

ABILITY
not disability

Employers Guide to Inclusive Recruitment

2025



CONNECT TO WORK

Funded by **UK Government**

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Inclusively

Enfield

Waltham
Forest

Redbridge

Havering

Newham

Barking &
Dagenham

Greenwich

Bexley

Bromley

About Local London

Local London is a partnership of nine
boroughs in North-east and South-east
London, working together to drive growth
and strengthen local economies.

We connect employers
with the skills,
infrastructure, and
networks they need to
succeed, while making the
most of the subregion's
diverse workforce and
business potential.

Covering some of London's
most connected and
ambitious districts, Local
London creates a direct link
between local government
and business, making it
easier to get things done
and seize opportunities.

Hiring Without Barriers

Practical advice to build inclusive, disability-friendly workplaces.



The purpose of this document is to support and encourage inclusive employment practices by showing why and how to recruit, retain, and progress individuals with disabilities, learning difficulties, or neurodivergent conditions.

It outlines both the moral and business case for inclusive hiring, emphasising access to **government funding, grants, and workplace support schemes available** in the UK.

Inclusive employment can lead to improved staff retention, reduced recruitment costs, increased innovation, and access to a wider customer base, ultimately contributing to long-term financial sustainability and growth. It also ensures compliance with legal responsibilities under the Equality Act 2010.

It's Easier Than You Think.



Intended Audience

This document is intended for anyone involved in employment or work-related opportunities, including employers, HR professionals, apprenticeship providers, colleges, training organisations, supported employment services, and others working across the employability and skills sector.

Whether you're offering paid work, apprenticeships, internships, work placements, or training-to-work pathways, this guide illustrates how inclusive employment not only creates social value but also brings measurable business benefits.

Free Employer Resources & Funded Support

Inclusive Hiring

A Smarter Way to Build Your Workforce.

There are over 16 million disabled people in the UK, including 3.6 million of working age. Yet disabled individuals are nearly twice as likely to be unemployed as their non-disabled peers.

This represents a vast pool of untapped talent - right here in London.

Inclusive hiring is a smart business choice.

By welcoming disabled and neurodivergent talent, employers can strengthen teams, spark innovation, increase productivity, and open new revenue opportunities — all while creating a positive social impact.

Of course, these practices also align with UK law (Equality Act 2010), ensuring fair and accessible opportunities for everyone.

"Every recruitment decision is an opportunity to nurture inclusion. Even small steps today can build a diverse and thriving workforce."

"Inclusion is now a critical business-level priority, shaping talent pipelines, culture, innovation, and long-term performance."

Why It Matters to Your Business

Employers across the capital are already taking action, helping people with learning disabilities, neurodivergent conditions, and long-term health needs build meaningful careers.

Access unique strengths from candidates who **think differently** and solve problems **creatively**

Boost retention and morale-inclusive workplaces see **lower turnover** and **higher engagement**

Reflect your customer base-diverse teams **better understand** and serve diverse communities

Drive innovation and growth-London tech leaders say inclusive teams **build better products**

Aligned with the Mayor of London's Inclusive Talent Strategy (published October 2025), this approach helps employers tap into pan-London diverse talent pipelines and contribute to the city-wide push for inclusive growth.



Get Involved

What types of support might be needed?

With the right support, inclusive recruitment is simple to implement.

From tailored onboarding to workplace adjustments, you'll be supported every step of the way.

- Free toolkits and training
- Access to local talent pipelines
- Support with government schemes like Access to Work and Disability Confident

Join a growing network of London employers who are building inclusive workplaces:

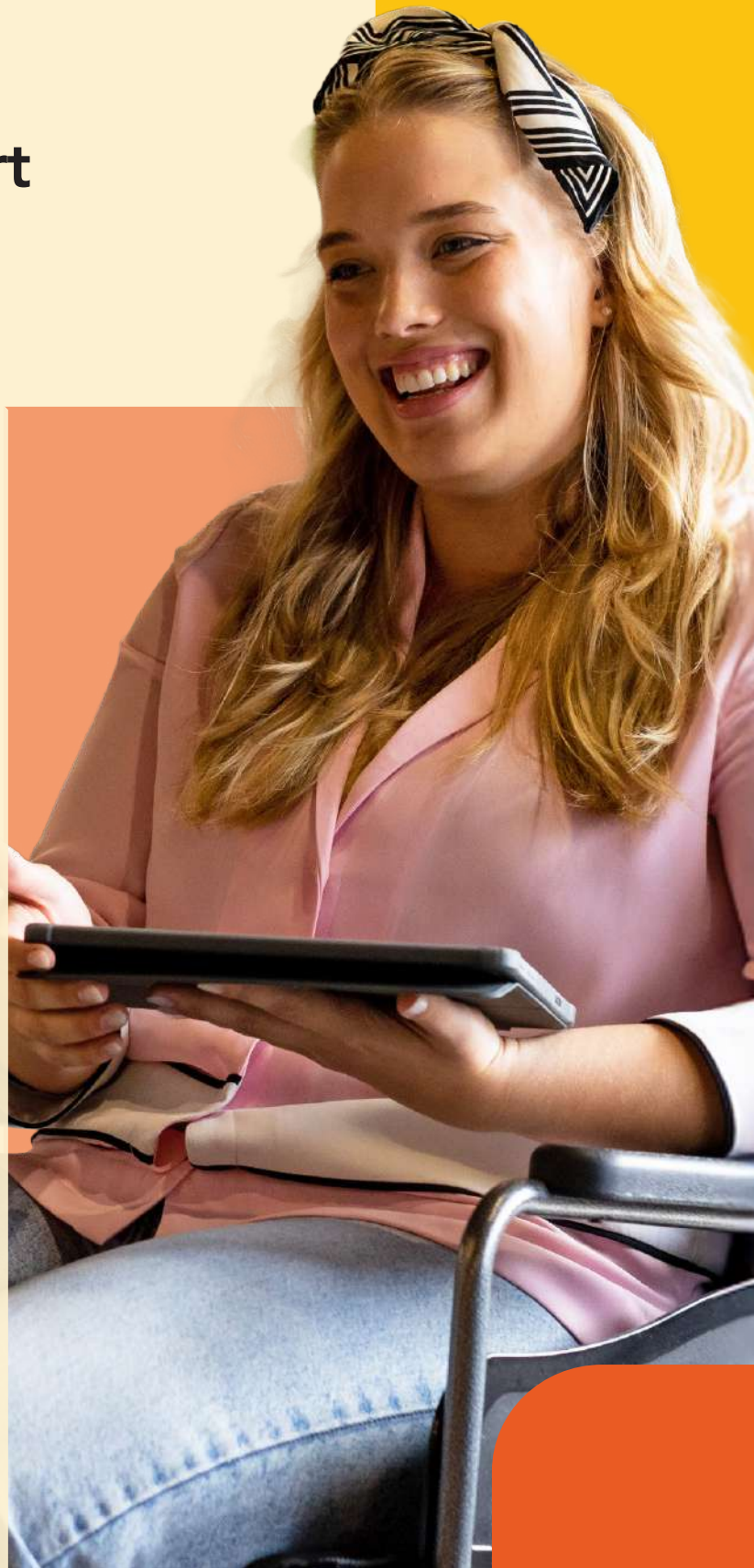
Virtual Noticeboard

Types of Practical Support (Reasonable Adjustments)

Flexible working patterns and clear communication of expectations.
Assistive tech and accessible tools; provide alternatives for tests and interviews.

Written instructions and structured feedback loops.

Let's build a workforce that reflects the strengths of every Londoner!



Understanding Disability while Harnessing the Talent



Only 60% of employers actively support neuro-inclusion despite teams with neurodivergent professionals showing up to 30% more productive and a 90% retention rate. Access the full report here:

CIPD Neuroinclusion at Work Report 2024.

Here are some examples of unique strengths that individuals may bring. They are not meant to stereotype, but to help employers recognise potential valuable skills.

Autism

Strong attention to detail and accuracy.
Reliability with routine and structure.
Excellent at pattern recognition and data analysis.

ADHD

Creative problem-solving and innovative thinking.
High energy and ability to multitask.
Resilience in fast-changing environments.

Dyslexia

Strong verbal communication and storytelling skills.
Creative and strategic 'big picture' thinking.
Good at simplifying complex information.

Wheelchair Users/Mobility Impairments

Often strong problem-solvers due to lived experience of navigating barriers.
Bring perspective on accessibility improvements that benefit all staff/customers.
Can thrive in roles where remote or desk-based work is valued.

Deaf or Hard of Hearing

Excellent focus and concentration in visual tasks.
Strong non-verbal communication skills.
Can help organisations adopt inclusive communication practices.

Blind or Visually Impaired

Often highly skilled in memory and auditory processing.
Bring expertise in accessibility technology (screen readers, voice tools).
Can highlight improvements in workplace accessibility.

Practical Support

What Help, Grants or Funding Is Available?



Employers are not expected to do this alone.

There's government funding and external support to help you confidently recruit and retain disabled and neurodivergent staff.

Access to Work

Free to employers - Government Fund

Access to Work is a government grant scheme that funds practical support for employees with disabilities, long-term health conditions, or neurodivergence. The aim is to remove workplace barriers so the employee can carry out their job effectively.

Key points for employers

- Specialist equipment and assistive technology
- Job coaches and workplace mentors
- British Sign Language interpreters and communication support
- Mental health support and coping strategies
- Travel-to-work arrangements, including taxis or ride-hailing services if public transport is not suitable
- Support for remote or hybrid working environments
- Simple application process. The employee applies directly to Access to Work; the employer will only need to confirm workplace details and agree to implement the adjustments

[Visit here for more info](#)

Full funding for small businesses

If your organisation has fewer than 50 employees, Access to Work can cover **100% of the approved costs** for adjustments and support.

Partial funding for medium and large employers

Businesses with 50 or more staff may be expected to contribute towards some of the costs, depending on the support required.

If the employee has worked for you for more than 6 weeks, you may need to share some of the costs for equipment or workplace adaptations. **In many cases, funding covers up to 80% of these costs.** Your employee applies for the support, but the business benefits from it.



Disability Awareness Training

Training can help your staff understand how to recruit and support people with disabilities or learning differences.

Topics may include:

- Inclusive language and communication
- Legal responsibilities and safeguarding
- Creating accessible recruitment processes
- Supporting neurodivergent colleagues
- Customising roles through job carving

Training is available through:

- Unity Works
- Scope
- Disability Rights UK





Joining the Disability Confident Employer Scheme

The UK Government's Disability Confident scheme helps employers recruit and retain disabled people and those with health conditions.



Even at Level 1 (Committed), you can commit to offering interviews to disabled candidates who meet the essential criteria, showing clear intent to be inclusive.

Joining the scheme beside giving you access to a wider talent pool, boosts your reputation as an inclusive employer, and demonstrates alignment with legal and social responsibility.

**Apply to become a
Disability Confident Employer**



Getting Started with your Inclusive Employer Journey

There are many ways to get started, even with limited time or resources. You could:

Mentor a young person with a learning disability

Review your recruitment practices

Host a supported internship

Offer a short work placement or taster session

Train staff on disability awareness

Join the Disability Confident Employer Scheme

Partner with local organisations to fill roles

Guidance on interviews / work trials



Reputation

Being known as an inclusive employer builds trust with customers, partners, and your community.

Improves customer trust & brand value.

Representation matters: when customers see themselves reflected in your workforce, loyalty grows.

Inclusion boosts your reputation: be recognised as a forward-thinking, inclusive business.

Inclusive hiring attracts socially responsible investors, suppliers and clients who want to work with ethical businesses.

A diverse team sends a clear message: your business values talent, skills, and contribution over stereotypes.

Community Impact

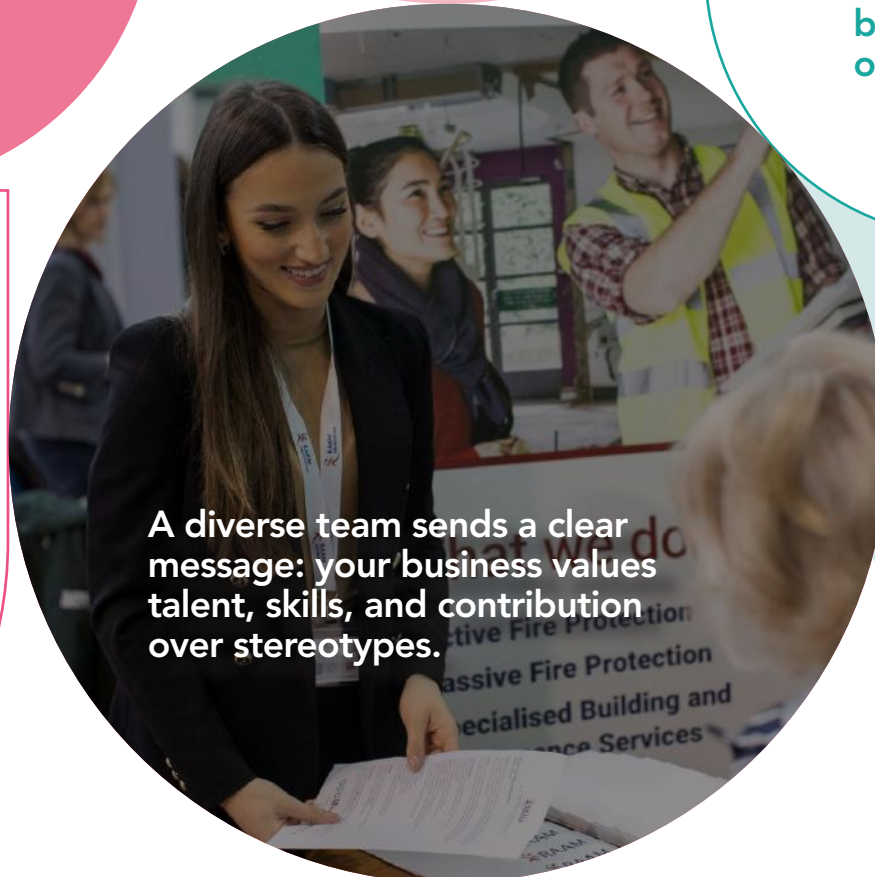
People remember and commend employers who create opportunities for all, building long-term goodwill.

Inclusive hiring strengthens community ties and positions your business as a driver of opportunity.

Employers across East London benefit from aligning with borough-wide values and accessing a wider talent pool.

By reflecting the diversity of your local community, your business shows it is part of it, not apart from it.

See the next page for real example of how inclusive hiring creates impact in our communities.



Social Value: Driving Inclusive Employment

Shaping opportunities for
all in your community.

It is increasingly standard for council contracts to include social-value commitments. Local London's boroughs provide clear examples of how this can support job creation, apprenticeships, and inclusive opportunities.

For example, in Barking and Dagenham, council contractors now submit social-value proposals supporting opportunities for underrepresented groups, including people with disabilities and neurodivergent talent.



Experts by Experience

Redbridge, Havering and
Unity Works Supported
Employment Partnership



The Local London Integration Hub is bringing together partners to provide a space for developing exciting new cross-borough collaborations and initiatives that could transform the lives of local people, including those with SEND and neurodivergent individuals, and their families.



UNITY WORKS

Greenwich: Inclusion in motion

J.F 'Expert by Experience' Supported Employment Journey



The Royal Borough of Greenwich wanted to create more paid employment opportunities for people with learning disabilities.

Recognising the value of a supported employment approach, the borough adapted existing roles and introduced 'Experts by Experience' positions, enabling people with learning disabilities and/or autism to represent and give voice to residents with these needs across council departments.



UNITY WORKS

Applying for a job can feel overwhelming:

"I find these sort of things very challenging, but I thought the process wasn't as stressful as it normally is because of how it was set up."

J.F, Expert by Experience

Making the recruitment process accessible from start to finish

With support from Unity Works, specialists in working with people with learning disabilities, the borough developed accessible job descriptions and person specifications. They worked closely with the Human Resources recruitment team to ensure job adverts were fully accessible and easy to read, and that accessibility requirements were considered at every stage of the process.

Following the launch of the job advert, Greenwich held two information days to explain the roles in more detail. Unity Works offered one-to-one application support and advice for prospective candidates. Around 40 residents attended, with 17 applicants progressing to the assessment stage.

Two adults with learning disabilities were successfully hired as "Experts by Experience" to advise on council services. Candidates were assessed on practical, work-based tasks, with strong candidates offered jobs. The successful hires started in November 2023 and are receiving ongoing support through WorkTrain Greenwich.



"The application was a bit of a puzzle and the least accessible part of the process. It took me several days and the use of AI."

J.F, Expert by Experience

Greenwich is now developing a wider supported employment model and has joined the British Association of Supported Employment (BASE). This example demonstrates that inclusive recruitment can be practical, effective, and highly valuable.

"It's been wonderful; I already feel like part of the team. Everyone has been supportive and shown a keen interest in my travel training experience."

J.F, Expert by Experience

*Greenwich has since requested The British Association of Supported Employment (BASE) to evaluate this recruitment approach with a view to establishing a council-wide supported employment model and recently became a member of BASE.

Case Study Jackson's Café

Havering is home to Jackson's Café, a Unity Works social enterprise supported employment project.



Although successful, progressing participants into sustainable employment remained challenging. Building on past experience, Redbridge and Havering launched a joint pilot project to create meaningful work opportunities for residents aged 19+ with learning disabilities.

The boroughs leveraged existing partnerships, including Jackson's Café and Unity Works, and secured £50k funding from Section 106 and UK Shared Prosperity Fund sources.

Through the SEND Board, the boroughs collaborated with sector specialists, coordinated activity, and explored solutions to improve SEND employment provision. Unity Works supported individuals and their families, including welfare guidance, while Supported Employment Officers delivered vocational profiling, intensive employability support, travel training, and in-work coaching.

The pilot offered roles in-house and through Disability Confident employers, including positions in children's services administration, reception, and support officer roles.

The pilot highlighted the importance of employer awareness and understanding of available support, showing how inclusive recruitment not only benefits individuals but also drives stronger organisational outcomes and sustainable value.



The project supported 25 residents by providing accessible recruitment, structured guidance, and ongoing employment support, demonstrating that inclusive recruitment can be practical, effective, and highly valuable.

- Vocational profiling
- Intensive employability support
- Travel training
- Job carving
- Job brokerage/employer engagement to provide sustainable jobs in the community
- In work job coach support



Havering
LONDON BOROUGH

Bexley Making Inclusion Happen

L's Story Support Finding Work

Bexley Mencap is a local charity providing services to children and adults with a learning disability, such as 'L'.

Meet 'L'

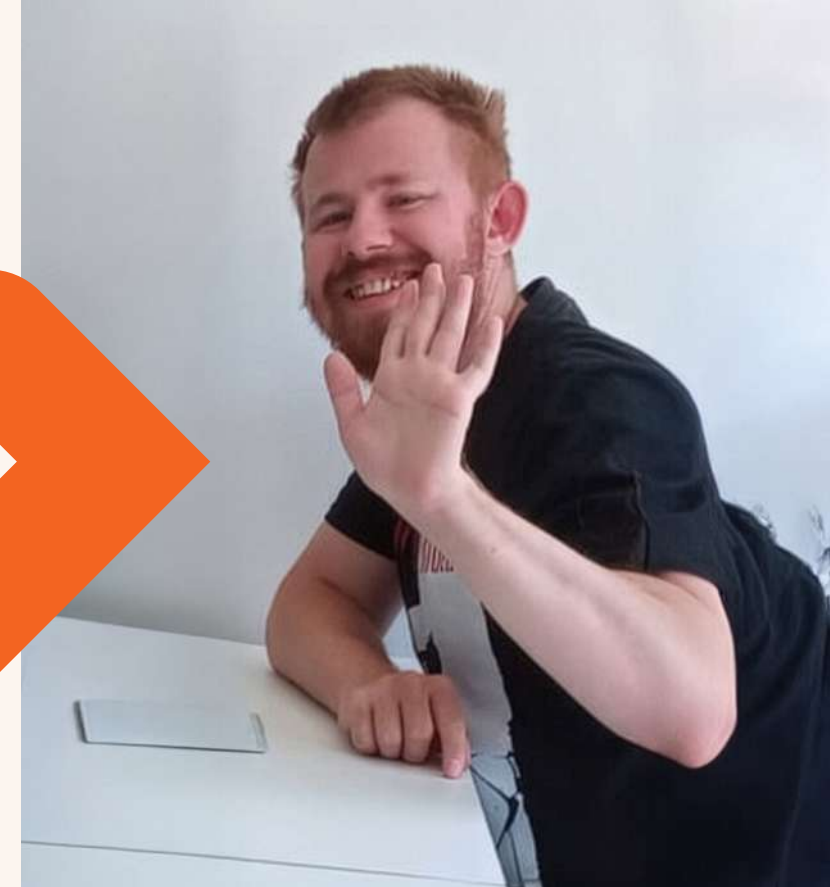
L has been a member of Bexley Mencap for several years.

L attends many of our activities and has featured in videos that have helped to promote learning disability awareness locally within our borough.

L was referred to Bexley Mencap for support in getting back in to voluntary work. L previously had a volunteering role, however due to the COVID-19 pandemic, L was unable to carry on with this and consequently did not return once restrictions were lifted.

L received support from Bexley Mencap to look for local volunteering opportunities, in addition to building their skills and confidence when it comes to employability.

[Visit here for more info](#)



"I like it when they showed me how to do the steaming. This is something new that I have been learning." - L

1:1 Support

L met with an assigned support worker on a weekly basis, where each meeting was planned in advance and would focus on something different each time.

Examples of this were:

- Updated and enhanced L's CV
- Creating several versions for cover letters
- Bookmarking useful employment websites for 'L' to go through with support and by themselves
- Practicing interview skills in several different scenarios
- Finding where the local jobs board is in the local area
- Supported in identifying transferable skills and matching them to local job opportunities.
- Guided through workplace expectations, confidence-building, and practical steps to secure and sustain employment.

Getting a Job

L managed to secure a weekly volunteering role at the local British Heart Foundation store - where L completes a variety of tasks around the store with her colleagues.

"We are very pleased with how things have turned out for L's employment situation and certainly hope that L feels happy, supported and fulfilled in their role."

Well done L!

Supported Internships and Work Placements

Supported internships are structured work placements for young people aged 16–24 with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND). They are delivered in partnership with colleges and include support from job coaches.

Interns gain practical experience while continuing their education.

Employers benefit by:

- Filling real business needs
- Demonstrating a commitment to diversity
- Building a pipeline of loyal, well-prepared staff

These placements last between 6 and 12 months. There is no obligation to hire or pay interns, although some employers do.

Per example, In Barking & Dagenham, council contracts over £100,000 require a Social Value proposal that includes job creation and apprenticeships; giving employers a clear incentive to open opportunities for under-represented groups, including people with disabilities and neurodivergent talent.

Whether you're offering paid work, apprenticeships, internships, work placements, or training-to-work pathways, this guide illustrates how inclusive employment not only creates social value but also brings measurable business benefits.

"Opening doors for talent that often gets overlooked."

**Free Employer Resources
& Funded Support**



Seek Local Support, Advice & Resources to Help You Recruit Inclusively

Local Support & Advice Borough of Bexley



Bexley Business and Employment (BBE)

bexley.gov.uk/bexley-business-employment/employment-support

Bexley Twofold

bexley.gov.uk/about-council/jobs-and-careers/career-help-people-learning-disabilities/bexley-twofold

Bexley Local Send Offer

bexleylocaloffer.uk

Bexley Mencap

bexleymencap.org.uk

Bexley Supported Internship Programme

shawtrust.org.uk/what-we-do/supported-internships

MIND in Bexley

mindinbexley.org.uk

Local Support & Advice Borough of Barking and Dagenham

Barking Job Shop / Dagenham Job Shop

lbbd.gov.uk/jobs-and-careers/help-finding-work-bd-works

Barking and Dagenham Supported Employment Programme

lbbd.gov.uk/supported-employment-programme

Barking and Dagenham Local SEND Offer

lbbd.gov.uk/children-young-people-and-families/local-offer

DABD

dabd.org.uk

One Place East (Barking and Dagenham, Redbridge, Havering and Waltham Forest)

oneplaceeast.org

MIND Havering, Barking and Dagenham

haveringmind.org.uk

Local Support & Advice Borough of Bromley



Good Work Bromley Exchange

lsec.ac.uk/good-work-bromley-exchange

Bromley Local Offer

bromley.gov.uk/LocalOffer

Bromley Mencap

bromleymencap.org.uk

Bromley, Lewisham and Greenwich MIND

selmind.org.uk

Local Support & Advice Borough of Enfield

■ Enfield Skills and Training Employment Pillar (STEP)

enfield.gov.uk/services/your-council/community-hubs-and-food-pantry#skills-training-employment-pillar

■ ILDS Equals Employment Service

mylife.enfield.gov.uk/enfield-home-page/content/learning-disabilities/ilds/equals-employment

■ Enfield Local Offer

enfield.gov.uk/services/children-and-education/local-offer

■ Enfield Mencap

enfieldmencap.org.uk

■ MIND in Enfield and Barnet

mindeb.org.uk



Local Support & Advice Borough of Havering



■ Havering Works

haverling.gov.uk/info/20010/jobs/629/haverling_works_employment_and_skills_advice

■ Havering Association for People with Disabilities

hadhaverling.co.uk

■ Havering SEND / Local Offer

familyserviceshub.haverling.gov.uk/kb5/haverling/directory/localoffer.page?localofferchannel=0

■ Richmond Fellowship – Havering IPS Employment

richmondfellowship.org.uk/services/haverling-ips-employment-service

■ MIND Havering, Barking and Dagenham

haverlingmind.org.uk

Local Support & Advice Borough of Greenwich



■ Greenwich Local Labour and Business (GLLaB)

royalgreenwich.gov.uk/gllab

■ Greenwich Local Offer

royalgreenwich.gov.uk/info/200236/children_with_additional_needs/1671/about_the_local_offer

■ Greenwich Mencap

greenwichmencap.org.uk

■ Bromley, Lewisham and Greenwich MIND

blgmind.org.uk

Local Support & Advice Borough of Newham



■ Our Newham Works / Our Newham Youth

ournewham.org

■ Our Newham Works Supported Employment Team and Newham Supported

newham.gov.uk/health-adult-social-care/getting-employment/1

■ Ellingham Employment Service

ellingham.org.uk

■ Newham Autism Information and Support

newham.gov.uk/health-adult-social-care/autism

■ Newham IPS Employment Service (MIND in Tower Hamlets, Newham and EFLT)

mindthnr.org.uk/our-services/employment-support/newham-ips-employment-service

■ Newham Special Educational Needs & Disability Local Offer

families.newham.gov.uk/kb5/newham/directory/localoffer.page?localofferchannel=0

■ MIND in Tower Hamlets, Newham and Redbridge

mindthnr.org.uk

Local Support & Advice Borough of Waltham Forest



Waltham Forest Jobs

walthamforestjobs.org

Waltham Forest Jobs – Supported Employment Team

walthamforestjobs.org/employment-programmes/supported-employment.html

Richmond Fellowship – Waltham Forest IPS Employment Service

richmondfellowship.org.uk/services/waltham-forest-employment-service

Waltham Forest – SEND Team

walthamforest.gov.uk/schools-education-and-learning/local-offer-special-educational-needs-and-disability-send/about-local-offer/our-team-and-vision-send

Waltham Forest – Local Offer: Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND)

walthamforest.gov.uk/schools-education-and-learning/local-offer-special-educational-needs-and-disability-send

MIND City, Hackney and Waltham Forest

mindchwf.org.uk

Local Support & Advice Borough of Redbridge



Work Redbridge

redbridge.gov.uk/jobs/work-redbridge

DABD

dabd.org.uk

MIND in Tower Hamlets, Newham and Redbridge

mindthnr.org.uk

Redbridge Local Offer

find.redbridge.gov.uk/kb5/redbridge/fsd/localoffer.page?localofferchannel=1_1_2

Richmond Fellowship – Redbridge IPS Employment Service

richmondfellowship.org.uk/services/redbridge-ips-employment-service

Local Support & Advice Pan London - National

British Association of Supported Employment (BASE)

base-uk.org

Dynamic Training

dynamictraining.org.uk

Business Disability Forum

businessdisabilityforum.org.uk

Access to Work

gov.uk/access-to-work

Maximus – Access to Work Mental Health Support

atw.maximusuk.co.uk

Disability Confident

gov.uk/government/collections/disability-confident-campaign

Unity Works – Thera Trust

thera.co.uk/about/companies/unity-works-social-enterprises

DFN | Project Search

dfnprojectsearch.org

The Employers Network for Equality and Inclusion (enei)

enei.org.uk

The Recruitment Industry Disability Initiative (RIDI)

ridi.org.uk

Down’s Syndrome Association – Workfit

dsworkfit.org.uk

Blind in Business

blindinbusiness.org.uk



Resources

Access to Work
Disability Confident Scheme
Mindful Employer Charter
BASE
Scope

gov.uk/access-to-work
disabilityconfident.campaign.gov.uk
mindfulemployertentsteps.co.uk
base-uk.org
business.scope.org.uk



Neurodivergence and Health Conditions

Autism
ADHD
Dyslexia
Long Covid
Mental Health
Diabetes
Crohn's and Colitis
Hearing Loss
Sight Loss

autism.org.uk
adhdadult.uk
bdadyslexia.org.uk
longcovid.org
mind.org.uk
diabetes.org.uk
crohnsandcolitis.org.uk
rnid.org.uk
rnib.org.uk



Produced by Local London Integration Hub in partnership with our boroughs.

For employers and Hiring Managers in Barking and Dagenham, Bexley, Bromley, Greenwich, Havering, Newham, Enfield, Redbridge and Waltham Forest.

For enquiry or to explore opportunities to collaborate with us, please contact:

workconnections@redbridge.gov.uk



This booklet was designed by a neurodivergent designer

in partnership with BizEd Projects
bizedprojects.com