

discovery

## Self Employment – Our Journey so far



Get more from life

# The research

- 5.7% of people with learning disabilities in paid work (ASCOF 2016-2017)
- 3% jobs 2014 self employment (NDTi)
- < 1% jobs in 2016-17 described as self employment
  
- 15 % of UK workforce self employed
- Since the down turn 2008
  - Part time employment up 7.9%
  - Part time self employment up 46.6%
- Self employment represents a significant proportion of new jobs since 2008. This is an ongoing trend (ONS 2016)

**Self employment offers a chance for individuals who are challenged by the competitive labour market to get work and is the 'the next logical step in the evolution of supported employment'**

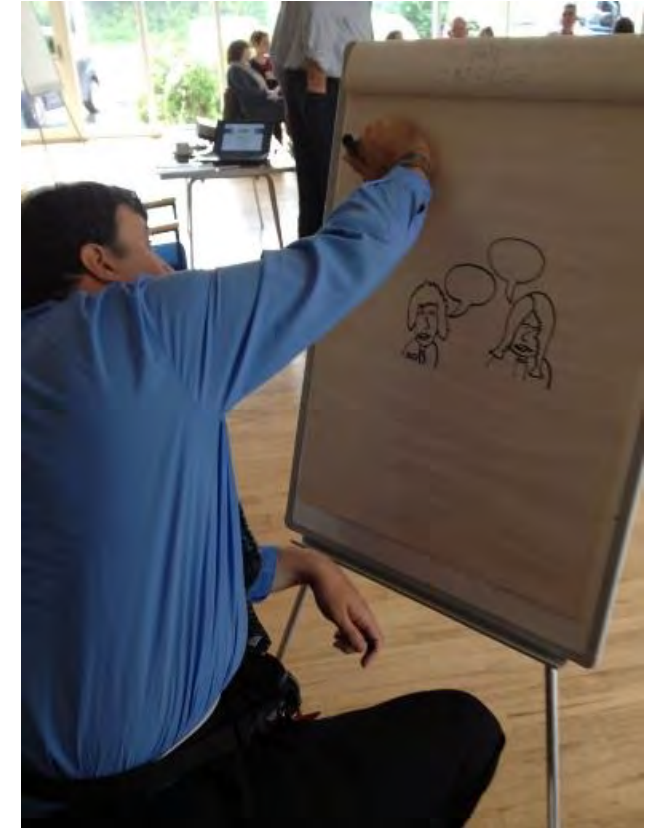
(Griffin and Hammis 2003)

# The case for

Closely matches individual preferences, gifts and may offer-

- types of work not found in existing job opportunities
- control and self-reliance, which is appealing to some
- help to people with more complex needs as it can be based on the particular interests and skills of the self-employed person
- an opportunity to control work to match personal productivity levels, personal goals, support needs, lifestyle choices etc

Newman (2001); Hagner and Davis (2002); Griffin and Hammis, (2003)



# Motivations

## - Opportunity or necessity?

The starting point for many non disabled people is a salaried position

- Understand the sector
- Learn the ropes
- Develop the networks
- Take the leap

For many disabled people the starting point becomes

- Their chosen work lends itself to self employment
- They don't care what they do as long as they are in charge
- Choice of last resort

Komisar 2007, Williams 2007, 2009



# Support for success

- Personal characteristics
- Accountability systems (such as funding and market conditions)

• Support  
(Yamamoto 2016)

- Support for individual
  - Support for the business
  - Support for the specific sector
- (Foundation for People with Learning Disabilities 2009)

We can add the benefits of

- Peer Support
- Families
- Mentoring
- Partnerships
- Specialist enterprise coaching



(Adams et al.2019, (Reddington and Fitzsimonds 2013, Jepps et al. 2019, Bates 2019, Griffin et al. 2014)

# Identifying entrepreneurs

- Individual employment aspirations
  - Personal interest
  - The pace and place of work
  - Vocational profile and employment plan
- Set of circumstances conducive to self employment
  - Skills, competences, support, finance
  - Circle of support
- A business idea
  - Viable, deliverable
  - Size v impact



# Discovery – Supported Employment

Discovery is a young supported employment service operating out of Somerset with an exclusive focus on developing more and better employment opportunities for people with learning disabilities and/or autism.

Having recently decided to extend our service offer to include supported self-employment, we are keen to share some of the steps taken, lessons learned and dilemmas on this journey.

- Embedding self-employment into our discovery and vocational profiling processes
- Encouraging and empowering Job Coaches to understand and embrace enterprise development
- Ensuring sustainable support options for new starts

# Motivations

Why we decided to do this...

We wanted to make sure we were offering the people we support a range of employment opportunities that are available including self-employment



- We had gone through a restructure in the move from Somerset County Council to Discovery
- The team had grown and there were a number of new job coaches in the team
- Wanted to ensure that all job coaches felt comfortable in exploring other employment
- We had “dabbled” in self employment previously, but had not done this well
- Standardise our approach, processes etc.
- Ensure that we were in a position to support people to explore and become self-employed



# Encouraging and empowering Job coaches to understand and embrace enterprise development



To enable us to move this forward it became evident that we had to:

- Review our current service provision
- Raise aspirations of Job Coaches
- Develop a Self Employment Champions group within the team
- Ensure the job coaches undertook RED Training & Development

# Embedding self-employment into discovery and vocational profiling processes

- Reviewing and adapting processes and paperwork to ensure they included self employment
- Deciding on where and when we would start the discussion about this option
- Build this into our vocational profile to ensure that we don't miss any opportunities
- Including Self employment in team meetings & developing "Innovation Labs"
- Development of our employment planning phase
- Ensure that we develop circles of support

# Barriers

- Confidence to explore self employment
- When to talk about this as an opportunity
- Limited understanding of the business start up process
- Is it about business, individual or service standards?
- A certain size or 'making a difference'?
- How do ensure we are not a barrier?
- What does success look like?



# Applying the art of the possible...



# The considerations?

Part of wider employment pathway or separate project?

- Critical mass v lower profile
- Skills, experience (and values?) of our job coaches

Building support

- For the individual
- For the business
- Specific to the sector

The enterprise facilitation mix – modules of

- Business planning
- Job coaching
- Community connecting

Consistency and sustainability

- Business circles
- Peer supports

SEED - Supported employment entrepreneurship and disability 2015

		Life cycle of a enterprise			
		Pre-start	Young enterprise	Growing enterprise	End-stage
client engagement	<b>engagement</b>				
vocational profiling	<b>Profiling</b>				
jobfinding	<b>Support defining and finding</b>				
employer engagement	<b>On and off the job support</b>				
on and off the job support					

This grid provides an overview of the possible SSE-support in the different stages in the life-cycle of an enterprise.

# Thank you

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Dimensions

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# Seeking participants



The  
University  
Of  
Sheffield.

The nature of entrepreneurship for people with learning disabilities.

- Exploring the role of supported employment and job coaching in creating more opportunities for self employment and small business ownership.

Looking for suitable self employed participants to act as case studies

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