

**Equality and Diversity Council Meeting Paper**  
**Valuing People: Employing More People with Learning Disabilities in the NHS**

**20<sup>th</sup> January, 2016**

### **Background and context**

NHS England and NHS Employers have partnered to support the NHS in becoming a more progressive employer that has a diverse workforce, representative of the patients it serves. The NHS Learning Disability Employment programme aims to significantly increase the number of people with learning disabilities employed in the NHS.

The Programme is aimed at employing people with learning disabilities; however we expect the programme to have wider benefits to other categories of disability and other historically disadvantaged groups as the NHS becomes both more accessible and more diverse.

### **Action taken to date**

Since September 2015, the programme has focussed on raising awareness and laying the foundations for tangible and sustainable improvement in the number of people with learning disabilities employed by the NHS. It has

- Published practical tools and guidance to: raise awareness, highlight good practice and give practical tips on how to break down barriers in employing people with learning disabilities.
- Launched a three step pledge to encourage organisations to commit to employing people with learning disabilities and demonstrate their progress. It also enables us to monitor progress of the programme by the number of organisations that pledge to each step: (i) commitment; (ii) ready; and (iii) success.
- Delivered three engagement events designed for NHS organisations to: (i) understand the practical steps needed to employ people with learning disabilities; (ii) learn from NHS organisations already doing good work; and (iii) facilitate opportunities to build local networks with support organisations.
- Facilitated the creation of partnerships with Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise organisations (VCSEs), NHS provider and commissioner organisations, and local government through networking at the engagement events and the creation of a LinkedIn Group.
- Written to Chief Executives and HR Directors of provider and commissioner bodies to encourage them to show their commitment by signing the pledge and increase their awareness of the programme.

There has been a lot of support and enthusiasm for the programme.

- As of 14<sup>th</sup> December, 51 NHS organisations have signed the first step (commitment) of the pledge, including NHS England.
- 350 delegates came to the Bristol, Manchester and London engagement events.
- There are 102 members in the LinkedIn Group

## **Next steps**

The next phase of the programme will be focused on turning support and enthusiasm into tangible results. This will involve the implementation of the tools and guidance at the provider and commissioner level, and maintaining the profile of the programme, to see real increases in employment of people with learning disabilities in the NHS. The next steps derive from the key challenges facing front line NHS managers and HR directors in employing people with learning disabilities. We have collated the key challenges in implementation from delegate feedback at engagement events. The following steps are the programme's response to mitigating the challenges:

1. Supplementing the tools and guidance with additional tools to address specific questions raised at the engagement events:
  - Easy to follow funding maps for organisations to identify different sources of support and information how to access;
  - Employment pathways for supported employment, supported internship and the co-working models;
  - Reviewing the accessibility of NHS Jobs through a user-led session.
2. Maintaining the profile and momentum of the programme by:
  - Create regular communications to share best practice and experience through blogs, social media.
  - Holding a one year on from the launch event with Simon Stevens to mark progress;
3. Developing active networks with NHS and non-NHS organisations through online and existing HR Networks.
4. Targeted follow up with NHS organisations to:
  - Identify organisations who are ready to start;
  - Turn pledges into jobs;
  - Share lessons learnt and best practice to build a large suite of case studies; and
  - Follow up on individual progress.

## **Action Points:**

- EDC members to note progress made to date and continue to provide support and promote the programme.
- Feedback from EDC member's progress reports will be tabled at the meeting for discussion.