

Potential Barriers to Work – Employer Factsheet

Potential Barriers to Work

Barriers to work can be wide ranging and mean different things to different people, therefore this factsheet is not all inclusive. We will be focusing on four areas; mental health issues, learning disabilities, substance abuse and ex-offenders.

Mental health issues: these can range from depression, anxiety, eating disorders, personality disorders, self-harm and sleep problems. Wiltshire Mind provide a more comprehensive list [here](#).

Learning disabilities: A learning disability is 'a reduced intellectual ability and difficulty with everyday activities' ([Mencap](#)).

Drug/Alcohol abuse: this is defined when an individual is not able to carry out normal activities without the dependency of either drugs or alcohol.

Ex-Offender: an individual with a conditional caution or 'spent' conviction. A rehabilitation table can be found via [Gov](#). The table explains what an ex-offender needs to share with employers, it is also useful to understand how long an ex-offender is in rehabilitation for.



Things to consider...

- 1 in 6 employees are suffering with mental health problems according to [Mind](#) and this can have an effect on productivity. If employees are suffering in silence they may start to feel overwhelmed and unable to concentrate. By creating an open culture and one which promotes an open dialogue employees may feel better supported and valued, even in hard times.
- As an employer, you have a legal responsibility to make 'reasonable adjustments' in the workplace to support your employees, for example providing a ramp for a wheelchair user or suitable equipment for somebody who is hard of hearing or visually impaired. By becoming an 'inclusive' employer you are benefiting your team, the company and your customers. Employing somebody with a learning disability means you are supporting a member of society into employment giving them confidence and helping them to be economically active.
- It is to the benefit of not only the employees in your organisation but also you as an employer to have a suitable substance misuse policy in place. The policy can protect you and employees, for example operating machinery under the influence of substances can be extremely dangerous. Having a policy in place means there is a procedure ready to help, advise and support employees who need it. ACAS provides guidance [here](#) for employers dealing with an employee who has a substance misuse problem.



- Supporting an ex-offender into employment means a real positive outcome for that individual, by supporting them in employment you are providing an opportunity for the individual to give back to society, earn a wage and provide for themselves. It is understood that some ex-offenders may not be able to work in certain geographical areas/sectors.

How you can support...

- Nominate a mental health awareness champion, the Public Health team at Wiltshire Council has developed a [Mental Health Champions programme](#). Their offer to employers in the county is; a free one day training course, a 'toolkit' to provide tips and resources, ongoing support in the role of Mental Health Champion and the chance to join a 'virtual network' of Mental Health Champions across Wiltshire. [Mind](#) promotes and protects good mental health for all they have a range of factsheets and support material for employers online.
- Providing support and time to somebody with a learning disability can help them to thrive, whilst they may need extra time to adapt to the working environment and job role they will become a valuable part of the team. If it isn't possible to employ somebody on a paid basis in your business at this time, providing work experience or a volunteer placement to somebody with a disability can really support them to update their CV and progress their skills.
- Employees with a drug and/or alcohol addictions require a supportive environment, also having policies in place can protect employees so they know the consequences of their actions. [ACAS](#) describes how as an employer you have legal obligations for under common law. You should also protect yourself by keeping up to date records of instances of poor performance at work in case of disciplinary action. Being educated on local support systems you will be able to guide the employee in the right direction.
- Giving an ex-offender a chance into employment also allows you to tap into new skills and talent pool which you may not have considered before. [Gov](#) states that there is an increased staff retention rate when employing somebody from a disadvantaged background.
- Working with Wiltshire Council and Wiltshire College you could support the Supported Internships programme. Designed to equip students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities with the skills they need to secure paid employment. More about can be found [here](#).
- Pledge to [Be Involved](#) to [Building Bridges](#) – can you support those facing challenges entering the world of work? By offering a placement to a participant you will receive support from the Employment and Skills team during the 6 weeks – 6 month placement. You are not required to pay the participant.

Further support...

Support for employers can be found here;

- [Mencap \(Disabilities\)](#)
- [Wiltshire Council \(Mental Health\)](#)
- [ACAS](#)
- [Wiltshire Mind](#)
- [Time to Change](#)
- [Gov – Employing People](#)
- [Building Bridges](#)
- [NHS](#)
- [Health and Safety Executive \(Alcoholism\)](#)
- [Health and Safety Executive \(Disabilities\)](#)



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