

# Putting ability first



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

**Remploy** in partnership  
with MAXIMUS

# Welcome

**Welcome to Putting Ability First, Remploy's annual review of our work in supporting disabled people into sustainable paid employment. Over the last decade, we have found jobs for almost 130,000 people and by doing so, helped them to transform their lives by achieving economic and social independence.**

More than seven million people of working age in the UK are disabled or have a health condition. There remains a 32% gap in the employment rate between disabled and non-disabled people and just 6% of people with learning disabilities are in work – what a waste of disabled talent.

We support the Government's ambition to halve this gap.

The work, health and disability green paper: improving lives, published in November 2016, posed some very challenging questions on the future delivery of support.

I believe passionately that to answer these questions we need to listen carefully to disabled people, give them a voice so that providers like Remploy, employers and Government understand what they really need to achieve their aspirations.

That is why we have launched Remploy's "Purple Platform" to allow the voices of disabled people to be heard. I want to hear how we can better help disabled jobseekers find a job and build sustainable careers.



Gareth Parry, Remploy chief executive

We are also building a national network of Disability Ambassadors – people with lived experience who are going around the country talking to employers, local authorities, commissioning bodies and disabled people, face to face and online, showcasing the talents of disabled people, building disability confidence with employers and championing the employment of disabled people as great business sense.

Remploy's heritage, stretching back over 70 years, and our hugely successful track record makes us the leading provider in Britain of health and disability related employment programmes.

With our business partner MAXIMUS we now also have a much broader range of employment and health related services. The global experience of MAXIMUS means that we can now identify best practice worldwide and bring it to the UK.

Our own journey continues as we address the challenge to secure transformational employment for hundreds of thousands more disabled people – it's a challenge that I know all my colleagues in Remploy are more than willing to accept.

# Remploy leads on disability confidence

**Remploy is one of only 13 companies in the UK to have been awarded 'Leader' status by the national Disability Confident scheme operated by the Department for Work and Pensions.**

The accolade, which is the highest award, recognises an employer dedicated to supporting people with disabilities or health conditions in the workplace, as well as helping other employers to become Disability Confident themselves.

Gareth Parry, Remploy Chief Executive, said: "I am immensely proud that Remploy has been awarded Disability Confident Leader status. It is important to the delivery of our mission to transform the lives of disabled people through sustainable employment that we set an example of best practice as a business ourselves.

"At least 28 per cent of all Remploy colleagues, including at board level, are disabled. It is a key priority for us to ensure that disabled people see Remploy as a great place to work." The Disability Confident scheme was set up in 2013 with the aim of working with employers to challenge attitudes, increase understanding of disability, remove barriers, and ensure that disabled people have the opportunities to fulfil their potential and realise their aspirations.

Penny Mordaunt, Minister for Disabled People, Work and Health, explained: "Disability Confident is about increasing opportunities for disabled people and for employers. More than 2,400 businesses have signed up so far and this is a great start but I want to see all employers challenging the misconceptions of the past and realising the many benefits disabled people can bring to the workplace.

"I urge employers everywhere to become Disability Confident and make the most of this untapped pool of talent."

The underlying aim of Disability Confident is to create a movement for change – getting employers to think differently about disability and to take action to improve how they attract, recruit and retain disabled workers. The scheme takes employers on a journey from being Disability Confident Committed (Level 1) to being a Disability Confident Employer (Level 2), then going on to be a Disability Confident Leader (Level 3) which is the level achieved by Remploy.



# Halving the disability employment gap

By Tom Hicks, Remploy head of communications and policy

The Government's aspiration to halve the disability employment gap is an ambitious aim.

'Improving Lives', the green paper on work, health and disability from the Department for Work and Pensions and the Department of Health, sets out in some detail the challenges Britain faces in achieving this.



Halving the gap will require supporting around 1.2m disabled people into work. Yet 9 in 10 disabled people who are not in work are classed as 'economically inactive', and are not actively seeking work. And around 150,000 disabled people fall out of work each quarter. Halving the gap will require wider access to provision and engagement that ranges far beyond Jobcentre Plus and those seeking employment within our welfare system.

The proposed Work and Health Programme incorporates much of what we know works well in employment support. This includes integration of support at a local level, collaborating with charities, local government and organisations as well as more effective working with Jobcentre Plus.

However, employment support programmes can only form part of the solution.

**"Halving the gap will require wider access to provision and engagement that ranges far beyond Jobcentre Plus and those seeking employment within our welfare system."**

At Remploy we have engaged widely with governments, think tanks, charities and other partners on how we can begin to close the gap. We support many of the positive initiatives underway to address barriers to employment for disabled people, including the establishing of the joint Work and Health Unit, the relaunch of the Disability Confident campaign and additional funding for Access to Work.

We need to focus on the other pieces of the jigsaw, including how we support disabled people to stay in work or better manage a fluctuating or progressive condition in the workplace. We also need to look at how the education and skills system can limit the aspirations of young disabled people before they even enter the employment market. Apprenticeships and supported internships have the potential to offer many thousands of disabled people their first taste of work.

We should also look for more innovative solutions to engage a wider group of disabled people in ways that fit around their lives. This includes through online solutions and digital platforms to allow people to access advice and support at a place and time to suit them, and the co-location of different services, including employment support, in community settings.

The role of employers is central to this entire agenda, and increasing employer capability and capacity is key to increasing opportunities for disabled people. Remploy has been piloting approaches to this alongside our regular employer offer. We also need to explore how SMEs can be better supported. Many are looking for easily accessible in-person, phone based and online support and access to advice and guidance when required.

To work towards genuine equality in employment for all, we need to shift the discussion on disability and employment. We need to drive changes in behaviours and culture, moving beyond perceptions of the 'hardest to help' and focusing on putting ability first.



# Everyone who works for Remploy also owns Remploy

By Kathryn Wood, Remploy employee benefit trustee



Remploy colleagues have a 30% stake in the business which is held by the Employee Benefit Trust. This was gifted to staff when Remploy left government ownership in a joint venture partnership with MAXIMUS, a US company which delivers health and employment support services for governments across four continents.

As EBT Trustees we are the ultimate guardians of that stake and have a legal duty to protect the long-term interests of employees and the Remploy mission. Our overall aim is to secure our mission through delivering a commercially successful business, with a thriving culture, in which employees are active co-owners.

There are two employee directors who sit on the main Remploy Board, representing the interests of their colleagues. One, Abdul Quddus, works as a frontline employment adviser in our Bradford branch.

Since becoming employee-owned in April 2015 the EBT trustees have worked hard to set up ownership structures and processes to enable colleagues to be really involved as co-owners. Every team across the business now has an elected Ownership Lead whose role is to ensure colleagues' voices are heard and to promote positive ownership behaviours.

An Ownership Council was elected and now Ownership Councillors from across the business bring forward topics to be discussed with leaders of the business. During our 2016 Ownership Council meetings we have seen a really positive working relationship develop and are confident that this will continue in 2017.

In April 2016 the EBT received its first dividend payment from Remploy. Each team in the business was asked to nominate up to three local charities or projects working with disabled people to receive a donation on their behalf. All the organisations chosen must be working to transform the lives of disabled people ensuring we further the Remploy mission. Colleagues also chose Cancer Research UK as a national charity to support with a substantial donation. We are working with them to develop plans for how this money can be spent in line with our mission and also how we can develop a continuing partnership.

In 2017 the EBT will continue to be mission-focussed. We will continue distribution of dividend money to mission-related good causes. But we will also promote an active ownership culture to enable Remploy to meet its mission by supporting more disabled people into sustainable employment.

# Jig dispels myths about disability

**Jignesh (Jig) Vaidya is a Remploy Disability Ambassador who visits businesses, recruitment fairs, open days and businesses encouraging them to take on more disabled people. This is his story.**

I was born in Mumbai in India in 1970. When I was two I contracted polio and was left with both my legs being paralysed. At the end of the 1980s my father and brother arranged for my family to relocate to England.



We settled in Leicester and although I spoke three languages, English was not one of them so I took English language classes.

Someone suggested that I take up a sport and I was surprised at the number of sports available to me from wheelchair tennis to track events and rugby. I decided on basketball when I was 20, joining the Leicester Cobras first team and training twice a week which I have done for the last 20 years.

After taking a BTEC course at college I began to apply for jobs but after 18 unsuccessful months of applications I began to feel very despondent. I felt that both my ethnic background and my disability were holding me back.

I decided that if I couldn't find paid employment I would take a voluntary role and build my CV that way. I began a weekend voluntary role with BBC Radio Leicester which turned into a paid job and at the same time I started to challenge myself more, going to the gym, yoga and learning to swim.

I was then offered a role with Remploy. Not wanting to give up my radio job, I work for Remploy four days a week and with the BBC on Fridays.

When I go out to meet businesses I share my story and encourage them to employ more disabled people. Sometimes I find they have reservations about employing people with disabilities and are not aware how easily disabled people adapt to the work environment.

I try to dispel assumptions that disabled people need special treatment or take a lot of sick leave and I hope that when employers see my confidence instead of my disability they will realise that employing disabled people makes absolute sense for their business.

# Providing support for GCHQ

**Remploy is the sole provider of a neurodiversity service to the Government Communications Headquarters (GCHQ), the security and intelligence organisation based in Cheltenham whose role is to protect the nation from threats such as terrorism and cyber attacks.**

A Remploy advisor has been providing this service in a range of ways. He has briefed large groups of individuals including apprentices and managers on neurodiversity to raise awareness of how staff may be affected and he consults frequently with GCHQ staff.

This has helped the individual staff members by enabling the implementation of the adjustments they need to help them to succeed and it has also helped their management by increasing their understanding of their staff's needs.

GCHQ is launching an expanded Neurodiversity service provision using key documentation which Remploy has provided including a self-help guide, line manager's guide, fact sheet on neurodiverse conditions, tools and techniques and guidance on workplace situations.



This should be of huge benefit to GCHQ's neurodiverse staff and their managers by giving them the tools they need to effect change themselves and produce efficiencies by reducing the workload of GCHQ's disabilities team. Longer term, it should help to foster a climate of greater acceptance and understanding of neurodiversity by highlighting the benefits that a neurodiverse workforce can bring.

Mike, who chairs the GCHQ Dyslexia and Dyspraxic Support Group, said: "My diagnosis helped me to manage my weaknesses and play to my strengths. I used to do lists and timetables to deal with my poor memory, and I found I had a flair for writing software (part of a bigger skill of breaking down problems into smaller, simpler parts).

"It was the latter that I thought landed me with my job at GCHQ. I later learned that it was in fact down to my performance at the two-day assessment centre. There the assessment panel had been impressed how my own self-awareness had given me an intrinsic understanding of different team members and how they all contributed differently to the team's success. I have since built a career at GCHQ in project management based on my problem solving and team-leading abilities.

"The support group I run for dyslexics and dyspraxics is championed by a director on GCHQ's board and is something I am proud to say the department takes very seriously."

# Disability confident... So what do we really mean?

**For me it is simple. It's being able to anticipate and accommodate the needs of disabled people effortlessly.**

We know that disabled people make great employees, and that the majority of working people with a disability or health condition gained it whilst in work – and becoming disability confident makes good business sense, something we have always known.

We appreciate that barriers exist, employers are uncertain, lack knowledge or simply don't see the benefits for making a change. This is the key to getting it right – disability confident organisations recognise this as a cultural change right across their business.

It takes time, but is well worth the effort.

Businesses not only benefit from access to a wider pool of talent and a new customer base but, just as importantly, employees feel comfortable sharing any challenges they may have, safe in the knowledge that their employer will make the often simple adjustments required.

Helping our employer partners build disability confidence is fundamental to our mission to transform the lives of disabled people. Increasingly, we are being asked to come up with innovative and fun ways to do it.



**Matt Reed, Remploy director of employer services**

We have created an employer journey to chart the journey to and beyond disability confidence and businesses tell us they love the simplicity of this approach and the solutions. Our training products also reflect this approach with employers able to choose from a simple two-hour 'Think Differently' session, or longer sessions focussing on general awareness and confidence to more specific areas such as Mental Health First aid, or TSI (Training in Systematic Instruction) which aims to reduce the shocking employment gap for people with learning disabilities.

It is however through practical, lived experience that we create the biggest impact enabling employers to utilise new found skills as part of a wider network of employer coaches and champions.

This new approach has opened up a whole new world of possibilities with projects in the pipeline with new partner Nationwide and involvement in Barclays' drive to take other employers with them as they strive to be the most inclusive organisation on the FTSE 100.

# Q&A

**Emma Taylor, Tesco's People Director, UK Channels, answers questions about her company's partnership with Remploy.**



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**We understand that disabled people have a harder time finding employment opportunities than non-disabled people.**

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## What is Tesco Launch, and what is its aim?

The Tesco Launch in partnership with Remploy programme is our way of reaching out and giving disabled and disadvantaged people an introduction to our industry and our business, which will stand them in good stead in their future employment and career.

As the UK's largest private employer we have also made a commitment to tackle youth unemployment by providing high quality pre-employability training and work placements. We understand that disabled people have a harder time finding employment opportunities than non-disabled people, so this programme is Tesco's promise, our pledge if you like, that we will get disabled people into work.

## Why is it important to focus on 18–24 year olds?

Youth unemployment is a persistent social and economic issue and even more so amongst disabled young people. By giving this vulnerable group the chance to gain skills and experience, develop self-confidence to enter work, education or training we're helping to create highly motivated potential employees. Tesco is one of the original 25 UK employers to voluntarily pledge a commitment to Movement to Work, that we will help tackle youth unemployment by providing suitable employability programmes and work placements.

## Why was Remploy chosen as the disability partner?

Remploy has considerable expertise in disability and has supported more than 100,000 disabled people to move into work in the last five years and sustain a career for themselves. We already work closely with Remploy on general recruitment; and their mission to achieve equality in employment for disabled people aligns to Tesco's values of treating people how they want to be treated.

## How does the programme work?

Tesco's work placement is a unique opportunity for candidates from Remploy to showcase what they're capable of and build their confidence. Participants undertake a two week placement which has been planned for them, helping them to grow in confidence and to gain the skills and experience to help them with their careers – whatever path they choose to take. They get the chance to work in one of our stores where they get a feel for what it is really like to work for Tesco. Throughout their placement they're supported by their Buddy, People Manager and our team in store.

In addition to awarding a certificate of placement completion, if the placement goes well and there are suitable vacancies in the store or other local stores, we'll offer them a role.

From our perspective, Launch gives Tesco access to a bank of accredited individuals when it comes to recruitment and their ability and skills have already been tested before they are offered an opportunity, which helps us to make our workforce even more diverse and inclusive.

## What is your ambition for the programme?

This is the first year we are running this employability programme with Remploy and we already have a number of successful hires in our stores. We'd really love to see it grow in numbers and for Remploy candidates to join Tesco or other retailers following successful placements. Serving the communities we're part of is one of our priorities here at Tesco.

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# Helping to improve health and social care

In early 2016 Remploy was awarded three out of four contracts to deliver the Experts by Experience programme for the Care Quality Commission.

We recruit and train people who have first-hand experience of using health and social care services or are the family carer for someone who does, to work with CQC inspections of these services.

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This work is incredibly important. Every inspection undertaken is reported on and these reports are used to rank the health or social care service – empowering people to make informed choices when choosing care for themselves or their loved ones.

John Crayden is an Expert by Experience (ExE) working with Enham Trust, which specialises in providing support and care to disabled people.

John worked in the finance, banking and the legal sectors before setting up his own business, which he still runs alongside his work as an ExE. So far, John has taken part in more than 30 inspections with Enham and the CQC.

He said: "I like people! I've always liked working with people so, when I was approached to become an ExE, I thought Yes, I could enjoy this – and I do!"

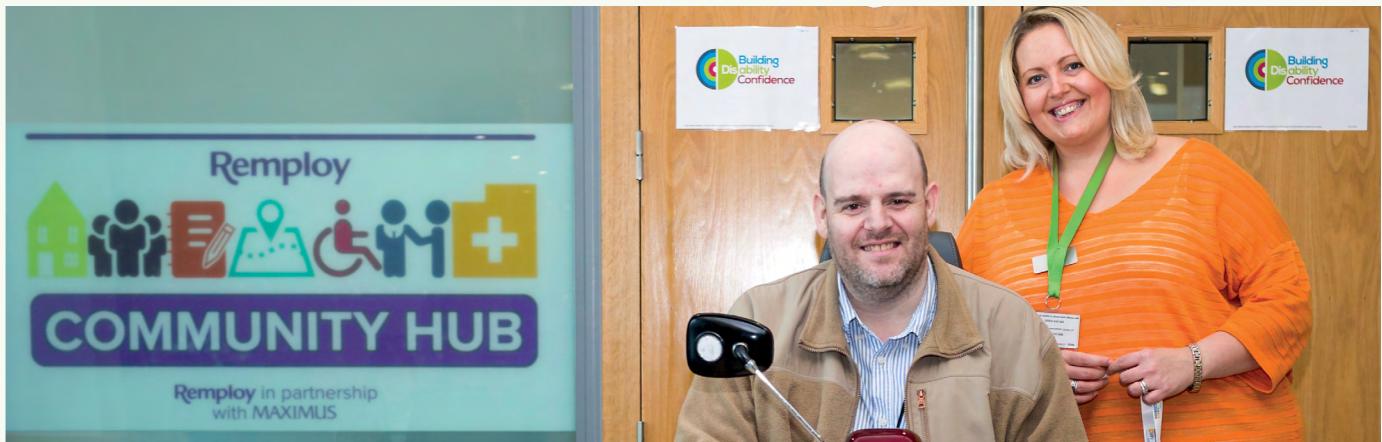
"We know how to ask the right questions, and what a good service should feel like."

"I have a maxim. If I can make someone smile or, better still, laugh each day, then I've had a successful day. I like to put people at their ease so that they feel comfortable talking to me and answering questions about their experience of the service they're using."

"In capturing this information I can paint a fuller picture of the service and their experience and make sure their opinions are heard."

If you are interested in learning more about the ExE Programme, or becoming an ExE yourself, please visit our website [www.remploy.co.uk/exe](http://www.remploy.co.uk/exe) or email us on [expertevents@remploy.co.uk](mailto:expertevents@remploy.co.uk) or call 0300 456 8123

# Hubs at the centre of the community



**For employment and health programmes to be successful and deliver genuinely personalised support, requires effective collaboration between a diverse range of organisations. Remploy works with more than 800 organisations in communities across Britain through our national and local partnerships**

Improving integration is an increasing focus for both commissioners and specialist providers. The Work, health and disability green paper challenges providers to offer disabled people "more active, integrated and individualised support that wraps around them." This is reflected in the design of the Government's proposed Work and Health programme which will replace the national Work Programme and Work Choice programme.

Remploy has developed a Hub model to bring together a range of specialist providers and services in one location, delivering personalised and integrated support. Jobseekers have immediate access to an integrated range of services delivered by multidisciplinary teams of specialists.

Just as our offering to each individual is shaped around their needs, our Community and Employment Hubs provide the flexibility to meet the specific needs of local communities. Our Islington Work Hub, delivered in partnership with MAXIMUS, delivers extensive mental health support in a borough which has one of the highest rates of mental ill-health in the country.

Our Swansea Community Hub offers dedicated space for employers to use as a local base and provide a 'one-stop' shop to help local people with a disability or health condition access vital support and employment opportunities.

And while co-location is important, genuine integration and personalisation is driven by collaboration and case management, sharing expertise and providing wrap-around support such as housing and debt advice, IT training and health provision to the individual, in a single location.

# Remploy working around Britain

**Work First Scotland - Scottish government programme** to deliver employability support to disabled and disadvantaged people across Scotland (starting April)



**Sheffield City Council - Adult Education**  
Budget Training Employability skills support and qualifications to disabled people and those with health conditions



**Wirral Reachout Partnership** – Providing employability skills, support and moving people into sustainable work for disadvantaged groups in deprived areas



**DWP Tata Steel** - Redundancy support for steel workers made redundant at Port Talbot including employability skills, CV building and job search support



**GCHQ, Cheltenham** - providing neurodiversity tools and support to disabled staff and those with health conditions



**SDS - Certificate of Work Readiness** - Qualifications and training for disabled and disadvantaged people enabling them to move into further education, employment, training or apprenticeships

**Big Lottery Fund - Talent Match NE** - With Wise Group, delivery of training and qualification courses to young people to support them to develop employability skills and move into employment

**DWP - Cheshire and Warrington ESF** - Employment support to disabled people and those with health and complex barriers to work, focused on securing sustainable employment (Starting in January 2017)

**BBC - Disability Access Services** - Birmingham-based service providing assessments and support for BBC employees globally who require adjustments or support to enable them to work effectively

**Richmond Council - Supported Employment Programme** - Supported employment interventions for people with learning disabilities and mental health conditions

**Camden & Islington Councils** - Delivery of employment focussed interventions and job search support for people with Mental Health conditions, delivered with supply chain partners

# Innovating with a unique digital service

**Innovation is key to delivering a digital service which can reach and provide employment support to as many disabled people as possible.**

Our online service gives our service users the choice and control of how, where and when they want to engage with us and the support we offer them. This allows our customers to engage with Remploy without needing to travel to one of our branches or outreach locations.

Our new "blended" approach to digital support sees each customer paired with an advisor in a branch who they can meet face-to-face and an online advisor who can support them remotely, either over the telephone or via online video conferencing.

This gives the disabled jobseeker the choice and flexibility to receive employment support when and where it suits them best- whether at a branch, at home or on the go- allowing us to make meaningful change to their lives in a way that is convenient to them. Both advisors support the customer in unison, providing a truly "blended" model of employment support.



This digital offering is especially useful in allowing Remploy to engage individuals living in rural communities, allowing them to receive employment support without needing to travel the long distance to their nearest Remploy branch. Similarly, our evidence suggests that this choice of digital support is especially valuable to people with mental health conditions, reducing the anxiety that can be created by relying only on face-to-face support.

By introducing greater levels of innovation to our digital offer, we have the opportunity to continually tailor our services to the needs of our service users and, ultimately, support more disabled people into sustainable employment. Other digital innovations we are exploring include the introduction of a Remploy app to allow individuals to receive support on the go and the creation of an online repository of information available on disability and work, utilising the data we have gathered as the leading authority on disability and work

# Supporting young people with SEND into work

**By Susan Allott, Remploy Learning Disability Champion**

There is exciting progress taking place which should open up better routes to employment for young people with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND).

Without doubt the most ambitious of these is the recommendation in the Government's Post-Sixteen Skills Plan that all young people with an Education Health and Care plan should undertake a Supported Internship. This would generate real change. It is only right that every young person with SEND should have the opportunity to combine study with supported work experience in their final year of education.



Richard Cowdery, from Sutton, south London who has Asperger Syndrome and cerebral palsy became a customer service assistant with London Underground after successfully completing Steps into Work, a programme jointly run by Remploy, Transport for London and Barnet & Southgate College.

While Supported Internships still operate on a relatively small scale, their success rates for young people with learning disabilities and complex needs are consistently high. Recent data shows that outcome rates of over 60% are being achieved across the UK.

With a national employment rate of less than 6% for people with learning disabilities – a figure which has dropped in each of the last three years – it is clear that scaling up Supported Internships is a sensible and much needed approach.

Remploy argues that the Government should lead a national marketing and communications campaign promoting Supported Internships as a model of recognised best practice. This would be aimed at employers, local authorities and education providers to afford Supported Internships an equal status to Apprenticeships.

Another positive development is the recommendation in the Maynard Review that maths and English requirements should be adjusted for apprentices with learning disabilities who are able to meet the occupational standard, but would struggle to achieve the English and maths qualifications.

Government is committed to halving the gap in the disability employment gap by 2020. These recommendations would begin to close the biggest gap of all, between those with SEND and the rest of the population.

# Remploy

## in Scotland

By Matt Lancashire, Director Remploy Scotland



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**We will continue to support the inclusive economic growth agenda in Scotland and we will work with employers to offer more support to candidates.**

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**As an organisation we pride ourselves on working in partnership and collaboration with our disabled customers and a wide range of stakeholders to design and provide the best integrated service for disabled people in Scotland.**

We deliver Work Choice throughout Scotland while offering support through the Certificate of Work Readiness programme for young disabled people looking to join a modern apprenticeship. We also deliver the Scottish Employer Recruitment Incentive which targets support at unemployed young people with the greatest barriers to employment to enable them to get and keep a job.

As we look ahead we see the great opportunities in Scotland to do something different and offer more integrated employability services for disabled people which are based on the values of dignity and respect. This is the main driver behind the Remploy Community Delivery Network which offers integrated and seamless quality employability support to disabled job seekers. This is combined with specialist support provided by organisations from the third, private and public sectors working together to achieve a common vision of supporting more disabled people into employment.

**Remploy  
Scotland**

**Putting ability first**

How we deliver this vision is changing and we continue to innovate to support the changing needs of our customers and how they access services.

We will continue to support the inclusive economic growth agenda in Scotland and we will work with employers to offer more support to candidates in work and help them to progress their careers.

We recognise though that there is a wider agenda than employability and fair work and as an organisation we have become living wage accredited and have signed the Scottish Business Pledge. These accreditations are significant moments for Remploy as we deliver a new Employer Engagement strategy focussed on placing more candidates with accredited living wage employers and those committed to the business pledge.

We will continue to listen to and work with our customers and stakeholders to deliver integrated programmes which help to ensure a Fairer Scotland.

# Constructing careers



**A partnership between Remploy and Mitie's property services division is supporting more than 60 disabled people who are seeking careers in the construction industry.**

The innovative 'Think Differently' project is funded by the Construction Industry Training Board and delivers training and job opportunities for disabled people and those with health conditions.

Remploy refers candidates to the programme and also delivers disability coaching to Mitie staff to help the company build disability confidence and capability.

**'Think Differently' aims to encourage employers to take on disabled applicants and give them the chance to gain real work experience and an opportunity to learn new, transferable skills.**

The project was piloted in Glasgow and Airdrie with the first ten disabled people on placements in roles including quantity surveying, electrical engineering, painting and administration. The project will now be rolled out across other areas of the business.

Mark McCafferty Regional HR Manager at Mitie's property services business, said: "We are keen to show disabled people that they can have a successful career in the construction industry and there is support for them. We are certain that this project will provide an excellent opportunity for participants, who most likely will have encountered significant barriers to employment, to enhance their skills, confidence and provide an alternative job interview model."

"It is widely accepted that disabled job seekers can be disadvantaged by traditional recruitment methods and that work trials can provide an effective alternative route into employment."



## Lynn lights up!

**Lynn Pattersonelliott, aged 49 from Glasgow, is taking steps towards her dream career as an electrician on the Think Differently project.**

Lynn has a rare form of dyslexia but is studying Electrical and Electronic Engineering with Renewables at Glasgow Caledonian University.

Lynn said her placement in Mitie's electricians department was "like gold dust. I can relate a lot of the learning from my degree to the practical elements of the placement. Things are looking promising and my confidence has been boosted by getting a foot in the door of my industry."

# Remploy in Wales

**Remploy Cymru is proud of Remploy's rich Welsh heritage.**

**Remploy  
Cymru**

Rhoi gallu yn gyntaf

Remploy Cymru is proud of Remploy's rich Welsh heritage. The first of our factories opened after the Second World War in Bridgend and, over the seven decades since, we have developed unrivalled expertise in supporting disabled people to gain the skills, confidence and opportunities they need to build enduring careers.

Remploy Cymru has a network of 16 offices and branches across Wales and 25 outreach service areas. We work directly and as a subcontractor with businesses of all sizes and sectors to secure sustainable jobs for disabled and disadvantaged people and those with health conditions.

Our goal is to reduce the disability employment gap through partnerships with the Welsh Government, commissioners, local authorities and other groups including disability organisations, housing associations, welfare to work providers and education providers.

We create personalised support plans and equip individuals with the right skills to move into sustainable employment. We work closely with employers, encouraging them to become disability confident and appreciate the incredible value disabled people bring to any business.

Our comprehensive range of products and services, including our unique online service, allows organisations to maximise the benefits of recruiting and retaining a diverse workforce.

Remploy delivers a range of programmes and contracts across Wales including:

- Work Choice, supporting thousands of disabled people with complex barriers to move into or retain employment.
- A Department for Work and Pensions contract to provide employability support for workers facing redundancy at TATA Steel in South Wales.
- Individual Placement Support Specialist support for people with mental health conditions to move into or retain employment, including guidance for employers to better understand mental ill health.
- Work Programme, partnering with Working Links we deliver tailored support for individuals with specialist needs to find work in Powys, Neath, Port Talbot and Monmouthshire. Since June 2011, we have supported 2,600 people into work.

# Stuart gets a new start with M&S

**A Swansea man, who has battled for more than a decade with depression and anxiety, has turned his life around with help from Remploy and Marks & Spencer.**

Stuart Harris, aged 47, has secured full-time, permanent employment as a Customer Assistant in an M&S Food hall in Fforestfach, as part of the 'Marks & Start' programme.

Stuart's anxiety and depression was triggered after a failed adoption attempt and the breakdown of his marriage in 2005.

He took part in the Marks & Start scheme which gives jobseekers the chance to develop their skills and gain experience over the course of a placement. Remploy is one of the partners M&S works with, focusing on helping individuals with health conditions and disabilities to gain vital workplace skills and sustainable employment.



Stuart Harris and his manager  
Judith Henderson

Stuart said: "Going for jobs was really nerve wracking at first but the help and support I received from Remploy gave me the confidence I needed to get stuck in at M&S. Working makes me feel better about myself and has helped me to control my down moments."

"I was offered a permanent role with M&S after my placement and short

temporary contract finished. They didn't need to ask me twice – I was down to the store to sign my contract within 15 minutes of getting the call!"

Judith Henderson, Stuart's Manager at M&S, said: "He's enthusiastic, reliable and flexible – a great asset to our team."



c.2890  
people placed  
between April '14  
- March '15

Over  
18,000  
disabled people  
into work since 2010

Pan Wales delivery with  
14 offices  
25 outreach locations



Our team plays a key role in the delivery  
of the Work Choice programme and  
serves over 60% of its market

c.800  
Welsh customers  
have been helped  
digitally through Remploy  
Online



# The best kept secret in the workplace?

Psychological pressures of the workplace have changed and for many employees balancing the demands and responsibilities at work with those of home life, can be challenging.

Mental health is the leading cause of sickness absence in the UK and the figures are staggering with more than 91 million days lost each year. The total cost to employers is estimated to be £26 billion each year.

The Workplace Mental Health Support Scheme, operated by Remploy under the Government's Access to Work scheme has now supported 7,000 people across Britain and has achieved an impressive 92% success rate of people remaining in their six months after joining the programme.

Gareth Parry, Remploy's Chief Executive, said: "As many as 1 in 6 adults of working age is experiencing challenges with mental health at any one time and while sickness absence is important so is day to day performance. According to the Centre for Mental Health, presenteeism from mental ill health alone costs the UK economy a further £15.1bn a year. "The good news is that there is help out there for employers – and the even better news is that it's free!"



**Chris Reed**, a 47-year-old senior manager from Gateshead, Tyne and Wear, who experienced mental health issues that threatened his career, is one of 7,000 people who have taken advantage of a free support service which has

helped them save their jobs.

and understanding of mental health issues and offers a range of face to face and telephone-based support.

A significant majority of people accessing the service have issues with depression or anxiety and the service has also supported people with schizophrenia, post-traumatic stress, eating disorders, obsessive compulsive disorders and individuals who self-harm.

**Employers and individuals can find out more by contacting using the details below.**

**Phone:** **0300 456 8114**

**Email:** **vocationalrehabilitation@remploy.co.uk**

**Website:** **www.remploy.co.uk/mentalhealth**

# Diam looks beyond disability

A Leicestershire company has demonstrated its commitment to creating equal opportunities in the workplace by taking on more than 30 Remploy candidates in the past three years.

Loughborough based Diam, which manufacturers stands and other point of sale merchandising for some of the world's leading brands, introduced a forward-looking social inclusion programme at its factory in 2013.

Since then it has provided jobs for dozens of disabled and disadvantaged people and built a strong partnership with Remploy, which has helped Diam employees have a greater understanding of disability employment.

Diam's production manager, Steve Ison-Jacques, said the thriving partnership benefits both organisations.

"Our managers and team leaders have been to Remploy's Leicester branch to receive disability awareness training, which has been very helpful. In return we have been able to give Remploy employees and candidates a hands-on demonstration of the work we do here at our factory."



L-R: Innocent Kenne, Lesley Hallam, Steve Ison-Jacques

was no way this person would be suitable for us.

"I was amazed, therefore, when they were able to complete the task given them with comparative ease. It was only later that it dawned on me that disabled people have to make adjustments all of their lives and this candidate was no exception."

Diam production manager, Innocent Kenne, said Remploy candidates integrate well with the rest of the workforce. "Of course, disabled people want to be treated the same as everyone else and receive the same opportunities, and that's our aim at Diam. We do, however, make workplace adjustments if they are needed, such as having fire alarms with visual and audible alerts for the benefit of people with hearing impairments."

"Remploy candidates are excellent," added Steve. "Working in a factory is not the most glamorous job in the world, but the candidates we receive from Remploy have a good work ethic, and that's very important to us."

Lesley Hallam, a senior team leader at Diam, has good reason to recall her visit to the Remploy branch. "Much of the work we do on the production line is quite intricate so when I was introduced to a Remploy candidate who had several fingers missing my immediate reaction was that there

# Sweeping away the barriers

**In 2006, TC Facilities Management (TCFM) signed a partnership with Remploy, making the specialist employment organisation its disability recruitment partner of choice.**

The partnership has developed and grown to the point where, TCFM is on the brink of recruiting its 1,000th Remploy candidate. It's a success story by any measure. But are there lessons that other employers, particularly those in the public sector, can learn from TCFM's experience?



Rachel Gardner, Head of HR at TCFM, said: "It's very simple, we want motivated people who are keen to work and our experience is that Remploy provides candidates who match those criteria."

"The employment gap between disabled and non-disabled people has come down in the last decade but remains stubbornly high at 32 per cent. We all need to do more," she said.

TCFM has contracts with many of Britain's leading companies, including one with Tesco to clean over 900 of its stores every day. Recruiting employees with the qualities it requires can be a challenge and retaining them in a sector known for its rapid turnover of staff is just as tough.

Remploy candidates, however, buck the trend, as Rachel explained. "Nationally, 64 per cent of candidates stay in the job longer than 26 weeks. We even have one Remploy candidate in Wales who has been with us for almost 10 years."

Key to TCFM's recruitment strategy with Remploy is an initial two-week work trial, which it uses as an alternative to formal interviews. Rachel said: "A large number of people on our work trials go on to get permanent jobs. Interviews can be intimidating for anyone, but if you have a disability and

have been unemployed for a long time they can be really tough.

"Work trials are perfect for giving candidates an opportunity to show what they can do in the workplace. Let's be honest, a conventional interview probably isn't the best way to show how good you are at mopping a floor!"

Rachel said: "When it comes to disability employment, we strive to get it right every time and that is where Remploy helps. There really is no reason not to employ disabled people."

# Stephen regains his independence

**When Stephen Taylor was told he had landed a job with TCFM, cleaning Tesco's store in St Mellons, Cardiff, he felt like he had won the lottery.**

Stephen, aged 40 who has a severe learning disability, was made redundant from his previous job at a Cardiff convenience store after 15 years, leaving him feeling angry and frustrated.

"I hated being unemployed," he recalled. "Work gives you money and independence and suddenly I didn't have either."

He turned to Remploy's Cardiff branch for help and received a comprehensive programme of support, including confidence building, preparation for interviews and a series of work placements."

After a successful work trial with TCFM Stephen was offered the chance to get his life back on track – and he grasped it with both hands.



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## If you want to partner with Remploy, please contact:

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