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# Paul Maynard taskforce recommendations

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The government is committed to reaching 3 million new apprenticeship starts by 2020 and halving the disability employment gap.

Although participation rates for disabled apprentices have improved recently and more disabled people are employed than ever before, there is still work to be done in both areas. Employment rates for people with learning disabilities hover around 6.8% and the lifelong costs of economic activity are considerable.

As a result, in May 2016 a taskforce was commissioned by the Minister for Disabled People, Justin Tomlinson MP, and the Minister for Skills, Nick Boles MP, to explore access to apprenticeships for those with learning disabilities. Improving access to apprenticeships will allow more people with learning disabilities to benefit from the opportunities available through apprenticeships and work.

Paul Maynard MP was asked to chair the taskforce, given his interest and expertise in this area. He invited disability organisations, learning providers, employers, parliamentarians and senior officials from both BIS and DWP to join the taskforce.

The full list of members can be found in [Annex A](#).

The taskforce met 3 times to:

1. reach an understanding of the issues and barriers that affect people with learning disabilities in accessing and completing an apprenticeship
2. identify solutions that could help overcome these barriers and raise participation levels
3. make recommendations to both Ministers on which options to pursue

Prior to the first meeting, stakeholder groups were asked to contribute briefings to allow members to have access to as much evidence as possible. The taskforce also noted the work led by Peter Little OBE in 2012, [‘Creating an Inclusive Apprenticeship Offer’](#).

## Recommendations

The taskforce recommends the following as being important steps to improving access to apprenticeships for those with learning difficulties.

1. BIS and DWP formulate, implement and subsequently evaluate a joint communications strategy to promote awareness, particularly of the funding and financial support available, and the positive business benefits of taking on someone with learning difficulties or disabilities (LDD), using case studies and role models to inform employers and providers. This should include using existing channels such as the current 'Get In Go Far' apprenticeship communications campaign and the future mental health apprenticeship champions network.

In addition, all guidance, including the website and [NIACE toolkit](#), should be reviewed to ensure they are fit for purpose and reflect the needs of LDD apprentices, their employers and training providers.

2. BIS adjusts the minimum standard of English and maths required (to entry level 3) for a defined group of apprentices with learning difficulties and disabilities who are able to meet the occupational standard but will struggle to achieve English and maths qualifications at the level normally required. The taskforce recommends that further work is done to define this group and its potential volume, and quantify the impact any changes will have on people with LDD. This should be implemented in a way that ensures we have a robust system to avoid potential misuse of this adjustment.
3. BIS investigates potential changes to the method of assessments for English and maths for targeted groups as some people with LDD may be able to demonstrate the minimum requirements in the workplace, but be unable to complete a formal assessment.
4. DWP updates the Access to Work eligibility letter to 'sell' the support

available better (eg up to £41,400) and emphasise that this support is available in situations which require more than reasonable adjustments. Furthermore, case studies of the transformative effect Access to Work can have for individuals should be included with the letter.

5. DWP uses the Disability Confident campaign – both in terms of pledges and events – to encourage employers to drive demand and increase supply. This could include signposting to good practice (including non-traditional recruitment practices mentioned below) and providing information on ‘navigating the system’ from a disability perspective.
6. BIS ensure Individualised Learner Records are as robust as possible in data capture by auditing providers, improving data collection particularly on severe and mild/moderate LDD to ensure that the right questions are asked, and also that there are ample responses.
7. BIS and DWP consider ‘what good looks like’ for relevant hidden impairment groups and age brackets, in order to set appropriate targets for increasing the number of apprentices with LDD. Given that existing analysis indicates that the overall LDD apprenticeship participation is at a similar level to the 16 to 24 year old employed population, the moderate learning difficulty group is likely to be a key group to look at, though there may be others such as those with autistic spectrum conditions. Any targets should take account of any existing departmental or cross-governmental targets in this area (eg the existing priority on recruiting more 19 to 24 year old apprentices with LDD as prescribed in 2013 Regulations).
8. BIS and DWP consider joining up funding streams, for example Additional Learning Support and Access to Work, so that potential hurdles are reduced and that the application is seamless from an apprentice/employer/provider perspective.
9. A defined pilot should be conducted exploring how the funding model introduced with the apprenticeship levy might be flexed to incentivise employers to recruit apprentices with learning disabilities. The pilot should bring together these recommendations and test how they work as

the levy is introduced, as well as evaluating the effectiveness of the funding incentives available in the levy funding model, to see if the right support can be provided efficiently to a range of apprentices with learning disabilities.

The pilot should include private, public and voluntary sector employers and look to test out how such an exemption might work within the levy. In turn, this would generate good practice case studies, which could be used to demonstrate how apprenticeships can work for people with a learning disability, showcase the support they need and then be used to inspire other young people.

10. BIS and DWP lead by example with their own apprenticeship programmes, and encourage wider Civil Service and public sector commitment to apprenticeships for those with LDD. Other ways of influencing the wider labour market that departments should consider include using public sector contracts to set expectations with regard to apprenticeships.
11. BIS and DWP investigate and raise awareness of the range of non-traditional recruitment practices including working interviews, job carving roles, electronic portfolios and other digital options to help LDD apprenticeship applicants. This should include investigating good practice from the Movement to Work programme and organisations such as Mencap, as well as the situation with others that have no previous experience of employing and supporting individuals with LDD.
12. BIS revisits recommendations from the [Little report \(2012\)](#) and provide a response to his update with a view to making further progress in delivering against them.
13. In the light of evidence that providers sometimes refuse to take on people with LDD, DWP and BIS to undertake further work to ensure that the system of reasonable adjustments and the availability of support, for example through Access to Work, are understood and consistently applied by providers, particularly in relation to those learners who could meet the normal English and maths criteria with this help.

14. BIS and DWP to consider the use of technology to support user-led strategies for apprentices with LDD, for example the Brain in Hand app.

## Annex A – Membership of the taskforce

Name	Role
Chris Heaton-Harris	Member of Parliament
Steve Double	Member of Parliament
Cheryl Gillan	Member of Parliament
Beth Grossman	Head of Policy, Scope
Rob Holland	Public Affairs and Parliamentary lead, Mencap
Kevin Oakhill	Director of Service Development, Ambitious about Autism
Grace Breen	Senior Policy Advisor, Confederation of British Industry
Paul Warner	Director of Policy and Strategy, Association of Employment and Learning Providers
Peter Little OBE	Author of 'Creating an Inclusive Apprenticeship Offer'
Jeremy Crook OBE	Chair of the Apprenticeships Equality and Diversity Advisory Group
Justin Russell	Director, Disability and Employment Support Directorate, DWP
Jenny Oldroyd	Deputy Director for Programme and Strategy, Apprenticeships Directorate, BIS/DfE

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