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Mini-Guide for Employers of Young People with Special Educational Needs & Disabilities

I am pleased to have been asked to introduce the Special Education Needs Employment Links (SENEL) Mini-Guide for employers. Supporting young people with special education needs and disabilities, and helping them into employment, is something which is very much in harmony with the Government.

People with special educational needs and disabilities are presently under-represented in the labour market and it is clear that as a result many employers are losing out on the skills and knowledge of a significant proportion of the population. Each person looks at various situations and problems differently, and the more diverse a work force is the stronger it will be.

SENEL recognises that employers can really benefit from employing individuals with special educational needs and disabilities. Whilst this guide cannot address all the individual differences that young people with special educational needs and disabilities will have, it does give helpful examples of real life stories where young people with special educational needs and disabilities show how they can contribute towards all sorts of teams in business.

Many young people with special educational needs and disabilities will have particular talents and employment skills which will be of benefit to a wide variety of companies. SENEL encourages you to use links with the local Department for Work and Pensions for up-to-date information and support. Useful links and information can also be found by visiting the SENEL website.

As the MP for Northampton North I am happy to support the SENEL project- and I hope that you will agree with me that young people with special educational needs and disabilities can benefit your company.

Michael Ellis

Member of Parliament for Northampton North

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Introduction to the Mini-Guide

What's in this for you?

- As an employer, you are looking to match the right person with the right job.
- You will be looking for young people who can grow and develop, at the same time growing and developing your company.
- You are keen to explore the idea of corporate responsibility, as well as exploiting the potential of the available workforce.
- You want to be legislation compliant.
- You will be employing someone with a **difference**.

This **Mini-Guide** introduces the benefits of employing young people with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND).

Advantages for employers: getting the right person for the right job

- People who have SEND have many skills and talents that make them ideal employees.
- Often only simple adjustments (which can have little or no cost to employers) may be needed.
- With employee support in place, there could be reduced absenteeism, stress and anxiety.
- Loyalty to your company and to you may be stronger.

Challenging thinking:

- The first challenge is to think about the specific requirements of the job vacancy you have.
- Use the table below to state which skills you consider to be essential / desirable for the vacancy.
- Try to be open-minded when matching an individual to the specific skills required for the job.
- Remember, it may be appropriate to assign a repetitive task.

Essential Skills	Desirable Skills

Frequently Asked Questions

You may never have thought of employing someone with a disability before and may have lots of questions you would like answered. Support is out there for you! Listed below are some of the Frequently Asked Questions from employers:

Q1. What are the cost implications?

None! Any additional costs will be met by Access to Work.

Q2. What funding streams are available?

Money is available to anyone with a recognised disability, of working age and who is able to work a minimum of 16 hours each week.

Q3. How many hours can a person with disabilities work?

However many hours you agree with them, but a minimum of 16 hours each week for help with funding.

Q4. What kind of adjustments do I need to make?

These can be really simple, depending on the person's individual needs.

Q5. What support is available for me as an employer?

Speak to a DWP Work Coach / Employer Adviser at your local Jobcentre, who can offer ongoing support

Q6. What would be the role of a mentor/ work coach/ named supporter for the young person with SEND?

Young people can access support to help find, keep and get on in a job.

More information

Click on the links below for additional information on Gov.UK, copy the web addresses, or go to SENEL website (www.ped.muni.cz/senel) for links.

Work Choice

www.gov.uk/work-choice/what-youll-get

Access to Work

www.gov.uk/access-to-work

How to use this guide

In 2012 we produced a framework called the '**Roadmap to Inclusion**'. This used **three dimensions of inclusion** to provide statements to consider good inclusive practice. The three dimensions were **cultures, policies and practices**.

Cultures

All businesses create their own culture where beliefs and attitudes underpin and affect the behaviour of all employees and trainees.

Policies

National, local and in-house policies of a business or workplace provide concrete guidance and direction for the development of an inclusive environment.

Practices

These are how the people in the business or company behave in practice. Using this way of looking at your business can ensure that people with diverse SEND are fully included in your workforce.

*This mini guide provides **case studies** to explore how to implement these **inclusive dimensions of cultures, policies and practices and employability skills** to identify and harness the **strengths and talents** of young people with SEND to develop valuable employees.*

Your person with SEND

Your Cultures

- Employees with SEND not excluded or discriminated against.
- Open collaboration and communication encouraged.
- Atmosphere of trust and respect.
- Success encouraged.

Your Practices

- Organisation responsive to staff diversity.
- Organisation encourages understanding of differences.
- Expertise of all employees is utilised.
- New employees are helped to adapt to work.

Your Policies

- Each employee's strengths valued.
- Every employee valued equally.
- Recruitment open to all applicants.

Which employability skills are you looking for?

Check out the Roadmap to Inclusion

(Available on our website)

How does this work in practice?

The following pages are examples of real employees with a range of SEND.

In this **Mini-Guide** we recognise that:

- Not everyone with SEND fits into a neat label or category.
- Every individual human being has their own pattern of strengths and weaknesses - not just people with SEND.
- In this guide we are just showing you a small sample of some young people with SEND we have met in this project who are successfully employed.

For more information about different SEND, please consult our website:

www.ped.muni.cz/senel

Follow the link **For Employers** and click on **Useful Organisations**

The case studies

No two young people with SEND are the same, but they all have many strengths and talents they can offer to the workplace. We have included stories of young people with a wide range of challenges. Further information about what the SEN and disabilities are and how they can affect an individual, can be found by looking at the links on our website.

Simple adaptations

Very small, and often free, adaptations can make your workplace accessible to a young person with SEND. For more information about any adjustments you might need to make to allow a young person with these different kinds of special needs and disabilities to succeed and support your organisation, please refer to our website. Alternatively, further guidance and information can be accessed by contacting your local **Jobcentre+**.

Giving people a chance

Many employers have found it very rewarding, from both a social and a financial viewpoint, to give young people with SEND a chance to succeed: what might seem to be taking a small risk can provide you with a better workforce! Check out our stories. These are all real young people from across Europe.

The Mini-Guide focuses on specific young people and through the case studies information has been included about the challenges they faced, how these challenges were overcome and how the young person with disabilities can still demonstrate employability skills.

Now meet:

- **Lizzie**, a highly-valued customer care assistant who has Turner Syndrome.
- **Ellie**, a successful and confident beauty therapist who has dyslexia.
- **Florian**, a very enthusiastic employee in the hospitality field who has learning disabilities.

Lizzie — a customer care assistant & a young person with Turner Syndrome

Social Competences

Communication

- Is able to communicate effectively with customers and has a friendly, approachable nature.
- Can deliver excellent customer service and gives 100%.

Working with others

- Works well in a team.

Being adaptable

- Can work independently and complete a variety of different tasks.

Practical Skills

Problem solving

- Asks for help when solving problems.

Managing Information

- Is able to ask for clarification. Can follow set guidelines and procedures.

Using technology

- Able to process customer orders using computerised tills.

Work Competences

Working safely

- Is aware of health and safety regulations.

Being responsible

- Has a smart appearance and her time keeping is good.

Learning continuously

- Has a positive work ethic and seeks advice.
- Knows her own strengths and weaknesses.

Quotations

Lizzie says: "This job has helped me develop my confidence in dealing with the public."

Quote from Lizzie's employer: "Lizzie makes sure that customers have an exceptional experience by putting them first. She always has a smile on her face while working, making it easy for customers to approach her."

What is Turner Syndrome?

It is a genetic disorder that only affects females and can cause them to be shorter than average. Hearing loss may also be present.

www.nhs.uk/Conditions/Turners-syndrome/Pages/Introduction.aspx

Adjustments made: Mentoring scheme

Ellie — a beauty therapist & a young person with dyslexia

Social Competences

Communication

- Ellie has excellent communication skills. She is friendly and approachable with customers and the team.

Working with others

She helps and supports others, especially new members of staff with training ,on the job's strategies.

Being adaptable

She can work independently or in a team.

Practical Skills

Problem solving

- She records processes and uses this information to problem solve and share with new staff members.

Managing Information

- She asks for help and support when needed.
- She can use her initiative.

Using technology

- She struggles with spelling of text messages and emails.
- She is confident in using computerised payment tills, appointment bookings and stock control.

Work Competences

Working safely

- She is aware of all health and safety within a salon setting.

Being responsible

- She is smart and well-presented.
- She is reliable and her time keeping is good.

Learning continuously

- She has a positive work ethic.
- She seeks advice.
- Ellie knows her own strengths and weaknesses.

Quotations

Ellie says: "*This job is invaluable and will help me fulfil my dreams of seeing the world.*"

Quote from Ellie's employer: "*Ellie gets on very well with all clients, supports new members of staff. She has a professional confident approach.*"

Adjustments made:

- Support for proofreading and checking text.
- Records processes in a notebook.

Florian — a qualified employee in hospitality & a young man with learning disabilities

Social Competences

Communication

- Florian learnt to overcome his insecurity and to talk to customers in a friendly and open way.

Working with others

- Florian can ask for help and advice if needed.

He is always ready to support and help in his small team.

Being adaptable

- If he is criticized he understands this as a way of doing it better.

Practical Skills

Problem solving

- He asks for help if he doesn't understand and tries out new strategies to solve problems.

Managing Information

- Florian shows initiative in his work.
- He seeks out new ideas to try in the cafe.

Using technology

- He is able to work with all the technology in the kitchen and on the cash register.
- He is very careful with all his tasks around money.

Work Competences

Working safely

- Florian is aware of the needs of hygiene in his workplace, he always considers safety and health aspects.

Being responsible

- Florian is friendly and respectful with his customers and his team colleagues.
- He is punctual and industrious.

Learning continuously

- He is ready to learn more each day.

Quotations

Quote from Florian's employer: *"I can rely on Florian a 100 percent. He stays longer without complaining, when we have a lot of work to do."*

Adjustments made:

- Support for proofreading and checking text.
- Processes recorded in a book as a reminder.

The Partnership

This guide was produced by the SENEL partners who would like to thank all the young people and their employers who so generously shared their stories with us.

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