

In 2008, The Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead established a model of best practice in employing people with learning disabilities and / or autism with their supported employment service, Ways into Work, The LEGOLAND® Windsor Resort was one of the first employers to Ways into Work contacted in 2009/10.

They need to recruit large numbers of employees to work across all areas of the resort and recognised that further diversification of their recruitment was important. Ways into Work worked jointly with Human Resources at The LEGOLAND® Windsor Resort, looking at areas where they found it difficult to recruit and retain staff, and where it would be beneficial to specifically design jobs for people with learning disabilities and / or autism.

Following this they worked together to adapt the recruitment and selection process and developed a bespoke induction package which better met the needs of people with a learning disability and / or autism. In the first year, 11 individuals were offered paid work ranging from 4 hours to 37 hours per week. Ways into Work maintained their involvement in offering support to both line managers and to employees.

The partnership is now in its 8th year and has provided meaningful and fulfilling jobs for over 40 people. Employees now include young people with mental health conditions.

Managers who have been involved have reported a host of benefits to their teams and the business overall. It has improved communication within teams and boosted motivation of the workforce. In addition, managers reported that it was helping them to improve the quality of their service to disabled visitors.

Values – why is this important

We all know that everyone has skills and talents, and this includes young people with mental health conditions, and people with a learning disability and / or autism. In addition, we know the positive contribution that people can make in the workplace.

Many employers and organisations could be missing out on a wider opportunity to recruit from an additional source of labour with previously undiscovered skills and abilities. The benefits of a diverse workforce are well documented and effectively managing the diverse profile of a workforce makes good business sense.

Organisations that are committed to ensuring that the workforce matches the profile of the community they serve are more likely to maintain a competitive edge and



attract a diverse customer base. This can be achieved by a diverse workforce informing, influencing, and improving the range of quality of services and goods they provide.

Having a job also brings much more than just having more money and improved financial independence. It can widen social networks, boost self-esteem and confidence, and improve independence skills. In addition, people in good jobs are happier which contributes to their health and well-being.

What are the challenges?

In 2008, The Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead established a model of best practice in employing people with learning disabilities and / or autism with their supported employment service, Ways into Work, to ensure that they were leading by example.

They used this as a platform to promote the employment of disabled people to other employers, to meet their business needs as well as ensuring people had good lives with paid jobs.

The LEGOLAND® Windsor Resort was one of the first employers to be contacted in 2009/10. As an employer, they need to recruit large numbers of employees to work across all areas of the resort and recognised that further diversification of their recruitment would add great value in attracting talented individuals to join their teams.

As an organisation they recognised that the main stream routes to recruitment may exclude some of these talented individuals and were positive in exploring complimentary ways of working with The Ways into Work Service to break down these potential barriers.

The LEGOLAND® Windsor Resort has a wide variety of roles across the park that needed to be filled and were open to looking at different ways of achieving this.

They were also keen to ensure that they were attracting greater numbers of people with a disability to experience their theme park and felt this could be part of the wider strategy in achieving this.

Solution

Ways into Work worked jointly with Human Resources at The LEGOLAND® Windsor Resort, looking at areas where they found it difficult to recruit and retain staff, and where it would be beneficial to specifically design jobs for people with learning disabilities and / or autism.

In the first year, they identified 12 posts across the resort in the Attractions, Environmental Services, Retail, Warehouse, Admissions, Marketing and Wardrobe departments.

Following this they worked together to adapt the recruitment and selection process, introducing a simple application form and working interviews as opposed to use of an assessment centre as an additional recruitment method.

They also worked together to develop a bespoke induction package which better met the needs of people with a learning disability and / or autism.

In the first year, 11 individuals were offered paid work ranging from 4 hours to 37 hours per week. Ways into Work maintained their involvement in offering support to both line managers and to employees.

Following the success of the first year, the partnership has grown from strength to strength with more and more departments wanting to participate in the scheme.

The partnership is now in its 8th year and has provided meaningful and fulfilling jobs for over 40 people, with some people taking jobs as holiday work whilst still at school as their first experience of paid employment.

It is also not restricted to people with learning disabilities and / or autism, and now also includes young people with mental health conditions.

Managers who have been involved have reported a host of benefits to their teams and the business overall. It has improved communication within teams and boosted motivation of the workforce.

In addition, managers reported that it was helping them to improve the quality of their service to disabled visitors.

Lisa Atkinson, HR Director says, “With Ways into Work it is been a real partnership, and they really have supported us and our managers to make this a success. We look forward to working with them through many more seasons to come.”

For further information about this case study, please contact
Laura Davis, Managing Director
Ways in to Work, laura@waysintowork.com