A chance to get on – as well as in - as we seek economic recovery

Liz Sayce
Disability Rights UK

A merger of Radar, Disability Alliance and National Centre for Independent Living

We are now Disability Rights UK – formed through a merger of Disability Alliance, National Centre for Independent Living (NCIL) and The Royal Association for Disability Rights (Radar)
The disabled individual

Unleashing peer support

• ‘Think through scenarios and solutions – show you are a problem solver not a problem creator’
• ‘Never give up on your dreams but be flexible when aiming for them’
• ‘Never be afraid to ask someone to be a mentor – they are usually flattered’
• ‘Your disability can help you stand out from the crowd. Use it’
Learning from successes

Disabled people share:

• Defining career moments - and how to sustain the shift
• And the qualities disabled people bring: resilience, problem-solving, empathy, creativity…..
• Changing the narrative from barriers and deficits – to strengths
• Leadership programmes, led by disabled coaches and trainers: 450 disabled alumni. Supporting people to be elected as councillors, set up businesses, start degrees and PhDs, ……etc

www.radar.org.uk
www.radiate-net.org.uk
Disabled people’s careers

• Virtually no existing evidence
• First national survey, supported by Lloyds Banking Group
• 1461 responses, disabled and non-disabled
• Identified a senior pool: 110 earned >80K. 102 Board level Directors
• Significant impairments from quadriplegia to bi-polar disorder
• ‘I have brittle bone disease which has resulted in 40 fractures of my arms and legs’
• ‘I have suffered from MS for 19 years’
• 2 significant factors: mentoring and career-long senior support
• ‘Good managers and good people who have given me confidence to achieve’
• Looking beyond labels
• ‘I filed the letter away fairly carefully and continued in that job, quite happily, for several years’
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Inequalities

- Disabled people less likely to get mentoring and senior support than non-disabled people
- Non-disabled people twice as likely to be Board level Directors, 3 times as likely to be other Directors/ Heads of Department
- Disabled people experience high in-work poverty
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The scale of the challenge...

A lost generation
- Over a million young unemployed people
- Young disabled people twice as likely to be NEET
- 41% of non-disabled 18-24 year olds not working – but 62% of disabled 18-24 year olds not working

What can be done?

Specialist disability employment support – review June 2011

Disabled people want the chance to work in any sector, any job – with support you can take with you

Evidence shows individualised support in mainstream employment works better than ‘stepping stones’
Individual support and control

- Confident, well informed employees ready to take the risk of going for a job – eg going to interview knowing indicative AtW entitlement
- Confident employers ready to take the ‘risk’ of employing a disabled person – eg through AtW cover for temps, to support people with fluctuating conditions
- Controlling your own support - to take with you from job to job - through AtW reform and peer support
- AtW works – recoups £1.48 for every £1 spent
- From government’s best kept secret to passport to successful employment
- Preventing ill-health retirement – promote via health professionals
- A portal to open up knowledge, empower disabled people, drive down costs of products and services
Individual support and control

• Remploy: strong support to move to viable social enterprises or companies wherever possible; strong protections and support for individuals
• Residential training colleges: open expertise to more disabled people and offer to mainstream colleges
• Government response expected
• Getting in – coverage of work experience, internships
• Promote to SMEs, and groups who under-use Access to Work (mental health, learning disability)
• Expanded peer support via Disabled People’s Organisations
The demand side

• Youth unemployment started to rise 2005 – pre recession
• Only 6% employers recruit 16 year old school leavers, 22% college leavers. Use qualifications as filter - disadvantaging many young and disabled people
• Idea that employers find young people ill-prepared in literacy etc is a myth. Majority find them well or very well prepared
• Main issue they cite is lack of work and life experience
Employers’ role

• To avoid missing best talent employers could take more responsibility to create entry points and progression routes
• Recruit non-graduates
• Move away from word of mouth recruitment which benefits the well-connected
• High quality work experience, internships
• Progression – autonomy, learning, roles
Role of providers and government

• Providers of Work Programme, Work Choice can support individuals through peer support, evidence based approaches
• And support employers to recruit and develop talented young people, disabled people and others facing disadvantage – and to end over-reliance on qualifications
• Government: align policies on apprentices, careers, health, social care, welfare reform – towards positive employment opportunity
Disability Rights UK

Supports the All-party Parliamentary Group on Disability Campaigns on welfare reform, future of social care, employment, education, transport……

Into Higher Education
Surviving and Thriving at Work: supports individuals – and for the employer, strengthens productivity, reduces sickness absence

www.radar.org.uk
www.disabilityalliance.org.uk
www.ncil.org.uk
www.ukces.org.uk

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