We are all aware that we live in a risk adverse society, but there are real business benefits to employing individuals who are disadvantaged in some way. Please take five minutes to read the following case studies to see why you should have a heart and care…

Has your Business employed Apprentices?

Could you support an Apprentice who is disadvantaged in some way?

Do You Care?
If not, Why Not?

Tamara is 21 years old and near to completing her Intermediate (Level 2) Business Administration Apprenticeship – Tamara has had many difficulties in her life and suffering from moderate dyslexia, which manifests itself in her verbal reasoning and single word recognition and pronunciation, it was suggested she would find it difficult to understand instructions and retain information that was not supported by written instructions.

Tamara’s dyslexia went undiagnosed whilst she was at school and her poor academic performance was associated with the untimely death of her Mother when Tamara was 12, and she was taken in by her older sister. Tamara attempted several courses but with limited support found this extremely difficult.

Tamara then began to explore the Apprenticeship route and began a Business Administration Apprenticeship with a micro business dealing with beauty products. Unfortunately the business was closed down. Tamara’s NVQ assessor invited her to a forum where local employers were invited. Tamara moved out of her comfort zone and gave a short presentation to the forum. This was fairly traumatic for Tamara! But she managed to get through it, and a few days later she was offered the opportunity to continue her Apprenticeship, working at the Grimsby Institute.

Tamara is now receiving comprehensive guidance and support from caring people who have developed strategies to help her manage the problems. As a result she is thriving in her new role!

Tamara said, “This is what has happened to me, and I am still managing to progress, so what’s your excuse? We might look like damaged goods but with a bit of help we can be fixed. I’ve been really lucky!”

Worried about the Business costs?

Apprenticeship Grant
Available NOW!

You may be entitled to an Apprenticeship Grant to support the training of an apprentice who is disadvantaged in some way. The grant is available to businesses with fewer than 50 employees and who haven’t recruited any apprentice in the last 12 months. You can claim up to 5 grants on your application worth £1,500 each. Put the following link into your browser for more details, or speak to your local college or training provider.

www.gov.uk/government/publications/apprenticeship-grant-employer-fact-sheet

Recruitment & Support

You’ll find lots of support from colleges and training providers to help you with the recruitment and support of disadvantaged individuals. They are well equipped to provide you with the support services that you may need, and to provide additional training and external assessment to compliment your own in-house training. There’s every possibility that all this help and support will be free, although employer contributions are increasingly on the rise for any apprentices over the age of eighteen.

Colleges and training providers are equipped to deal with any special educational needs that your apprentice may have, and can carry out initial assessments and diagnostic testing as required. This will help to identify an individual’s support needs, while offering recommendations to ensure your apprentice succeeds with their programme of learning.

Why not contact your local training provider to find out more? Or contact the National Apprenticeship Service on or 08000 150 600 (England only)

www.gov.uk/take-on-an-apprentice
www.greatbusiness.gov.uk/
www.gov.uk/national-minimum-wage-rates

It may be about work, and making money, but wouldn’t it be wonderful if you and your organisation could make a difference to someone’s life at work.

Imagine that!
CASE STUDY 1: Raymond’s Story

Raymond is 21 years old and is due to complete his Intermediate (Level 2) Professional Cookery Apprenticeship. This sounds like any normal 21 year old until you begin to read a short extract from Raymond’s Story:

Raymond has had many challenges in his life beginning from the age of 6 when he was taken into care: he suffers from severe dyslexia, moderate dyspraxia and a moderate level of autism. Even though he went to special schools throughout his life he failed to overcome his severe difficulties with reading, writing and spelling.

With Raymond’s enthusiasm to work and with help from Barnardos, a work placement was found. Raymond began work as a kitchen assistant carrying out general kitchen porter duties, which gave Raymond a desire to become a professional cook.

First college, Barnardos and Lincolnshire County Council pulled their resources together to give support to Raymond in helping him achieve his potential. The support ranges from the simple techniques of using green paper and green screen filters on a PC monitor, to the pragmatic support from a talented and caring assessor and crucially the employer, who made all of this happen through their support, training and sheer understanding.

Raymond is quite simply a great employee, dedicated and hard-working, adding real value to the business.

James is 24 years old and began an Intermediate (Level 2) Business Administration Apprenticeship with Lincoln City Council in January 2014 and is due to complete July 2015.

James struggled at school but was not formally diagnosed with learning difficulties until the end of his secondary education. James suffers from Autism and Asperger’s syndrome which makes it difficult for him to read emotions and needs people to be frank and honest – a challenge for many! James is currently being tested for Dyslexia. It’s hardly surprising that he struggled in an unsupported mainstream educational environment, whereby James only achieved D and E Grades at GCSE.

James also suffers from depression and anxiety, triggered by a marriage break up from a violent and abusive partner and is receiving counselling and medication for these conditions.

Without a particularly supportive family, James has had to be very self-sufficient but has benefitted from the help of a couple of friends, one of whom used to be one of his teachers. She said, “When James left the school I work in, he asked for my telephone number. I gave him it, this was not a norm for me, but there was a connection with him and his family which I felt I wanted to continue. I became his and his families support through all his school life. I attended all his Special Educational Needs reviews with the family and was able help by taking notes, filling in forms and generally, unpacking anything that had been said in the review.

James began to sort his life out he finished his child care course and got a job and was housed independently. He had insecurities about relationships, always asking ‘are you my friend’ and was desperate to be in a relationship where he was loved.

Throughout the 20 years of contact with James I have proclaimed the good news, nurtured his belief, responded to his human need and have sought to transform unjust structures in society, although this requires more work.”

When he joined Lincoln City Council James was with their Public Protection Service team. His colleagues are hugely supportive of James, understanding the challenges he faces.

James summed up his view on life by saying, “I don’t live by my disability”. He is determined to function and succeed in the regular world, by standing up to his fears of new situations and ‘putting on a shoe’ when all he wants to do is run home and hide away.

CASE STUDY 3: James’ Story

CASE STUDY 4: Stephanie’s Story

Stephanie is a young woman of 19 years and began her Intermediate (Level 2) Business Administration Apprenticeship on 26th January 2015 and is due to complete March 2016.

Stephanie comes across as a confident and eloquent young woman which belies the challenges and difficulties she has had and continues to face.

Stephanie was taken into the care of the local authority when she was about 11 years of age and the traumas of her early life – including being bullied at school, which meant a move to the Pilgrim Hospital School, have resulted in her suffering from depression, post-traumatic stress disorder and anxiety. She receives both medication and counselling for her conditions.

As a care leaver, Stephanie benefits from the LCC commitment to the Care Leavers’ Apprenticeship Scheme – (CLAS) – whereby the County Council pays her salary and provides support through Barnardo’s.

As part of the Barnardo’s process, great care is taken to identify supportive environments for these young people with the ultimate aim of securing an appropriate Apprenticeship opportunity for them. In Stephanie’s case this involved an extended period of work experience designed to break her into the world of work gently and prepare her potential employer/placement for their support role.

Stephanie’s work experience period at the Bishop Grossteste University lasted for some 4 months and demanded exceptional support from her Barnardos support worker and BG co-workers. Her work experience spell was regularly interrupted by episodes of anxiety and non-attendance which Barnardos’s helped manage. Significantly, her BG co-workers made exceptional allowances in the early days which allowed Stephanie to develop the trust in them that was needed in order for her to progress. Stephanie is now in the situation where she feels a sense of responsibility to her team at BG and is responding positively to the demands of regular employment. There is still some way to go but progress is positive and observable.

Everyone around Stephanie, herself included, acknowledges the huge growth in confidence and social abilities since she began working at BG. Stephanie said, “I just needed that one person to believe in me and that is what happened here at BG.”