

Remploy thoughts on Access to Apprenticeships for Disabled People in Wales

- Disabled people are currently underrepresented in the take up of apprenticeships in Wales. According to the latest statistics, only 2.7% of learners in work-based learning provision and 1.3% of apprentices in Wales have a disability or long-term health condition.¹ This compares to 9% in England.² This is despite 20% of working age people in Wales having a disability or long-term health condition, as defined by the Equality Act 2010.³ Whilst a number of measures recently introduced by the Welsh Government will increase these rates over the next few years, it remains the case that businesses in Wales are missing out on a large pool of potential talent.
- Remploy welcomes the establishment of the Welsh Government’s Inclusive Apprenticeship Working Group and looks forward to its work in producing the Welsh Apprenticeships Disability Action Plan. We believe that in its work developing this plan, the Inclusive Apprenticeships Working Group should consider the following as potential ways to increase the uptake of disabled people entering apprenticeships:
 - If there is scope for the Welsh Government to pilot alternative routes into apprenticeships for disabled people, such as Supported Internships for individuals with complex learning difficulties.⁴ These would provide an accessible route into apprenticeships for those individuals that would otherwise fall short of the necessary qualifications to allow them to begin an apprenticeship.
 - Whether there could be a role in the Welsh Government’s Additional Learning Needs funds in supporting individuals with learning difficulties and/or disabilities into apprenticeships.
 - Whether the Welsh Apprenticeships system could be better linked up with new and existing provision such as the Work and Health Programme and the Welsh Government’s forthcoming Working Wales programme.

¹ <https://statswales.gov.wales/Catalogue/Education-and-Skills/Post-16-Education-and-Training/Further-Education-and-Work-Based-Learning/Learners/Work-Based-Learning/uniquelearnersworkbasedlearning-by-age-gender-programmetype>

² <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/fe-data-library-apprenticeships>

³ <http://gov.wales/statistics-and-research/prevalence-disability/?lang=en>

⁴ <https://www.remploy.co.uk/about-us/current-programmes/supported-internships>

- Exploring ways in which the Welsh Government could identify and support disabled people that are already in employment, but have a desire to upskill themselves by entering into an apprenticeship
- Whether the Welsh Apprenticeships Disability Action Plan could include a “challenge” to apprenticeship providers to increase the participation and completion rates of disabled people in apprenticeships. This should have the overall aim of ensuring that, within the next 3-5 years, the demographic profile of providers’ learners are reflective of the disabled population of Wales. This could be linked to a scheme, providing training providers with disability awareness training, and allowing the Welsh Government to highlight exemplar providers of apprenticeships to disabled people.
- Exploring how existing services such as Access to Work and Additional Learner Support can be better promoted to disabled apprentices
- Exploring how the Welsh Government can link in with the UK Government’s Disability Confident campaign to promote the benefits of disability employment to employers and create more opportunities for disabled apprentices.
- Some barriers to success that disabled people face in apprenticeships are hidden. As such, Remploy have worked with partners to develop an assessment tool to identify potential barriers that an apprentice may face in the workplace. This supports the individual to sustain in their apprenticeship by allowing us to create an individualised support plan to suggest suitable adjustments specific to their barriers; signpost to existing support services; and, if required, help the individual access funding available to any apprentices that require additional learning support. Crucially, if this approach were to become standard in Wales, it would allow the Welsh Government to better understand the true levels of disability participation in apprenticeships, as current figures are based on self-declaration.