



LINKAGE
Employment Services

Supported Employment

A Guide for Employers and Service Users





Who we are and what we do

Linkage has been established for almost 40 years, successfully supporting learning disabled people into greater independence through its further education, enterprise and supported living services.

Linkage Employment Services team offers a specialist programme designed to meet the needs and requirements of the individual. We have many years' experience in the supported employment field and plenty of success stories to share. We pride ourselves on offering a high-quality service and an approach tailored to the individual, including access to Linkage's Work Skills training programme.

We offer excellent employability skills training, helping finding work, excellent job-coaching and support in work for both employee and employer.

Employment Services are committed to working with learning disabled people and supporting them with their goal of securing and retaining employment. We operate throughout the wider Lincolnshire region, working with around 150 employers, and we have developed many other partnerships that support the work we do.



What should people expect from our Employment Services?

Both employers and users tell us that they value the professional service provided. This encourages the development of skills appropriate for the workplace, typically resulting in sustainable employment, thus achieving greater independence. Our qualified and experienced Employment Services staff will ensure that each programme is focused on individual strengths and development needs.

Our service offers:

- Access to a range of almost 150 potential employers
- Work trials
- Job-coaching/one-to-one in-work support
- Year-round service, seven days a week
- Regular reviews and monitoring
- Access to Linkage's Work Skills training programme
- Interview support
- Assigned employer liaison officer

- Careers, Information Advice and Guidance
- One-to-one employment coaching/training including in-work support
- Weekly scheduled individual programme
- Time-bound work experience
- Job search/employer liaison
- Benefits guidance
- Signposting to other services

We are working with many local and national employers

Linkage has access to a range of potential employers. We have a long history of effective partnership-working with major local and national brands. Our service offers them a unique package of support that boosts the chances of the individual successfully sustaining employment opportunities. Here are just some of the many employers with whom we have become involved:



Fenland's trio has delivered confidence

Fenland's business has grown and so has their association with Linkage. Former owner Don Fry's bold and passionate step to support people with learning difficulties has proved to be a successful partnership. Many students have enjoyed work experience over the years.

Three Linkage service users are now employed by Fenland at its Louth and Skegness sites.

Richard Gascoigne works in Production, Michael Hallam as grounds assistant, both at Louth, and Gareth Kent, who joined the Stores Team at Skegness, makes up the trio. A story for Fenland's internal newsletter for Summer 2013 read:

"All three thoroughly enjoy the few hours of paid work they do each week for us, taking a lot from it in terms of their life skills development. Richard, Michael and Gareth also do a grand job, have made good friends in their working teams and we are very glad to have them with us!"



Eyes Down for Celia's Busy Life

Celia Green loves playing bingo, doing quizzes and baking. So she was thrilled to find all these activities rolled into her new job at a Louth nursing home where the residents love to see her.

Celia's confidence is palpable, running the bingo session and using technical equipment in the process at Stewton House Care Home in Louth. She helps activities officer Jayne Wright with refreshments as well as the games. Jayne says: "Celia's fantastic. I was looking for someone to help work alongside me to let me do other duties and I can leave her to get on activities. Her confidence has grown and really you can't be shy in a place like this, doing things like bingo."

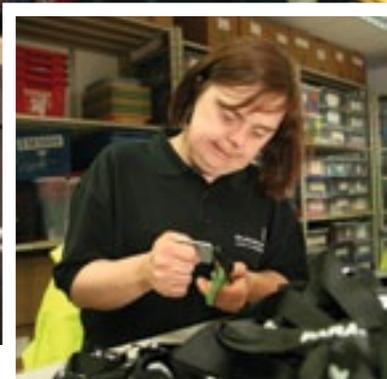
She does four hours a week at Stewton House and combines that with six hours each week at Woodside Care House in Skegness where Celia is a kitchen assistant, who admits: "I love both jobs but really wanted a role doing activities with people, as I enjoyed that before."



Five Years of a Welcoming Smile - John Millns

Lincoln Cathedral is probably the most iconic tourist attraction in the county and café assistant John Millns is the man with the welcoming smile. John has celebrated five years working at the Cloisters Refectory, greeting customers, clearing tables and helping in the kitchen. John lives in a flat 10 minutes away and spends his Fridays at the Cloisters. He says: "I enjoy working with the staff team and I make them laugh. I enjoy working on the dishwasher, clearing tables and making customers happy."

Although he does not work at very busy times such as the Christmas Market, he is certainly a key member of staff during his weekly, four-hour stint. He joined after gaining retail experience at the Sir Joseph Banks gift shop in Horncastle. "He is very hard-working, a valued member of the team and very helpful," says Angie Wilson, Deputy Manager. "Whenever we have a function in the Cathedral Centre, he also assists there."



Rachel hits the ground...running

Rachel Morris receives a medal every time she arrives at the office for work on a Friday, piles of them.

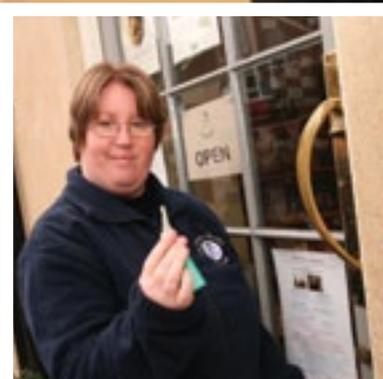
Following a work trial at Running Imp, the Lincoln-based event supplies company, she joined a small team pairing up dozens of medals and ribbons, plus operating a computerised engraving machine.

Attending a weekly job club run by Linkage helped Rachel understand what she needed to do to produce a CV and what an employer would want from her.

Rachel says: "I like it here and we have fun. I am really busy and the time flies by."

Running Imp Managing Director Faye Yarwood says:

"After we were approached by Linkage, we offered a work trial and Rachel has really progressed well and enhanced productivity. That's an important message to other employers, to give it a go."



Shop! A warm Linkage Welcome in Horncastle - Helen Fox

She has the key to the door and her eye on the books. Helen Fox has become the first paid worker among the Linkage service users who gain real work experience in a gift shop in Horncastle.

Joseph Banks Ltd has worked with Linkage to provide retail opportunities for learning disabled people at its thriving Bridge Street outlet for the last six years. The Sir Joseph Banks Centre was set up by local people who were keen to keep alive the achievements of one of Lincolnshire's famous sons.

Helen, who is 35, has responsibility for Saturday opening and now puts in five hours a week, three on a Saturday in the shop and a further two during the week. She works in the administration office, ensuring that sales information suppliers is correctly processed.

Helen says: "I have been there five years and really enjoy the job, which includes taking phone calls for orders, working as a team and helping out with customers. I am also thrilled to have the responsibility of opening up the shop on a Saturday."



The Voice - James Bell

James is employed as a peer champion by the advocacy service, Total Voice – part of the national charity, called Voiceability. James attends meetings where he shares his experiences and acts as a role model for others. James says: "I wanted to get involved with how the organisation runs. I also find it interesting listening to other people's points of view. It's great that we can help people to have their say and get their voices heard."

Linkage Employment Services support James in accessing his paid work and ensuring there is a link between employer and employee.

James also works part-time at the Priory Hotel in Louth. His employer Paul Hugill says:

"James is so enthusiastic. Linkage deserves credit for giving people the opportunity to get out into the real world and be part of something."



Should have gone to Specsavers... they did: Claire Crossland and Graham Clark

The national opticians chain Specsavers is the latest big name retailer to team up with Linkage's Employment Services and take on service users into paid work.

Claire Crossland from Mablethorpe and Graham Clark, who lives at Spilsby, successfully came through work trials at the Lumbley Road, Skegness, branch. They are job-sharing a cleaning role with each working for one and a half hours a day - Claire doing Mondays, Tuesdays and Thursdays, while Graham is on duty on Wednesdays and Fridays. Claire has also been on work experience as a domestic assistant at Linkage's Weelsby campus. Graham has also done similar work in the Gatehouse Café at Manby near Louth.

Store Manager Hillary Kay says:

"We're delighted that they have joined us, how well they have fitted into the team and the enthusiasm they demonstrate about the work."



At the Cutting Edge with Cherry

Cherry Chamberlain works as a ground assistant in Mablethorpe. She had a work trial at Wyngate Residential Care Home before being taken on to use the skills she gained through Linkage in horticulture. Her years of 'work experience' with the Linkage contracts team have paid off and allowed her to progress into the wider world of employment.

Care Manager Ann Grant says:

"Cherry has fitted in really well and the residents and staff love having her around as she joins them at breaks. The gardens are looking lovely and Cherry looks after the fruit trees and plenty of borders."

Enjoying the green fields - Simon Heathcote

Simon has a strong interest in horticulture and found his paid seasonal work with the support of Linkage, working at Greenfields Caravan Park. Simons assists in maintaining the general appearance of the park, ensuring flower displays are presented well and tackling the constant problem of weeds. Simon has been supported by Linkage for a number of years, living in accommodation near to his work. Simon impressed his bosses at Greenfields so much over his initial months of employment that his previously seasonal opportunity was extended all year round.

Spokesman John Conyers says:

"We appreciate the work Simon does and we appreciate him."



In Season - Scott Hill

Scott is now one of the seasonal staff at Sutton Springs Caravan Park at Trusthorpe near Mablethorpe. In his five-hour stint on Tuesdays, Scott's role with a rotary mower adds finishing touches to the grounds, giving a final manicured appearance to the lawn round each of the caravans. After Scott completed his first season in paid work, he saved his wages to buy a television for his bedroom. He says: "It's brilliant working at the caravan park – all the staff made me welcome."

David Brailsford, General Manager at Sutton Springs, says:

"Scott's hard work helped maintain the grounds to the high standards that our customers expect. He's been punctual, reliable and hardworking. More companies should be working with Linkage."



How to Purchase our Employment Services

Individuals can purchase our service via personal budgets, direct payments and private funds. We will ensure that it is clear what you will pay for prior to committing to purchasing our services. You can also feel assured that we will only ever send you an invoice for our services after you have received them and you will never be charged for support that you haven't received.

Our experienced Finance Department will ensure that paying for services is hassle-free and they are on hand should you need to contact them to discuss any queries or concerns.

Frequently Asked Questions:

What are personal budgets?

A personal budget is an amount of money that is allocated to a learning disabled person, based on their individual needs. This allows them, or someone acting on their behalf, to choose how to spend that money to meet their needs.

How much do I get?

There is no set amount. What you receive is calculated based on an assessment of your individual needs.

How do I apply?

To apply for a personal budget, you need to be eligible for social care. Contact your local authority and they will explain the process and support you.

Employers - what should you expect

Imagine how your organisation could benefit from recruiting individuals who are keen to work, albeit often suited to certain tasks, but are sometimes removed from the labour market because of their disability. We work innovatively with employers to:

- help fill vacancies and save you time & money
- offer on-going support to you and your employee
- provide extra reassurance to you and the employee to develop in their new job
- complement your existing recruitment methods
- match the right person to the right job for you
- offer you ongoing support for as long as you need it
- provide you with a flexible service that is tailored to your changing needs
- enable you to promote equality and diversity
- help you create employment for clients
- enable you to help transform the lives of learning disabled clients.



Our style of working with employers has resulted in many successful and enduring partnerships.

To find out what we can do for you, please call us today on **01790 755068** to talk to one of our team members.

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