



# Be Ready Employer Hub Service Outline Version 1 (updated September 2020)

# Unlocking Disability for Employers

## Introducing the Be Ready Employer Hub

The Be Ready Employer Hub is a new Employer Support Service for Devon-based employers. It is designed to help all sizes of businesses (existing and new start-ups), charities, social enterprises and public sector organisations understand the benefits of recruiting and retaining people with disabilities or long-term health conditions.

It has been recognised that whilst targeted support has been available to individuals with a disability, information and guidance for employers is widespread and not easy (or quick!) to find.

Therefore, we provide practical information, updates and knowledge - direct to employers - focusing on the business benefits of valuing difference and diversity in the workforce. We are able to provide our range of services **free of charge** as we are fully funded by Learn Devon (through Devon County Council) and the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP).

We highlight the ability and talent of individuals that is available when you have a more diverse workforce. This is especially relevant as the UK steps out of the Covid-19 lock-down and businesses work to recover and grow.

Before the pandemic, the ONS (Office for National Statistics) [reported nearly a fifth \(18.9%\)](#) of the adult

population in the UK had declared they had a disability. The actual number is likely to be much higher as many people with disabilities do not declare their



condition - 80% of disabilities are hidden or invisible, so it is not always obvious that a person has a disability or health-condition.

And post-Covid-19 the percentage of the workforce with a long-term health condition is expected to be even higher.

What's more, 83% of disabilities were developed during a person's working life, ie aged 16-64 - so even if you do not have employees who have declared their disability today, as an employer you need to be prepared for any changes to your staff.



# Unlocking Disability for Employers

## Business Growth through Diversity and Inclusion

The Be Ready Employer Hub - as well as providing information about available grants, legal requirements such as the Equality Act, what Reasonable Adjustments are etc - our service also aims to create a “*Paradigm Shift*” in attitudes and behaviour towards people with a disability or long-term health condition. To enable this fundamental change of approach, concepts or underlying assumptions, we also deliver training workshops (online and onsite) and B2B Learning Networks to overcome our “*Unconscious Bias*”. These are the stereotypes and prejudices we all learn based on our unsupported and unconscious judgements.

This is particularly vital post-Covid-19 as businesses cope with re-building and returning to growth. Securing employment has always been a significant challenge for disabled people. This is now compounded by the potential loss of existing employment and having to face an increasingly competitive labour market. Businesses may be tempted to lay-off people who have additional support needs, but in these unprecedented times, your business needs the best talent and skills available to grow, no matter what.

Before Covid-19, research highlighted that a typical business would be likely to have staff with a physical or mental health condition. The pandemic presents a unique situation in which

employees may be driven to disclose a disability or health-condition for the first time, as their condition had not impacted on their ability to work previously. If this is happening in your business, we are here to help. We can provide guidance and links to specialist support for employers and access to grant funding. This includes mental health conditions, which may become more prevalent as the nation’s lock-down continues.

### If your business has 10 employees, it is likely that...



have a long term health condition (33%)



has a diagnosable mental health condition (16%)



has a musculo-skeletal condition (10%)



may have a physical **and** a mental health condition (5%)

# Unlocking Disability for Employers

## Business Growth through the “Purple £”

Our service also includes advice and guidance on how to tap into the potential market of the “Purple £”.

This is a term coined by Mike Adams, OBE, who is the Chief Executive of Purple Zest Ltd. Mike

was the keynote speaker at our formal launch in March 2020. Through his website [www.wearepurple.org.uk](http://www.wearepurple.org.uk) Mike and his team advocate and champion disability rights, including the commercial benefits of the Purple £, as well as the annual day that highlights the value and needs of disabled customers [Purple Tuesday](#).

The Purple £ market equates to **£249 billion** a year for the UK economy. It is the estimated annual spend of disabled people, their family and friends. It is a relatively untouched market of potentially very loyal consumers. When a fifth of your potential consumers are disabled, it is sound business sense to understand their buying behaviours, needs and wants. And the simplest way to do this is to employ, work with or contract with people and organisations with lived experience of disability – especially those colleagues who are responsible for marketing your products and services. Market research is vital, so it is worth connecting with other organisations who have experience of working with, and on behalf of, disabled people.



**4.3 million** disabled online shoppers who click away from **inaccessible websites** have a combined (lost) spending power of **£11.75 billion**

**EXIT**

**75%** of disabled people and their families have walked away from a business because of poor accessibility or inattentive customer service

The spending power of disabled people and their families is worth



Can your business cater for the Purple Pound?

Research shows businesses who adopt a more inclusive approach to their marketing stand out from their competitors. We can help you understand this market for your

business, including how to achieve the Disability Confident award which will help your business' reputation for being disability aware.

# Unlocking Disability for Employers

## Be Ready Employer Hub's Services - Overview

We provide a combination of online practical information and updates with training workshops and networks designed for specific aspects of disability awareness for employers based in Devon.

All of our services remain **free of charge** for the duration of project (until August 2021). Whilst we have been limited in how we deliver our services during the Covid-19 lockdown, we will continue to provide employer support online, and then reintegrate our on-site delivered services once the pandemic restrictions have been cleared.





# Unlocking Disability for Employers

## Disability Awareness Training Workshops

We offer trainer-led workshops about disability awareness for employers. These are available either as part of an Open Programme (where individuals attend from different organisations at published dates and times); or Bespoke series specifically for your organisation at times and dates to suit you (see next page). Whilst we still have Covid-19 restrictions, all our workshops are provided online (via Zoom, Microsoft Teams or Skype for Business).

We currently have (at September 2020) two open courses available to book:

- ▶ [\*\*Disability and Employment\*\*](#) - 5-part online series for Managers and those in HR roles to find out more about how to recruit, employ and retain the best talent. In this series we cover the following topics:
  - ▶ Module 1: An Introduction to Disability Awareness in the Workplace, including Models of Disability, the Equality Act (2010) and Disability Discrimination
  - ▶ Module 2: Access to Work Grant - how to apply for the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) Access to Work grant for employees, including sharing of lived experience by people who have used it
  - ▶ Module 3: Reasonable Adjustments - what the Equality Act (2010) requires of employers in terms of disability, such as what are Reasonable Adjustments
  - ▶ Module 4: Recruitment and Job Carving - how to provide/ enable an inclusive workplace and recruitment process, including ideas for Job Carving
  - ▶ Module 5: Disability Confident Scheme – how to achieve the Disability Confident award to enhance your organisation's reputation.

This course can also be delivered as a half-day workshop on-site when restrictions allow.

- ▶ [\*\*Language and Communication\*\*](#) - a stand-alone workshop which supports delegates to overcome language or communication barriers they may experience when working with disabled colleagues or customers. It is ideal for Managers and any customer facing staff.

We are also developing a third course – An Introduction to **Accessibility for Websites** - which we hope to have available by the end of the year.

# Unlocking Disability for Employers

## Disability Awareness Training Workshops - Dates

Click the “course reference” web link below for more details:

**Disability and Employment** - first date of each 5-part series:



- Thu 8<sup>th</sup> Oct (1pm start) - [course reference OMW09](#)
- Thu 17<sup>th</sup> Nov (1pm start) - [course reference OMW12](#)

### Language and Communication:

- Tue 15<sup>th</sup> Sep (1pm start) - [course reference OS10](#)
- Thu 29<sup>th</sup> Oct (12:30pm start) - [course reference OS11](#)
- Tues 15<sup>th</sup> Dec (10am start) - [course reference OS13](#)

### Easy to book!



- Email - via our Project Co-Ordinator  
[susan.windley@devon.gov.uk](mailto:susan.windley@devon.gov.uk)
- Telephone the Be Ready Employer Hub on 01392 241124
- Online - visit the Be Ready website  
<https://www.readydevon.org.uk/events/>

## Disability Awareness Training Bespoke Workshops

If you have 6 or more staff that would benefit from Disability Awareness training, we can deliver our courses specifically to your organisation - at dates and times to suit you - either at your premises or online.

For example, we are currently delivering a cohort of 60 places for a local company. We have combined our Language and Communication course with the Disability Awareness programme to develop series of 3 x half-day sessions.

And the bespoke delivery is still available free of charge!

For more details, contact our Project Co-Ordinator (as above).

# Unlocking Disability for Employers

## B2B Learning Networks

Business to Business Local Support  
Learn from the business experts - You!



As part of our aim to create a [paradigm shift](#) in attitudes and behaviours, in addition to the training workshops, we will also be hosting Learning Networks around the county (hosted in Exeter, Plymouth, Torbay and Barnstaple/Bideford).

The concept is to create regular (monthly), facilitated meetings for business and charity owners, directors and managers to discuss, analyse, apply solutions or celebrate outcomes for any issues or situations around the topic of disability and employment. These peer-supported networks will be delivered under “[Chatham House rules](#)” - where you can discuss sensitive issues openly (eg if they relate to your business or an employee) within a private group on the agreement that any information shared will not have the identity or affiliation of the speaker/s or subject be revealed.

The learning element will be facilitated by the action learning process - where a discussion topic is agreed by the group, and participants share their own experience and knowledge to support others in the group learn, understand and implement diversity in their own workplace.

We will also introduce participants to specialist mentors dependent on the topic under examination. Typically, these will be representatives from Disability Confident Leader organisations who can share their day-to-day experience of recruiting and retaining a diverse workforce.

Ideally these learning networks will re-start in the New Year once lockdown restrictions are lifted, so people can meet face-to-face. However we are also reviewing how these may be started in the autumn via an online platform (eg Zoom, Teams).

More information is available on our website - [B2B Learning Networks](#)



# Unlocking Disability for Employers

## Disability Confident Award

The Disability Confident award is a Government scheme supporting employers to understand and make the most of the skills and abilities disabled people can bring

to the workplace. Your organisation agrees to a set of commitments and actions around inclusive recruitment and staff retention.



It comprises three levels:

- ▶ **Level 1: Committed** (this is what you sign up to online) - to complete one action to make a difference for disabled people in your organisation – these are things you are probably doing already!
- ▶ **Level 2: Employer** – you complete an on-line self-assessment on how your organisation is progressive around the two themes of inclusive recruitment and retention. Once this is completed, you are registered as a Disability Confident Employer for 3 years.
- ▶ **Level 3: Leader** – now you are an active champion promoting equal opportunities within your local and business communities. To achieve this level, you will be assessed externally (by someone with lived experience of working with disabled people).

It is often seen as a “Badge of Honour” by disabled people when searching for potential suppliers, businesses or employers. Not only do you improve existing employees’ morale, this award also demonstrates to customers, suppliers and stakeholders how you are committed to equality in the workplace. Research has shown that buying behaviour is increasingly being influenced by the organisation’s reputation, especially with regard to ethical work practices.

More details are available on our webpage - [Disability Confident](#) - and we can help either get you started at Level 1 or support you to progress to Levels 2 and 3.

# Unlocking Disability for Employers

## Online Information Hub and Call Back Service

### Information Hub



The [Be Ready Information Hub](#) is our online library of information, data, resources and tools to help employers recruit and keep disabled people. By clicking on the individual subject tabs (for example Access to Work, what are Reasonable Adjustments etc), you will find practical information and resources on that topic.

We add and update pages regularly to ensure you have the latest data and facts. We also have a [News page](#) for additional articles and updates provided by external sources.

### Call Back Service

**Call Back Service: 01392 241124**

If you have a specific question or need information for your own organisation, you can call us direct on 01392 241124. We will then search an answer for you, or find a specialist who can support you within 48 hours.

Alternatively you can email us:

- for information about the purpose and aims of the Be Ready Employer Hub project, please email our Project Manager Debbie Stafford at [debbie.stafford@devon.gov.uk](mailto:debbie.stafford@devon.gov.uk) or
- for information about events administration for the online training or the Be Ready Employer Hub project, please email our Project Co-Ordinator Sue Windley at [susan.windley@devon.gov.uk](mailto:susan.windley@devon.gov.uk)



# Unlocking DisAbility for Employers

