

This response was submitted to the [Children, Young People and Education Committee](#) inquiry into the general principles of the [Tertiary Education and Research \(Wales\) Bill](#)

**TER 44**

**Ymateb gan: Anabledd Dysgu Cymru**

**Response from: Learning Disability Wales**

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## **About the Engage to Change project**

Funded by the National Lottery Community Fund, the Engage to Change (E2C) project is working across Wales to support young people aged 16-25 who have a learning difficulty, learning disability and/or autism to achieve their full potential. It uses a supported employment methodology and job coaching. Project partners are:

Learning Disability Wales, lead partner for the project, is a national charity representing the learning disability sector in Wales.

Learning Disability Wales works with people with a learning disability and their families, Welsh Government, local authorities, disabled people's organisations and the voluntary sector to create a better Wales for all people with a learning disability.

Other project partners are: two supported employment agencies, Agoriad Cyf and Elite Supported Employment; and our research partners the National Centre for Mental Health (NCMH) at Cardiff University.

## **Our feedback on the Bill**

We welcome the opportunity to give feedback to the Tertiary Education and Research (Wales) Bill. We do have some concerns regarding the relative absence of specific support for people with learning disabilities and neurodivergent people within the draft Bill.

Building on research and practice lessons, the Engage to Change project recently identified the need for additional job coaches, a

national supported internship offer and greater public sector engagement in offering placements and jobs in order to respond to the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic and the needs of people with learning disabilities and/or autism. We believe that this Bill should include some of these proposals. Supported employment and job coaching are central to these proposals as E2C have demonstrated they are key to obtaining and sustaining paid placements and paid jobs for people with a learning disability and/or autism.

We would like to see the principles that will lead to people with a learning disability and/or autism to be explicitly included in this legislation. Welsh Government cites supporting both life-long learning and reducing economic inequality as priorities. We believe that disability equality should also be a priority and there should be specific mention of ensuring that all the educational programmes (including job training and apprenticeships) have built in support.

Specifically, we would like to see the Commission be more concrete in how their commitment to people with additional learning needs will translate into policy. In article 277 you write that:

*The intention is that the Commission will secure general, proper and reasonable facilities for learners with additional learning needs and that local authorities will, under the 2018 Act, be responsible for funding and securing specialist provision on an individual basis, including any necessary board and lodging.*

We suggest that funding for supported internships and apprenticeships are integrated into the Bill. This is particularly important given that people with a learning disability struggle to find suitable employment and are particularly disadvantaged as compared to other groups. We are concerned that often the special and specific requirements of what is needed to make a workplace accessible for people with a learning disability are not

recognised by providers. We urge you to be more specific in encouraging and supporting supported apprenticeships in this Bill.

We draw your attention to the briefings we have developed on these issues, which are available on the [Engage to Change website](#):

Stephen Beyer (2020): [What needs to change to allow people with a learning disability and/or ASD equal access to employment?](#)

Stephen Beyer, Elisa Vigna, Andrea Meek (2021): [How can public sector employers like the NHS help people with a learning disability or autism get jobs?](#)

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