



## Specialist support – encouraging diversity

A diverse workforce is a resource rich workforce.....  
but sometimes it takes a little extra support to release the potential

### Disability in the workforce

How many people in the UK workforce are disabled? According to The UK's Office for National Statistics:

- 19% of people of working age have a disability. That's almost one in five!
- The number of working age disabled adults has increased from 6.2 million in 1998 to almost 7 million in 2005
- Of these only half are in work

Disabled people are more than twice as likely as non-disabled people to have no qualifications

- Their average gross hourly pay is £10.31 compared to £11.39 for non-disabled employees

Labour Force Survey. Spring 2005

With a little imaginative support and training many of these could find useful fulfilment. Did you know that only 20% of those who have a speech impediment, and want to work, have found work? Only half of those who have limb conditions and want to work are actually in work. Just 63% of those who have a skin condition but want to work are in employment.

### What support is available?

- The Employers' Forum on Disability offers help and advice to employers and their disabled staff - [www.employers-forum.co.uk](http://www.employers-forum.co.uk).
- The Disability Employment Adviser at Jobcentre Plus is there to advise.
  - The Work Preparation Programme is designed to give disabled people an opportunity to try out different types of work to assess what they and the employer might be comfortable with.
  - Access to Work (AtW) helps by contributing to costs incurred by employing someone with a disability contributing up to 100% of approved costs – for more information go to Jobcentre plus.
  - The Job Introduction Scheme can provide a weekly grant (for 6 wks) towards training or support.
  - WorkStep is an individually tailored programme of support for an employer with an employee with more complex needs



### **What can the employer do to help?**

- Make the workplace accessible
- Provide appropriate training
- Identify a mentor or specific support colleague
- Provide training material in appropriate format
- Train other staff to understand both the strengths and limitations of a disabled staff member
- Build on strengths and identify potential.
- Meet all the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act

### **How will the college or university support a student with a disability?**

- Specialist information and guidance on course choice
- Tutor support during the course
- Suitable materials, eg computers, calculators, audio-visual material

See SLN Leaflets on Disability Support in Higher Education, Disability in Further Education on the SLN website

[www.sussexlearningnetwork.org.uk/learning](http://www.sussexlearningnetwork.org.uk/learning)  
and [www.open.ac.uk/disability](http://www.open.ac.uk/disability)

### **Further information**

Access to Work Advisers, 01273 364750

Norfolk House, High St., Shoreham by Sea BN43 5EN

Employers' Forum on Disability. Helpline 020 7403 3020

Jobcentre Plus Employer Direct Helpline 0845 601 2001

Business Link: [www.businesslink.gov.uk](http://www.businesslink.gov.uk)

The Disability Partnership holds Leadership Development Programmes 'to nurture leadership potential in talented disabled people.'

[www.thedisabilitypartnership.co.uk](http://www.thedisabilitypartnership.co.uk)