

Valuing Employment Now



JOB COACHING OR SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT

Approach and progress in developing standards

Introduction

Supported employment is a well-evidenced¹ personalised approach to working with people with significant disabilities, including people with learning disabilities and autism, to access and retain open employment, with support.

In *Valuing Employment Now*, the Government committed to publish standards for job coaching to drive improvements in supported employment provision, to ensure that more people with learning disabilities, especially people with moderate to severe learning disabilities, get and keep jobs. The Government is clear that as many as possible of these jobs should be at least 16 hours per week, since this is the point at which most people will be financially better off and achieve greater social inclusion. We know that this is a reasonable aspiration for most people with learning disabilities.

The starting point in the development of standards for job coaching is to agree a definition of supported employment. Outlined below is the Government's draft definition of supported employment. The Government's aspiration for the standards is that they will apply to all supported employment, and will be pan-disability. However, the driver at present is *Valuing Employment Now*, so there is greater emphasis on learning disability in the current draft definition.

¹ *A Review of the Research Literature on Supported Employment*, Steve Beyer and Carol Robinson (2009)

The Government needs to seek further views on the draft definition, and will be seeking the views of stakeholders including disabled people, family carers, and supported employment providers. The views of employers will also be sought, as the definition needs to be such that they can commit to participate fully in the supported employment process. It is important that employers understand that supported employment provides them with a way of realising the positive benefits of diversity, such as drawing on a wider pool of talent, positively motivating all employees and meeting the needs of a wider customer base.

Currently, there are different terms used to describe supported employment, including job coaching, customised employment and the 'place, train and maintain' model of vocational rehabilitation. For the purpose of this document, the term 'supported employment' will be used. The final terms used to describe high quality personalised support into and in employment, for people with significant disabilities, need to be agreed by Government departments and stakeholders.

What is supported employment?

Supported employment is an evidence-based and personalised approach to support people with significant disabilities into real jobs, where they can fulfil their employment aspirations, and achieve social and economic inclusion. It should start from age 14, to ensure that people can have meaningful work experience and Saturday jobs, to support a person-centred employment pathway. Supported employment should achieve the following outcomes:

- real jobs where people have the opportunity to earn equitable wages and other employment-related benefits
- development of new skills
- social and economic inclusion
- promotion of self-determination, choice and independence
- enhanced self-esteem
- increased consumer empowerment
- increased quality of life where people are treated fairly and with respect.

Real jobs are those where:

- wages are paid at the going rate for the job, with the same terms and conditions as all other employees
- the job helps the person to meet their life goals and aspirations
- the role is valued by managers and colleagues
- the job has similar hours and times at work as other employees, with safe working conditions.

Real jobs are provided by different types of employers across the private, public and third sectors. It also includes self-employment, where additional specialist support may be needed for spotting opportunities and enterprise development, testing and refining the proposition, and launching the venture.

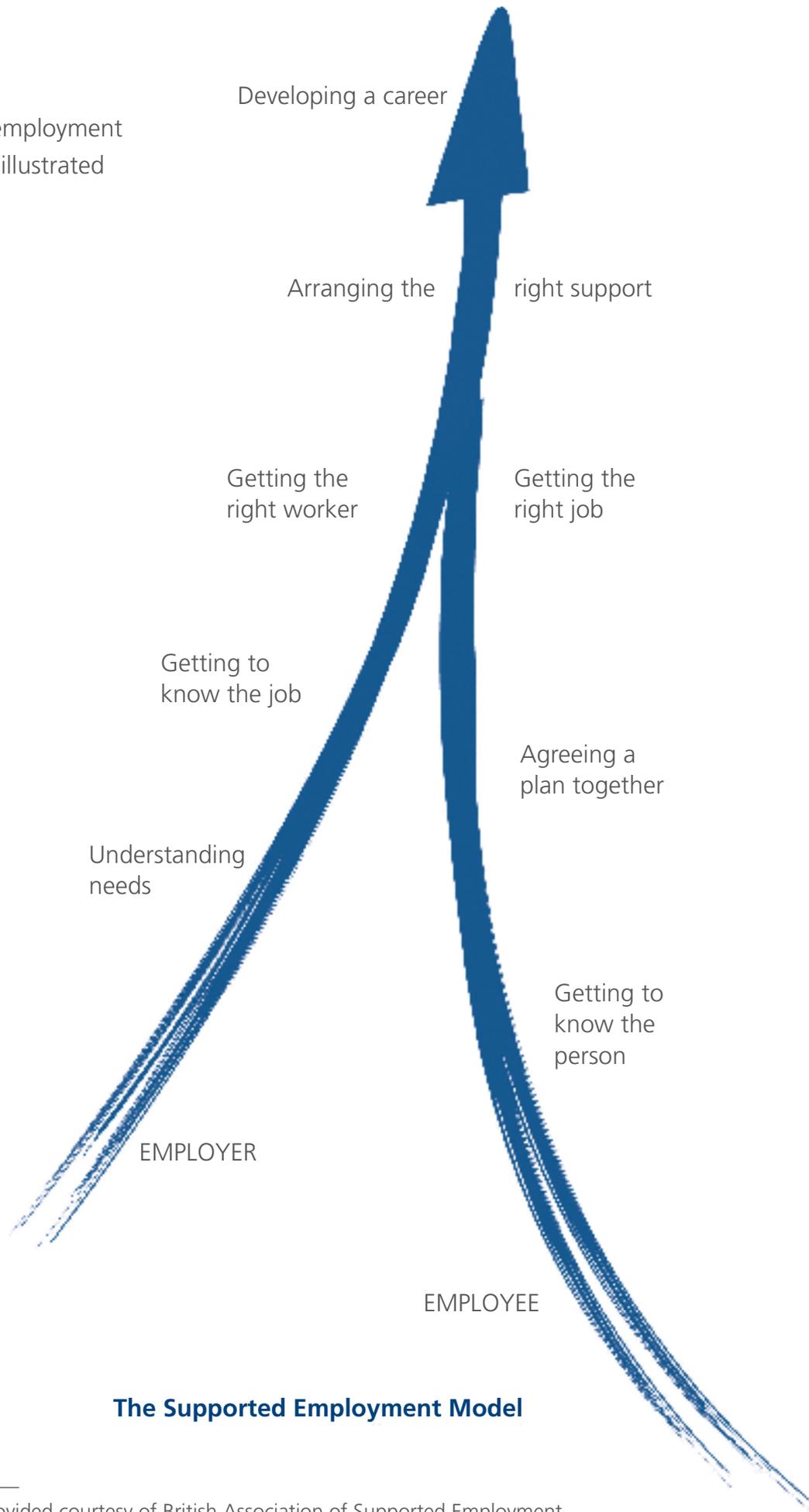
The overarching guiding principle of supported employment is that it is designed to support individuals who do not necessarily meet traditional criteria for job readiness or employability. Fundamental to supported employment is that everyone can work, with the right job and the right support. Providers of supported employment should be able to offer a nil rejection policy, as everyone should have the opportunity to work and contribute to society.

The other guiding principles of supported employment are:

- Choice and control – people are presented with a variety of experiences, options and support to achieve their career aspirations. Support is built around an individual, promoting choice. People choose and regulate their own employment support to promote career satisfaction. All options assume successful employability.
- Partnership – there is genuine partnership between the person, their family carers, employers, community supports and the provider of supported employment.
- Full inclusion – people are supported to be full and active members of their workforces and wider communities, both socially and economically.
- Rapid job search – intensity of support is provided as appropriate, to ensure that the supported employment effort results in successful jobs in months rather than years.
- Careers – people are supported to enhance their skills, providing opportunities for greater responsibility, compensation and challenge, as part of ongoing career progression and development.
- Natural supports – the most natural approach should be taken for people to get and keep jobs, building on and using community supports or social capital, and fading specialist support.
- Long-term support – long-term support is available to employees, employers, family carers and community supports, to ensure people maintain employment stability and achieve career growth.
- Assistive technology – creative solutions are found using assistive technology to increase choice, control and independence.
- Continuous quality improvement – people who receive supported employment are actively involved in developing and evaluating services.
- Right to work in a safe workplace – everyone is supported to work safely, underpinned by good risk assessment taking into account the workplace, and an individual's skills, awareness and capacity.
- Protection of human rights and freedom from abuse – support is provided which prevents discrimination, abuse and neglect and upholds a person's legal and human rights.

Key stages

Supported employment can best be illustrated as follows:²



² Diagram provided courtesy of British Association of Supported Employment

Work with the employer	Work with the job seeker/employee
<p>Employer engagement</p> <p>This starts with researching the local job market and contacting employers that best match the skills and interests of the individual job seeker. It requires a professional approach to promote and sell the business case of a diverse workforce to employers, and secure their commitment to participate fully in the supported employment process.</p>	<p>Job seeker engagement</p> <p>This involves identifying those people with learning disabilities who aspire to work, preferably in jobs of at least 16 hours per week, (recognising that some people may need to work less than 16 hours or may need to build up their hours over time). Support is gained from family carers and community supports, ensuring all believe that their employment aspirations are achievable. Accessible information is provided to job seekers to develop self-determination and to make informed decisions. It is important that the impact on benefits is discussed from the outset. This stage should ensure that the job seeker is a full and active participant in the process from the outset and is supported to become highly motivated to work.</p>
<p>Understanding needs and identifying vacancies</p> <p>An employer's needs are understood so that they can be good employers of disabled people. It also identifies an employer's unmet needs and opportunities for customising or developing jobs (jobs that will add value to the employer's business) for an individual job seeker. The recruitment and retention policies of an employer also need to be understood so that a recruitment strategy can be agreed.</p>	<p>Getting to know you</p> <p>This is often referred to as vocational profiling, person-centred employment planning or discovery. It is a non-traditional, holistic and person-centred approach to assessment, undertaken in partnership, to understand a person's aspirations, skills, needs, abilities, talents, experiences, preferences, and informal supports and connections. Information on benefit income is gathered to ensure a better-off calculation is undertaken. The process is led by the job seeker, to get to know them well enough that the information will lead to a job and an effective support strategy.</p>

Work with the employer

Getting to know the job

A job analysis is carried out to understand all aspects of the job, together with the workplace culture and environment. It also involves identifying potential natural supports and begins to build on these.

Work with the job seeker/employee

Agreeing a plan together

A plan is agreed in partnership to find and keep a job that matches a person's skills, interests and all information gleaned during the 'getting to know you' process. It also looks at making sure that people will be financially better off in work. This process identifies each person's unique pathway into employment, which is led by the job seeker.

Job match

Employers get the right worker and job seekers get the right job! This may involve developing, designing or customising jobs. This will require negotiation with the employer, to agree the reasonable adjustments that are needed for the individual to do the job. It also requires risk assessment to address equality and diversity, health and safety and safeguarding issues. Both the employer and employee, together with their family carers and community supports, need to be involved in the process so their respective needs are met.

Arranging the right support

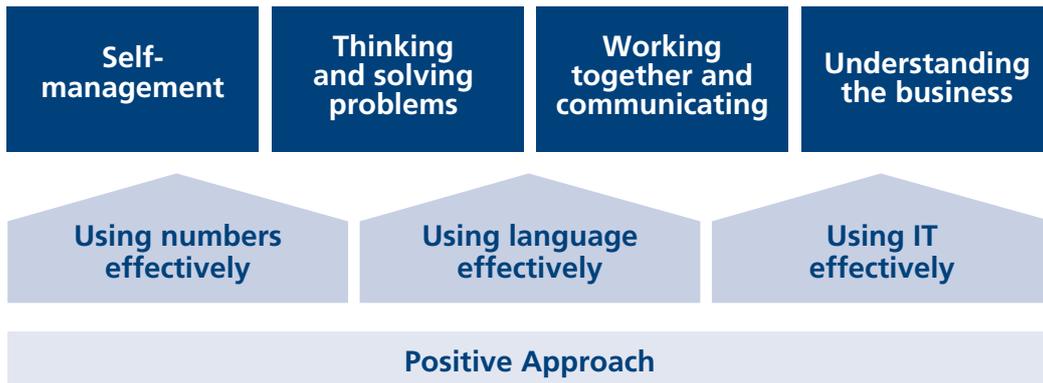
A person-centred plan is agreed with employee and employer in conjunction with family carers and community supports, which is properly considered and justified to make sure the most 'natural' ways of providing support are used. It makes sure that people will get the right support to become valued employees and maintains their health and wellbeing. It makes sure that employers understand how to create workplaces that are supportive of disabled people. Support to employee and employer may include systematic training or structured training; travel training; advocacy; disability awareness; job re-adjustments; ongoing problem solving; and ongoing development of natural supports.

Developing a career

Career development, enhancement opportunities and career progression are agreed with the employee and employer to the benefit of both. Support is provided for employees to benefit from training opportunities and, where appropriate, to work towards qualifications.

Employability skills

Throughout the personalised supported employment process, support should be given for people to develop their employability skills, as set out by the UK Commission for Employment and Skills³. It needs to be recognised that the evidence base shows that people with learning disabilities often develop their employability skills best 'on the job'⁴. Employability skills can best be described through the diagram below:



Who provides supported employment?

Supported employment can be provided to people from aged 14, to support smooth and seamless transitions from education into employment, and support meaningful work experience and Saturday jobs. It can be provided in whole or in part by schools, further education providers, Connexions, providers of supported employment, welfare-to-work providers, Jobcentre Plus providers, family carers, day services and community supports. Providers of supported employment tend to have a variety of job titles such as job coaches, employment advisers, and employment support officers. Jobcentre Plus staff and Disability Employment Advisors are often a key referral route onto supported employment.

It is important that everyone involved in providing supported employment is appropriately trained to understand and implement the evidence-based approach. There need to be clear protocols in place, to ensure that all information from the supported employment process follows the person (as they will be leading the process), regardless of whom is providing the support.

3 *The Employability Challenge*, UK Commission for Employment and Skills (February 2009)

4 *A Review of the Research Literature on Supported Employment*, Steve Beyer and Carol Robinson (2009)

Next steps

- The Government will make these draft standards accessible for people with learning disabilities and family carers, to support choice and control.
- The Government will seek views from stakeholders, including disabled people, family carers, providers of supported employment and employers, to agree the definition. This will include agreeing the terminology to be used to describe both supported employment and job coaches.
- The Government will then develop national standards and explore how to accredit these and/or job coaches, as set out in *Valuing Employment Now*.

Valuing Employment Now: real jobs for people with learning disabilities

For further resources please visit www.valuingpeople.gov.uk/venresources

Email venresources@dh.gsi.gov.uk

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