



Recruitment Process

The Employment Team have told the Partnership Board that they were going to advertise and give jobs to people with Learning Disabilities to work in the Adults and Housing Departments Learning Disabilities Service.

8 posts to work across the Learning Disability Service were advertised in the Councils Job Bulletin and in all services and organisations within the City that provide services to people with a learning disability.

Outing Assistant
Dining Room Assistant
Laundry Assistant
Clerical Support Assistant
Valuing People Assistant
Person Centred Planning Assistant
Travel buddy
Service User Quality Coach

The Person Specification and the Advert was aimed at people with Learning Disability. The job description was developed for people with a Learning Disability. The Specific criterion was that applicants must have a learning disability to be eligible to apply for these posts

Learned dependency on Benefits, and the associated fear of losing them, can be a real issue for people with disabilities and their families, so people were offered “better off checks” before making a decision to apply for a job.

In total, 47 people applied for the posts and all were interviewed. The interview questions were scenario-based, and the tests were practical and job-related, in line with Positive Action measures allowed by law in the Disability Discrimination Act. Support Workers were made available to assist applicants in completing the application forms and were accessible throughout the whole recruitment process. A Support Worker or family member was also allowed to attend the interview with applicant.

The recruiting manager sought help and advice from Remploy to collaborate on the interview process and also had a member of Remploy staff on the interview panel. 17 people were offered a job. Everyone who applied for these posts was given automatic feedback to develop their interview skills for the future.

Following the interviews, the recruitment manager introduced the successful appointees to the Human Resource team. This is not the usual process, but it was felt that this would help familiarise the appointees with the Human Resource staff and vice versa, leading to better long term support. Help with completing the application forms (as part of the employment process) and assistance with completing the associated forms (e.g. CRB, Occupational Health) was given by the Valuing People team if and when required by the applicants.

The challenge for Human Resources was to make suitable adjustments to the generic recruiting exercise that would enable applicants with learning disabilities to apply. One of the major benefits of this exercise was to work with front line colleagues to use their skills, knowledge and experience of etiquette of working with people with learning disabilities.

Human Resources gave the people who will be working in these post 'Annualised Contracts' – this means they can work their hours over 52 weeks in the year. This will give the people working and the service more flexibility. It also means their benefits will not be affected.

People are working between four and sixteen hours a week depending on their availability previous employment experiences, with scope to increase their hours pending a successful probation period and their own wish to do so. For many people this is the first time they have experienced real paid work.

In order for this recruiting exercise to work well, Human Resources had to look at what could be done to make reasonable suitable adjustments for the specific client group. The Human Resource team had a 'what can we do' approach as opposed to trying to work within the constraints of the standard procedures. Suitable adjustments were suggested and made to the front line managers, and this included how interviews were conducted, the written material that was sent to applicants together with some of the core policies and procedures being converted into easy read format.

This included the use of 14-font size, using Comic Sans and Arial instead of the Times New Roman, removing abbreviations and making the documents easy to read including the use images and easy words from the Learning Disability Partnership Board's Symbols Project and Wordbank.

It was recognised, in advance, that some appointees might not have the necessary number of documents for the Criminal Record B check to be made. Therefore a form was designed to be submitted with the documents that were available. This would assist the CRB in making the appropriate checks. A form was designed to send to the CRB for staff that did not have sufficient identification for the CRB check.

Arrangements were put into place to produce easy read payslips and payment facilities, if required, for employees who did not have bank accounts. This has not actually been used but we needed to consider the possibility that not everyone would have a bank account and the facility therefore remains open should the need arise.

A minimum of two references is generally required but as this was the first employment for a number of appointees, character references were accepted as principal references.

An initial Induction day was held for all new starters prior to him or her starting their new jobs. The Service Director together with the Head of Service (Learning Disabilities) and a Service Manager welcomed the new appointees to the Council. The day outlined what the Human Resources Team do and how they can help employees. The day also included presentations and information from the Chair of the Disabled Employees Group, the Health & Safety Team, the Unions and the Staff Development team.

All new starters went to Adults and Housing Department Induction day. The Corporate Director and Service Director welcomed the new appointees to the Council. The day outlined what the Adults and Housing Department do. The day also included information from the Equality, Staff Learning and Development, the Health & Safety Team and the Unions.