

There has been an increase in the employment of disabled people in the last few years; however disabled people still experience lower rates of employment and lower pay than non-disabled people.

Employment rates vary considerably by impairment, with people with depression and learning disabilities the least likely to be in employment.

In Scotland, **40.8%** of disabled people were in employment compared to **78.9%** of non-disabled people. (**Source:** Annual Population Survey, July 013-June 2014, ONS)

In higher education 9% of all students declare a disability and in Further Education 13% of all students declare a disability. (**Source:** Scottish Funding Council, 2012/13)

The following tables provide statistical data on employment by age, gender and main health issue.

Table 1: Equality Act Disabled/Non-disabled Employment Levels and Rates (16-64) by Age Group, July 2013-June 2014

	Equality Act Disabled		Not Equality Act Disabled		All	
	Level	Rate	Level	Rate	Level	Rate
16-24	19,900	31.0%	290,700	54.9%	310,600	52.3%
25-34	39,200	50.1%	529,100	84.1%	568,300	80.3%
35-49	92,000	48.8%	777,800	90.3%	869,800	82.8%
50-64	99,400	35.1%	594,100	78.5%	693,500	66.7%
All	250,500	40.8%	2,191,700	78.9%	2,442,200	72.0%

Source: Annual Population Survey, July 2013-June 2014, ONS

Notes

1. Levels rounded to the nearest hundred.
2. Proportions are calculated on unrounded figures.

Table 2: Equality Act Disabled/Non-disabled Employment Levels and Rates (16-64) by Gender, July 2013-June 2014

	Equality Act Disabled		Not Equality Act Disabled		All	
	Level	Rate	Level	Rate	Level	Rate
Male	114,000	40.8%	1,150,800	82.9%	1,264,800	75.8%
Female	136,500	40.8%	1,040,900	74.9%	1,177,400	68.3%
All	250,500	40.8%	2,191,700	78.9%	2,442,200	72.0%

Source: Annual Population Survey, July 2013-June 2014, ONS

Notes

1. Levels rounded to the nearest hundred.
2. Proportions are calculated on unrounded figures.

Table 3: Equality Act Disabled/Non-disabled People
Employment Levels and Rates (16-64) by Main Health Issue,
July 2013-June 2014

	Equality Act Disabled		Not Equality Act Disabled	
	Level	Rate	Level	Rate
Arms, hands	19,200	48.3%	11,000	77.5%
Legs or feet	34,200	44.9%	14,400	79.3%
Back or neck	37,400	49.8%	13,900	77.2%
Difficulty in seeing, hearing or speech impediment	8,800	49.1%	8,100	77.0%
Chest, breathing problems	22,500	45.4%	56,000	77.2%
Heart, blood, pressure, circulation	15,300	41.6%	57,800	79.0%
Stomach, liver, kidney, digestion	18,000	52.8%	23,300	88.0%
Diabetes	12,200	56.4%	28,700	77.7%
Depression, bad nerves	28,900	32.6%	17,300	75.7%
Other problems, disabilities including epilepsy and learning difficulties	32,700	36.6%	52,500	80.4%

Source: Annual Population Survey, July 2013-June 2014, ONS

Notes

1. Levels rounded to the nearest hundred.
2. Proportions are calculated on unrounded figures.

Notes on changes to Disability Question in Labour Force Survey:

“Estimates from April 2013 onwards are not directly comparable with those from earlier periods. This is because there was a change in the reporting behaviour of survey respondents following changes to wording in the questionnaire, to bring it into line with the Government Statistical Service (GSS) Harmonised Standards for questions on disability.”

“Estimates, from April 2013 onwards, are based on the core definition of disability under the Equality Act 2010, as specified in the Government Statistical Service (GSS) Harmonised Standards for questions on disability. It includes people with a health condition or illness lasting 12 months or more that reduces their ability to carry out day-to-day activities. It excludes certain non-core groups covered by the Equality Act, such as those with progressive or past conditions that do not currently limit their activities, and conditions that only limit their activities without medication or treatment.”

Source: Scottish Government, Labour Market Statistics

The Legislative Context

This document assists and supports the delivery of the requirements contained within the Equality Act 2010, the United Nations Convention for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD) and the Human Rights Act 1998, all of which promote inclusion and equality of opportunity - including equal access to education and employment.

Whilst this document refers specifically to disabled people, it is supportive of all equality characteristics, to ensure successful employment becomes a reality for all people in Scotland regardless of age, ethnicity, gender, religion or sexual orientation.



United Nations



Human Rights

The Equality Act 2010



Models of Disability

Definitions and the language used are important because they form the basis of models. Models are not scientific or philosophical theories or ideologies.

They are merely ways of looking at things or situations. There are two predominant models of disability commonly in use in the UK; the Medical Model and the Social Model.

Medical Model

Under the Medical Model, disabled people are defined by their illness or medical condition. They are disempowered: medical diagnoses are used to regulate and control access to social benefits, housing, education, leisure and employment.

The Medical Model promotes the views of a disabled person as dependent and needing to be cured or cared for, and it justifies the way in which disabled people have been systematically excluded from society. Control resides firmly with professionals.

Choices for the individual are limited to the options provided and approved by the 'helping' expert.

The Medical Model is sometimes known as the 'individual model' because it promotes the notion that it is the individual disabled person who must adapt to the way in which society is constructed and organised.

The Medical Model is vigorously rejected by organisations of disabled people but it still pervades in many attitudes towards disabled people.

Social Model

The Social Model has been developed by disabled people in response to the Medical Model and the impact this has on their daily lives.

Under the Social Model, disability is caused by the society in which we live and is not the 'fault' of an individual disabled person, or an inevitable consequence of their limitations.

Disability is the product of the physical, organisational and attitudinal barriers present within society, which lead to discrimination. The removal of discrimination requires a change of approach and thinking in the way in which society is organised.

The Social Model takes account of disabled people as part of our economic, environmental and cultural society. The barriers that prevent an individual taking part in society are the problem, not the individual.

Barriers still exist in education, information and communications systems, working environments, health and social support services, transport, housing, public buildings and amenities. The devaluing of disabled people through negative images in the media – films, television and newspapers – also acts as a barrier.

The Social Model has been developed with the aim of removing barriers so that disabled people can have the same opportunity as everyone else to determine their own life styles. A simple example is that of a wheelchair user. He/she would not be disabled if he/ she lived in an environment which provided the ability to gain full access to buildings and their facilities in the same way that someone without his or her impairment could do.

The Social Model of disability has fundamentally changed the way in which disability is regarded and has had a major impact on anti-discriminatory legislation.

This document is based on the Social Model of disability.

Case Studies

The following case studies provide real life stories from employers and employees. The interviewees have given permission for the case studies to form part of this document.

Some names have been removed or changed to protect the identity of the interviewee.

We would like to convey our thanks to all who have shared their story for the purposes of this document.



- Case Study 1 The Employee, Rosie Duffy
- Case Study 2 The Employee, Ryan Evans
- Case Study 3 The Employee, Lottie Aither
- Case Study 4 The Employee, Rebecca Macaulay
- Case Study 5 The Employer, Grow to Work (G2W)
- Case Study 6 The Employer, The Green Team
- Case Study 7 The Employer, Aquarius Hair Design
- Case Study 8 The Employer, Scottish Borders Council Equality Scheme

Case Study 1: The Employee

Rosie Duffy, Age 23, Scottish Borders

Background

Rosie has a speech impediment, partial deafness and dyslexia in maths. At three years old Rosie had a heart bypass operation. She was schooled in Derby, using a loop system in primary school. At around the age of 12 she had an operation to insert Grommets which allowed her to attend high school without the need for any hearing assistance. After leaving school, Rosie attended college to study Art, Design and Photography, passing her course with merits. She later moved to Heriot to be with her boyfriend.

Experience

Since moving to Heriot Rosie has held two positions. The first being a seasonal position, with a shoe manufacturer, over the 2013 Christmas period. The second position was with a Chiropodist, within a Garden Centre, in June 2014.

After interviewing for the position of retail assistant in the chiropodist shop she was offered a two week trial period. Rosie's role was to serve customers, take payment using the cash register and answer the phone. Rosie did not retain employment after the two week trial period.

Rosie was advised this was because it was such a busy period for the store that the supervisor was unable to give Rosie the support she needed. Rosie however did not feel that she needed any more support than anyone else. She wasn't sure about answering the telephone and made a mistake on the cash register, but considered that this was common to most new starters.

Whether Rosie received the training and support that a new employee should receive is questionable. It was clear at the interview that they wanted someone who could start immediately, and although Rosie felt comfortable during the interview process, she did not feel that her needs were necessarily considered with respect to the job and was, in a sense, set up to fail. Ultimately, Rosie was uncomfortable in the role and with asking for more time.

These represent the only two interviews and paid jobs that Rosie has had. She has also done voluntary work with the PDSA charity shop.

Rosie has stated on her CV that she has a speech impediment and maths dyslexia but does not believe that this has any bearing on whether she is selected for an interview or not.

Aims & Objectives

As a result of Rosie's work experiences, she has realised that she would feel more comfortable in a position which does not place her directly in the front line, but allows her to familiarise herself with the job and pace herself so she feels more confident. Ultimately, Rosie would like to follow her passion and work in an art gallery/museum or in photography.

Support & Assistance

Momentum have been supporting Rosie, helping with job searching, writing her CV, completing job applications and interview skills. However, Momentum was unable to assist with the previous employment issues during her employment within the Chiropodists.

Transport

Rosie has her own car, though it is currently off the road, she does not encounter difficulties with respect to transport.

Financial

Rosie is in receipt of the Job seekers Allowance but not the DLA.

Recommendations

Rosie's messages are:

- to employers - offer the necessary time and support to help a new employee settle into their new role
- to those seeking work - she advises that they be honest about any special needs or support that they have, or need, right from the start

Case Study 2: The Employee

Ryan Evans, Age 27, Scottish Borders

Background

Ryan was born with Cerebral Palsy which affects his speech. He was schooled in Hawick, leaving at the end of fifth year with higher certificates in History, Mathematics and English. He enjoyed school immensely and had a supportive network of friends.

Experience

Ryan found searching for work very frustrating at first, being unemployed for 18 months after leaving school.

He has always stated on his job application forms that he had a disability but cannot be sure whether this has had any impact on not getting interviews.

Through the support of Ways2Work in Hawick, Ryan was offered an interview within a major retailer in Galashiels. He had a successful interview and was then given training. After the training the employer advised Ryan that he did not have the job.

Ways2work supported Ryan, and with supported representation, he was successfully reinstated at the supermarket. Ways2Work carried out a risk assessment of the employers premises prior to Ryan starting and despite the initial problems Ryan felt that the employer did demonstrate knowledge of his disability and needs.

Ryan held this employment for three and a half years, working a 7:00am – 10:00am shift. He was the only physically disabled employee. He did not have any special requirements to be able to do his job.

Ryan only had two negative comments about his experience with this employer. The first was with respect to his inability to get to work for three weeks during one winter when snow was particularly bad.

The employer insisted that Ryan should take the bus to work if he was unable to get there by car. However, Ryan does not like the bus for many reasons and refused. The employer then claimed two of the three weeks that Ryan had off from his holiday entitlement.

Ryan's second negative experience was with respect to his shift work. After working the early shift for so long, Ryan requested a later shift. The employer however refused, though the basis of this decision was not clear.

Ryan's mother and stepfather run 'The Elm Hotel' in Hawick. When a position became available there, he decided to leave the supermarket. He has been working there for the last three and a half years doing a variety of different work covering everything from administration to kitchen duties.

Support & Assistance

With respect to lessons learned, Ryan is clear that if he had not had the support of Ways2Work, he may not have actually got the job at the supermarket.

Communication was a big issue in this instance as it was not clear to Ryan why the job was withdrawn after his training.

Aims & Objectives

In addition to his job at the hotel, Ryan volunteers at Borders Interest Link and coaches Boccia - a precision ball sport for athletes with disabilities, twice a month in Galashiels for the Borders Sports and leisure Trust. He enjoys his role at the hotel very much; however he is passionate about sport and would like to have a career in that field of work.

Transport

Ryan owns his own car.

Financial

Ryan is in receipt of the DLA and Working Tax Credit.

Recommendations

Ryan's messages are:

- to employers - seek out and use the support that is available to you
- to employees - don't settle for a life on benefits, understand your limitations and keep trying!

Case Study 3: The Employee

Lottie Aither, Scottish Borders Social Enterprise Chamber (SBSEC)

Background

Lottie is a typical young woman from the Borders who really enjoys being with her friends and having a great time. Lottie has a physical disability that makes certain tasks difficult however, she doesn't let this hinder her ambition. Education was an enjoyable time for her as it was a very sociable activity. However it failed to keep her attention, or suit her learning style.

After finishing her 6th year, she went to college to follow a career in media, but soon realised that this was not the right path for her and decided to leave to look for opportunities locally. This was a challenge as opportunities were few and far between, and these were again reduced by her accessible requirements. Today, Lottie is employed by the Scottish Borders Social Enterprise Chamber.

Aims & Objectives

Lottie's main goal at this time is to maintain paid employment to help build on her real life skills. She feels she has a lot to offer and if she is able to find suitable positions she can offer a lot towards them. She is currently doing a distance learning course

Support & Assistance

On leaving college Lottie made contact with her local Job Centre. Fortunately, her mother knew the Disability Support Adviser and this made the process smoother. They put her in contact with the Shaw Trust for a six-month placement. This led her to paid work with SBSEC, where she is currently working. The support she gets within SBSEC has been vital to her development and confidence; it provides a non-judgmental environment that is supportive of her needs and more importantly, provides her with the time to display her many strengths.

Transport

Lottie travels to and from work independently as she has her own car, so transport is not an issue for her.

Financial

Through work with the Job Centre Lottie is receiving DLA and Working Tax Credits.

Lessons Learned

Lottie and her colleagues have learned that with the right support in place, all individuals can grow and can provide a positive contribution in the workplace.

Recommendations

Lottie's messages are:

- to employers - create a non-judgmental environment where people listen to your needs
- to employees - she would advise fellow employees to have confidence in themselves and in their ability
- to all - challenges are more easily overcome if people don't make assumptions

Case Study 4: The Employee

Rebecca Macaulay (Becca), Scottish Borders Social Enterprise Chamber (SBSEC)

Background

Becca lives in the Scottish Borders and is employed in two posts, which she started recently. Becca has a mental health condition, which was exacerbated while attending high school. Becca found her educational environment was not supportive or encouraging.

She felt that there was a complete lack of understanding of her and her condition. She left secondary education at the first available opportunity, and was referred to complete an activity agreement with support, from a local organisation. Today Becca is working at SBSEC and Encompass.

Aims & Objectives

Becca's ambition when at school was to be involved in Accounting. Unfortunately due to her disappointing experience within secondary education she was led to believe that this was not possible. However, she is currently completing a distance learning course, at which she is excelling. This is building her confidence in her own ability to learn, and she is able to apply these new skills within her current employment, at SBSEC and Encompass.

Support & Assistance

Support specific for Becca's needs was non-existent when in education and, if it wasn't for the support of her family, the outcome could have been a lot worse. The pivotal point for Becca was when she was referred to complete an activity agreement. The key factor in this process was the relationship she built with her key worker. It was this supportive relationship that led to Becca believing that she had a lot to offer in terms of

Feeling more confident, Becca applied for an opportunity at SBSEC where she is employed today. This employment has been successful as it has been supportive and has encouraged her to learn in a style that suits her needs. A big part of this success, Becca believes, is down to the supportive and non-judgmental approach of the employer.

Transport

The availability of local transport is not an issue for Becca. The main challenge presented is in the cost of travel, and the need to get to places of work. It's been challenging for Becca to meet the costs of this on the minimum wage.

Financial

Becca does not receive any additional financial support.

Lessons Learned

Through her life experience, Becca often feels penalised as her mental health condition is not a visual, physical condition. She feels less support is given to this disability, and would like to share her experience with others, so that they can consider providing more support and assistance to people with mental health issues.

Recommendations

Becca's messages are:

- to employers - listen to the individual and their needs, it really helps them to build their confidence
- to employees - a vital part in Becca's journey was the relationship with her key worker. Individuals should seek support available to them
- to funders - more funding to provide support for people, for example keyworkers. Such support can be of real benefit to build confidence and support people into employment

Case Study 5: The Employer

Grow to Work (G2W), Thornylee, by Galashiels

Background

Grow to Work (G2W) was established by Gregor and Deborah Scott, with the aim of providing supported employment to their son, who has a profound learning disability. G2W is based at the family farm at Thornylee in the Central Borders.

G2W is now a growing social enterprise, and offers work for young adults who find it harder than most to find employment. Trainees work as a team with other school leavers, many of whom have Autism or a learning disability. The small team are aged 16-23 and activities are matched to each person's interests and abilities.

Greg, whose background is in academia and research, is Co-Director and works in an unpaid capacity, as does G2W's other Co-Director. There are two members of staff employed directly by G2W and three employees on the Community Jobs Scheme.

There are a further two young men who attend as volunteers and who have been referred by support agencies to G2W.

Experience

The individuals work on flexible shift patterns to suit their needs and travel requirements. G2W have a great understanding of the differing needs of those they employ and provide variable hours to enable the best results in terms of meeting the needs of the employees and the business requirements.

The work is extremely physical and mostly outdoors. Activities include ground maintenance, landscaping and growing vegetables. Trainees have also learnt how to lay lawns, dig land drains, perform tree surgery, lay paths, build sheds and cut grass.

Many of the employees had not eaten or even heard of some of the vegetables grown at G2W, so one of the many benefits to working here is learning about crops and how to grow them. Employees also learn about healthy eating and well-being as part of their journey.

The G2W team benefit from a vibrant, committed management team, who truly have the desire to enable young people who find it difficult to obtain work due to their disability or other reasons, to become confident, skilled individuals.

G2W operate a 'buddy' system, where the skills, knowledge and expertise of individuals is assessed and employees are matched with a buddy to maximise output, share learning and provide support. G2W have found this system has promoted positive thinking amongst their workforce, where individuals are able to recognise the strengths and abilities of others first hand. Importantly, the majority of individuals referred to G2W by Community Jobs Scotland have progressed to full time college or have been offered permanent jobs at the end of their contract.

Aims & Objectives

G2W is open to all young people living in the Central Borders. G2W work closely with schools to identify pupils who would benefit from their 'hands on' approach to learning in an open environment. Most of their employees come from referral from Community Jobs Scotland. They do offer work experience opportunities, but often find there are restrictive barriers to doing this with great success or for longer periods of time. These for example, could be legislative or insurance requirements.

Their objective is to provide a true working experience and develop a range of rural skills. This enables every trainee to develop to their full potential, access the employment activity of their choice to enable young people to live independent lives.

Support & Assistance

G2W would not exist if it were not for Self Directed Support (SDS) payments which were essential when other sources of funding were not available. Applications had been made for enterprise funding (Firstport and Big Lottery) but were unsuccessful as it was considered that not enough people would benefit. Since being fully operational as a company and in November 2013, winning an award (Scottish Borders Supported Employment and Diversity Award for Best Social Enterprise 2013), Firstport and Unlimited have been to visit G2W and have encouraged the Directors to make an application for Tier 2 funding.

Transport

The G2W business management team recognise that a disproportionate amount of staff wages is spent on travel to and from work (around 15% of weekly income on average), due to its remote rural location in the Central Borders. However, they do all they can to support individuals to manage their outgoings effectively through car sharing, using bus passes etc.

Lessons Learned

Greg notes with gratitude, that the early survival of this business was only possible because he has a valuable network and many connections from his previous professional life. The network and connections have been fundamental in providing guidance, support and finding resolution to many of the barriers the founders of the business have faced.

He has also learned that individuals with learning disability, whether profound or minor, do not understand things in the same way as those without this disability. They usually do the work at the same pace, or understand how a business operates. Greg says 'most people with a learning disability will learn more effectively learning from experience, as opposed to a classroom environment.' Many people with a learning disability are illiterate, this does not mean they are not suitable for employment, but it does mean there they are less likely to understand the policies and procedures of a business, or employment rules.

He highlights current legislation presents many barriers to setting up, improving and managing a business. For example, obtaining Planning Permission for building works in the set-up and to develop their business premises has caused issues; delay in proposals and in some cases has meant they have not been able to pursue proposed growth in the business. Similarly, Health & Safety Legislation, Public Liability Insurance and Social Work legislation has prevented the employment of some volunteers.

The staff must be encouraged to share this ethos, and take responsibility and accountability for their part in retaining success.

Recommendations

Greg would advise considering the following before embarking on a venture similar to G2W:

- Be clear about the reason for your business, what you hope to achieve and what outcomes you expect
- Do it because you can realise the 'softer' benefits that can be derived from it. For example long term investment to build knowledge, skills and confidence in young people, which will enable them to make their own long-term choices and live independent lives□
- Use who you know and build your support network they will become critical to your survival
- Policy Officials and those who improve or create legislation should consider cross-policy development to ensure policies and legislation do not conflict, particularly around Employment, Social Work and Health & Safety legislation
- Know your limitations, for example, Health & Safety requirements on a farm prevent Greg from offering placements to physically disabled people
- Identify the problem and seek the solution. If you want to you will fix it!
- Ensure the Board of Directors and staff share the business objective and take accountability and responsibility for their own output
- Use videos or practical training sessions to explain to people with a learning disability the rules of employment, their contract or Health & Safety requirements. Many people with Learning Disabilities are illiterate, and cannot read or will not retain large amounts of text.
- Ensure the task fits with the individuals abilities, skills and desired objectives, not the other way around or the individual is likely to fail

The Grow to Work Team



Comments from the workforce

Greg's son Callum says:

"Dad is the boss; I am the farmer and the lads help".

Read one of the employees' testimonials*. This young person has seen their life change around since becoming employed with Grow to Work. He confesses that prior to his employment he was idle, and had bad sleeping and eating habits.

*

<https://drive.google.com/viewerng/viewer?a=v&pid=sites&srcid=Z3Jvd3Rvd29yay5vcmcudWt8Z3Jvdvy10by13b3JrfGd4OjVkyjYyMml4ZWNiMjl2M2I>

For more information follow this link to the Grow to Work website <http://www.growtowork.org.uk/>

Case Study 6: The Employer

The Green Team, Hawick

Background

The Green Team started its life as a day centre managed by the Scottish Borders Council; however, in 2006 it established itself as a social enterprise, with charitable status, providing employment and training for adults with learning disabilities in the Scottish Borders. Its business provides a range of garden services to customers, as well as producing garden furniture including benches, planters and bird boxes.

The Green team is based in the historic Scottish Borders town of Hawick and cover the Borders area. It provides services on a one-to-one and contractual basis on a range of jobs for commercial and residential customers across the Scottish Borders. A Board of Directors manage the business of the organisation. There are two full-time and three part-time members of staff, with a self-employed Joiner assisting with day-to-day work. The organisation hopes to extend their working team to include a Research Officer.

The team who provide services are aged 18+ and work on a voluntary basis. The majority of recruits are referrals from the Department of Social Work.

Experience

The Green Team currently provide around 35 training and volunteering placements per week, with approximately 17 people working there at the time of writing this case study.

Some of the team members come as short-term placements, work experience from school for example. These individuals are allocated to a team who have been volunteering in the organisation for longer. The 'buddy up' and provide support and

The Green Team has two grass-cutting squads and another squad learning woodworking skills. The team environment and tasks allocated help team members to understand and prepare them for employment, as well as helping them to develop their social skills and friendships.

Trainees are encouraged to work towards a recognised qualification and each has an individual personal action plan, which is reviewed to consider progress and learning support.

Aims & Objectives

The Green Team aims are to:

- Give people with a learning disability opportunities to contribute to society and the economy by creating routes for transition from day care services and schools
- Provide people with a learning disability with meaningful activity, ownership and purpose in moving toward employment
- Build relationships between those with a learning disability and communities in the Scottish Borders, to address stigma, develop openness and demonstrate the value brought to communities by disabled people
- Use a workplace environment to provide vocational skills, social skills and other softer skills for people with learning difficulties
- Develop links with local and national employers to provide routes from the organisation into supported and independent work

Support & Assistance

The Green Team continue to be supported by the Scottish Borders Council. The Voluntary Action Fund (VAF) also provides the organisation with support on funding and development issues.

Transport

Transport can cause issues for The Green Team as they are located in the Borders and transport methods, timetables and costs can vary enormously. The organisation provides a pick-up service, tending to collect the volunteers at an agreed location. However, they also recognise this is restricted as the vehicle can only seat six passengers at a time.

Financial

The Green Team has a service level agreement with the Scottish Borders Council. This along with funding from contractual arrangements, and sponsorship (some local organisations provide supplies for their crafts and garden furniture) provides the finance to fund the placements.

The organisation, with the support of the Board and their employed members of staff, seek to continually improve their business. They are actively seeking to increase their funding to expand their organisation.

Lessons Learned

The management team have realised every day is a school day with learning for both the volunteers and the employed staff. New issues crop-up on a regular basis, as they do with any business; however people with learning difficulty learn things differently, manage things differently and react differently. However, if the time is taken to find out how to get the best from people with learning disability, then the best is what you will get!

Again, those managing operations have found operating ‘normal’ business working hours is challenging. People with a learning disability have differing needs. Some may need to take medication early in the morning, for example, which will mean it is not safe for them to operate machinery. Flexible working hours are a must, where the business is designed to suit the needs of the team and not the other way around.

The Business Development Manager, speaking on behalf of the Green Team, says “my experience of people with learning difficulties is that they are reliable, enthusiastic, good workers, whose attendance is good”.

Recommendations

Gilbert McBride, The Green Team, Business Development Manager, advises as follows:

- Don’t assume what people can and can’t do – ask and explore! One of the volunteers at the Green Team has learning difficulties, but has a fantastic memory and has brought a sizable amount of income into the organisation through the sale of kindling
- Don’t assume disabled people are unhealthy and will not come to work. He has found the team is reliable, committed and honest
- Do ensure you provide adequate supervision for any task which involves operating machinery and when working outdoors to ensure all staff are protected and safe
- Do know the strengths and weakness of the team. This enables you to allocate tasks effectively, and therefore, you will get better results
- Do give people with learning difficulty time to express themselves, and remember many can only focus on one thing at a time. He reminds us, this is not a problem if you are trying to sell something!

The Green Team

The photographs below show some of the team and an example of the work they do.



For more information follow this link to the Green Team website: www.bordersgreenteam.org

Case Study 7: The Employer

Aquarius Hair Design

Background

Morag Sterrick, winner of the 2012 Scottish Borders Business Diversity Award, owns a hair salon in Earlston. Other than herself she employs two other members of staff; a qualified hair stylist and an assistant named Megan.

Megan, 22 years old, is an enthusiastic and amiable individual who has a love of working with hair. She also has Down's Syndrome.

Experience

Although Megan has been working with Morag for nine years, she has only recently begun a relevant course at college. Getting the college to accept Megan on to an SVQ Level 1 Hairdressing course has been an incredible struggle for Morag and Megan's family.

The first application to the college was in 2012. An interview was held to assess Megan's application at which Morag and Megan's mother were present. No reader or scribe was present, however, as per the requirements of the interview, and the outcome was negative. The second time an application was made, the college told them 'not to bother'. Morag challenged the college, using its own Disability Inclusion Policy against them, and won. This process took one year to complete.

Prior to this Megan attended a five year Access Course at the college, based on skills development. However, during a meeting at the end of 4th year between Morag, Megan's family and the college, it became apparent that the lessons had not been adapted in any way to suit Megan.

She switched off during lessons on topics such as ‘Mortgages and Taxation’ as she did not understand the relevance to her work. Given that the Access Department exists to educate students of varying needs, Morag felt this clear lack of course adaptation for Megan was a disgrace and made a formal complaint to the college Depute Principal.

Aims & Objectives

Although Megan has now been accepted onto the SVQ Level 1 Hairdressing course, there are still concerns with respect to how she is being taught. She does one day a week at the college on a one-to-one basis and is trained by Morag in the salon during the rest of the week. Morag is determined to ensure Megan receives the same level of training as anyone else and is ready to step in if necessary to address any issues with respect to this. However, as there is no single point of contact at the college for Megan, it is often difficult to get the information she needs.

Support & Assistance

Clearly, Morag is an employer who supports equality of opportunity. In a small business environment, Megan is the second individual with a disability whom she has employed. Sadly, due to her one-to-one support needs, the first lady had to leave her employment when Morag went on maternity leave as there was no other person to provide that support.

Morag differs from others in that she does not see an individual’s disabilities and is not interested in what a person cannot do. She is interested in what they can do. As such she is driven to overcoming obstacles such as the ones she has encountered with the college and has done so with little or no help from external agencies.

In Morag's experience the focus of the majority of the organisations she has dealt with is on placing people with disabilities into work, after that the employer is on their own. There is a lack of sign posting from the relevant bodies to ensure that Morag is supported in the employment of Megan. In particular, the problems that have been encountered at the college are of concern given their documented policy on Equalities, Diversity and Inclusion.

Transport

Megan makes her own way to work.

Financial

Morag is unaware of any financial incentives or support for employing someone with a disability.

Lessons Learned

Aside from issues with obtaining a college education for Megan, Morag has had to deal with biased approaches towards Megan from both staff and customers. Her previous stylist for instance could not understand why Morag bothered with Megan, assuming that she could not do the work set for her.

This was an opinion shared by some of Morag's clientele, who felt uncomfortable with Megan in the salon. However, Morag has stood firm by her decision to hire Megan and her belief in her abilities, leading others by example. The walls of her salon are adorned with photos of hair styles like many others, but they also show pictures of Megan and one in particular of the whole team holding up their L'Oreal Diplomas, Megan's face is a joy to behold. Morag now has a number of clients who avidly follow Megan's development, asking to be brought up to date at each visit to the salon and Morag's current stylist is completely supportive of Megan.

Recommendations

When asked what advice she would give to others in her profession who might consider employing someone with disabilities, Morag's message is this:

'For each student with enthusiasm, determination and the talent required, regardless of whether they are disabled or not, the barriers can be removed if the salon owner can demonstrate the contribution that the student is capable of making. This would be the same in any industry.'

In terms of barriers and obstacles Morag is very clear – *'it is a matter of seeing the capability of the student and accessing the people who make the decisions'*.

Case Study 8 (Policy Based Study): The Employer Scottish Borders Council Equality Scheme

The Scottish Borders Council's Equality Scheme states:

“We value and celebrate the diversity that exists within our community and look to see it reflected in our workforce. We are committed to creating a working environment in which everyone can take full part. We aim to integrate fairness and equal opportunities into every aspect of our employment practices.”

Background and Policy Support

The Employment Support Service was established in 2013 to improve Scottish Borders Council's performance in providing supported employment and to develop a workforce more representative of the general population within the area.

Scottish Borders Council has made a commitment to significantly improve its track record by offering work opportunities to those furthest from the labour market.

To support the Equality Scheme statement and further improve the Council's current performance for equality and diversity as an employer, it has approved the introduction of a corporate Work Opportunities Scheme.

Aims & Objectives

The aim of the Work Opportunities Scheme is to give the participant the opportunity to be part of a working environment where they can receive training, experience and employability skills. It will do this by improving the employment prospects of:

- The long term unemployed
- Young people
- People with mental health issues
- Disabled people

What does the Work Opportunities Scheme provide?

The Work Opportunities Scheme provides the following options to promote a holistic and flexible approach to employment:

- Work experience and job taster sessions
- Student placements
- Work placements (including industrial and academic placements)
- Apprenticeships and traineeships
- Seasonal employment
- Graduate opportunities and Internships
- Work opportunities for care leavers
- Paid work/ learning employment

Support & Assistance

The Council operates this system by means of a two-way process where staff mentor the participant, providing the opportunity to improve their own knowledge and skills, whilst the participant receives the same benefit.

Where to get more information

Contact: Bruce Brodie at Scottish Borders Council
Telephone: 01835 824000

Acknowledgements

This report was developed by the Scottish Disability Equality Forum (SDEF) in co-production with the Scottish Borders Social Enterprise Chamber (SBSEC), and with valuable contributions from a number of national and local groups and agencies.

The case studies contained within the document were provided by real people from within the Scottish Borders, and provide a realistic perspective of some of the barriers experienced by disabled people long before getting into the workplace.

We wish to thank those who shared their personal experiences with us for the purpose of this report, and that others might learn from their experiences.

We also wish to acknowledge the local Enterprises, large and small, who have shown a real commitment in championing the potential of their disabled staff.

The Scottish Borders Social Enterprise Chamber are pleased to be an active part of the growth in the number of Social Enterprises in the Scottish Borders, many of which SBSEC helped to establish.

SBSEC was able to offer a number of opportunities reported in this document through both the Community Job Scheme (CJS) and the Wage Incentive Scheme. SBSEC acknowledges the unequivocal support it has received from the Scottish Council for Voluntary Services (SCVO), for allowing the Chamber the flexibility to work with its members to ensure that we can offer these CJS posts and to ensure that we have access to training.

The report also recognises the work of the Supported Employment Network and the Employability Service that operate across the Scottish Borders, and the support currently available to potential employers to ensure that the ambitions of our disabled people can be realised.

SBSEC owe a debt of thanks to staff and members, without whose dedication and hard work we could not have accomplished what we have set out to achieve in this report.

Finally, we are grateful to you the reader, for taking the time to read and consider this document. We would hope that this report prompts you to ask yourself the question:

‘What would **you** do to break down the barriers?’

***Susan Grasekamp, Chief Executive Officer,
Scottish Disability Equality Forum***

***Margaret Simpson
Scottish Borders Social Enterprise Chamber***

Next Steps

Moving forward, we have written this document to raise awareness and demonstrate how small improvements, and the will to support, can have an enormous impact.

The next step is to work with our partners on two very specific projects:

The first 'The Life Cycle', is a project to employ a disabled person(s), record the journey from both the employers' and the employees' perspective, articulate the lessons learned and provide recommendations.

The second project 'What's in it for me?' will provide an evidence based document which will demonstrate the benefits of employing a disabled person.

Useful Links

- Making Access Work 4 You
<http://www.makingaccesswork4you.org.uk/>
- A Working Life for All Disabled People: The Supported Employment Framework for Scotland
<http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Resource/Doc/303584/0095164.pdf>
- Working for Growth, A refresh of the Employability Framework for Scotland
<http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Resource/0040/00402275.pdf>
- The Independent Living in Scotland Project
<http://www.ilis.co.uk/>
- Inclusion Scotland
<http://www.inclusionScotland.org/>
- Scottish Borders Social Enterprise Chamber
<http://www.sbsec.org.uk/>
- Scottish Consortium for Learning Disability
<http://www.sclld.org.uk/information/employment/work-benefits/stories>
- Scottish Union of Supported Employment
<http://www.susescotland.co.uk/resources/implementation-project-resources/>

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