

## Valuing People: Employing More People with Learning Disabilities in the NHS

### Objectives

By March 2017

1. The NHS will be a more progressive employer that has a more diverse workforce representative of patients it serves. This will be done by employing more people with learning disabilities<sup>1</sup> than at present, including through its supply chain.
2. The NHS will have laid the foundations for sustaining long term improvements in its employment of people with learning disabilities. This will be done by creating NHS specific tools and guidance that will enable organisations to remove barriers and encourage recruitment.
3. Employing people with learning disabilities will not only benefit people with LD by increasing their independence, health and wellbeing but also NHS organisations. NHS organisations that are employing people with learning disabilities have already seen the benefits of a diverse and inclusive culture (shown through the case studies).

### Core Principle

People with learning disabilities have a right to have meaningful employment based on their own individual choices.

### What we have done

Since the last paper to EDC we have:

- We have been working closely with key stakeholders: the strategic partners, LD programmes across the NHS and NHS Employers to determine the direction of the programme.
- By working with key stakeholders we have created building blocks and a set of case studies to help NHS organisations take action to remove barriers and encourage recruitment. We have published this on the NHS Employers webpage as a part of the programme launch.
- Launched the programme during Learning Disabilities Awareness Week (June 17<sup>th</sup>) to show the NHS's commitment to the Five Year Forward View and to the LD agenda. The launch was intended to build interest in the programme and encourage NHS organisations to start thinking about getting their organisation ready.
- To gain momentum, during Learning Disabilities Awareness week we participated in the market place in London and Leeds (16<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup>), Lela Kogbara wrote a blog and we released a press release following Simon Steven's speech on the 17<sup>th</sup>.
- Undertaken an Equality and Health Inequality Impact Assessment (EqIA).
- Wrote a letter to CCG Clinical Leads / AO, NHS provider HR directors / CEOs from Danny Mortimer and Jane Cummings that was sent out on June 23<sup>rd</sup>. The purpose of this letter is to encourage NHS organisations and HR directors to start reviewing their hiring practices and to start thinking about how to get their organisation ready, an sign-up for engaging in the programme. So far, 51 NHS organisations have expressed an interest in working with us in the development of the programme.
- Met with the Staff Council and the EDC data subgroup and received helpful feedback and support that will help with the next steps for roll out in September, particularly for

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<sup>1</sup> The three core criteria for a learning disability are (1) significant impairment of intellectual functioning, (2) significant impairment of adaptive/social functioning, and (3) age of onset before adulthood. This project covers LD and not specific learning difficulties such as dyslexia.

development of some specific elements of the guidance (e.g. relating to agenda for change) and also for establishing monitoring.

### **Next Steps and Key Milestones**

The programme team will lead the work to develop the tools and guidance to support NHS organisations and build momentum after the launch during learning disabilities awareness week. A communications and engagement plan is in development. We will continue to build a strong commitment to a more diverse workforce and make it easier for NHS organisations to hire people with learning disabilities.

Over the summer we plan to:

1. Build on existing resources to create a set of tools and guidance in collaboration with NHS Employers, PHE, DWP, HR directors networks, and VSCEs to
  - Identify areas of best practice and evidence of what works
  - Making the tools and guidance NHS specific (addressing agenda for change)
  - Develop pathways for people into employment, both through job creation and the concept of starter jobs
2. Test the resources with stakeholders and people with learning disabilities. Three engagement points are being planned over the summer to test and get feedback, including from the 51 providers who have responded to the letter, Staff Council and strategic partners.
3. Determine a mechanism for measuring the success of the programme:
  - Develop a 'pledge' that NHS organisations can sign-up to, demonstrating that they are 'ready' to employ people with learning disabilities (e.g. implemented key elements of best practice from the tools and guidance).
  - Define options and methods for data collection to measure the success of the programme over the coming years.

In the autumn we plan to roll out the tools and guidance across the NHS. To start measuring the programme, we intend to create a checklist/ pledge for NHS organisations to sign up to once their organisation has started removing barriers. This pledge will be cross referenced with the data measurements to determine the scope of change.

1. Start building local and regional networks to share learning with other organisations and provide support, and with other NHS organisation who area already practicing this work.
2. Create peer to peer networks and facilitate learning though regional training sessions.
3. Keep the momentum of the launch high by participating in events such as the NHS Employers Diversity Conference in September.
4. Find other ways of motivating people to take action such as thinking about initiatives like the Times Top 100 employers, charity-led most improved award

### **Questions for EDC**

- Are you happy with this approach?
- What is the best way for us to ensure that NHS organisations engage with these objectives to ensure that we are making a sustainable difference?
- What are the other options to keep momentum going and to get buy-in?