

THIS IS YOUR FUTURE

Change
100

A career guide for disabled
students, by disabled students

Leonard
Cheshire
Disability





There have been great steps in recent years towards achieving a more diverse and inclusive workforce. The Prime Minister has launched Disability Confident to get businesses engaged with employing more disabled people; the BBC have pledged to quadruple the number of disabled people on their screens, and Leonard Cheshire Disability has launched Change100, a programme offering paid work placements to disabled students. We are working towards a truly inclusive workforce, where every person is able to contribute economically and participate fully in society.

At Leonard Cheshire we have understood the benefits of employing disabled people for some time. I believe that businesses that overlook disabled candidates are missing out on a wealth of skills and talent that they may not

find elsewhere. And what a shame that is. And equally, it appears that disabled students are often not equipped with the knowledge they need to make the most out of their careers. So many young disabled people are not aware of the wealth of support available to them, and are consequently disadvantaged when starting their career. We need this to change.

And so we have asked our first group of Change100 employees at Leonard Cheshire Disability to produce this guide to provide other people like them with the information that they need to kickstart their career. I am proud of what they have achieved in their short time here at Leonard Cheshire Disability, and the passion with which they have applied themselves to something that truly can make a difference.

We need to make sure that things start to change. Please let anyone who might benefit from this guide know about it, and pass the information on. If we can better equip disabled students with support and knowledge, we can advance the move towards a truly inclusive workforce, and ensure that disabled students are not left behind. No applicant or employer should ever underestimate the value that disabled workers can bring to a business - and we need to make sure that they are not left behind along the way. This is Your Future and our movement. It's time to make it happen.

Clare Pelham
Chief Executive
Leonard Cheshire Disability



Disability Confident is entering its third remarkable year. The campaign sets out the Government's commitment to support disabled people into employment while targeting employers to increase their awareness of the business benefits of employing disabled people and, in doing so, empowering them to thrive within organisations that value diversity.

The campaign continues to grow, with over 350 partners and supporters now helping to drive change. Businesses that have pledged to help boost employment opportunities for disabled people are sharing valuable examples of good practice and helping to encourage even more enterprises, whatever their size, to sign up as responsible employers.

There are now 3.2 million disabled people in employment, an increase of 2.5% compared with the same time last year. This strong outcome shows the benefits of working together to challenge negative attitudes and educate employers to understand how straightforward and beneficial it is for them to employ disabled people.

But we must keep striving for more. To support the government's objective of halving the disability employment gap, I want to increase awareness of the positive contributions made by disabled people and increase the number of suitable job opportunities available to them.

This means getting 1 million more disabled people in work by 2020, and I believe that focusing on the aspirations

of young people like those within the Leonard Cheshire Disability Change100 programme will help us do that. This guide provides young people with the information they need to capitalise on their existing skills and encourage them to learn new ones in order to ensure that they are equipped with the necessary knowledge to succeed.

The guide is an invaluable source of information for young people looking to enter the working world with confidence. We hope it encourages employers to recognise the vital contribution to society and the economy that disabled people make.

Justin Tomlinson
MP, Minister of State for
Disabled People

This is Your Future: a career guide for disabled students, by disabled students.

This guide is full of information about starting your career if you have a disability. It covers looking for work, the recruitment process, being in a job and can tell you about the different types of support available to you at each of these stages.

Learning about your rights and the support you are entitled to will help you make the most of every opportunity at the beginning of your career.

This guide was produced with the purpose of supporting disabled students and is not meant to provide legal advice on employment and disability. If you require specific or further guidance around these issues, please consult a careers professional.



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The authors were the first group of students in Leonard Cheshire Disability's Change100 programme. They have produced this guide to share their experiences and pass on their advice to other students with disabilities entering the world of work. All members of the group are now continuing their studies or have found further work following their time with Change100.

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LOOKING FOR WORK

Here you can find out where to look for work, how to consider your disability in your search and how to explore volunteering opportunities.

SEARCHING FOR VACANCIES

Where can I look for work?

- **Online:** graduate-targeted career websites such as Milkround and Prospects advertise a wide range of employment, internship and volunteering opportunities
- **Recruitment agencies:** recruitment agencies match you to vacancies that you are suited to, giving you a better chance of success in the assessment process
- **Social media:** LinkedIn is an excellent source of professional networking and is used by employers to find potential employees
- **Networking:** it is estimated that 60% of job vacancies are never formally advertised, so ask around and use any available contacts!

How do I choose employers that will support my disability?

Every employer is required by law to support disabled employees by means of reasonable adjustments. However, some employers will inevitably be more 'disability-smart' than others. These companies are worth targeting when searching for jobs.

The Two Ticks accreditation scheme can be a good place to start when searching for disability-friendly employers. Employers that are part of the scheme will usually have the Two Ticks symbol on their website or on their recruitment page and job adverts. These companies have agreed to:

- engage in disability-friendly practices
- automatically interview any disabled candidate that meets the minimum criteria for jobs advertised
- have discussions with disabled employees to help them develop

Just because a company isn't part of the Two Ticks scheme, it doesn't mean that they aren't disability inclusive. You could check their diversity policies or speak to someone in their recruitment team to find out more information.

Should I use recruitment channels specially designed for disabled people?

Some organisations advertise vacancies specifically for disabled candidates or within companies that are actively looking to engage with diverse talent. While there are fewer of these opportunities around, they offer benefits such as:

- the employer already knowing that you are disabled, meaning there is no issue of disclosure
- knowing that you are applying to an inclusive business

Websites and organisations offering these opportunities can be found in the useful links section at the end of this guide.

Disability-specific schemes can be great - however, don't rule out other routes when job seeking. Your dream job could be advertised anywhere, so look everywhere!



“Looking for the guaranteed interview scheme is my first step because, if I match the minimum person requirements for the job, I am guaranteed an interview. This is where I feel most comfortable in my ability to sell myself to potential employers. It also gives me confidence that the employer is disability aware from day one, reducing any anxiety about issues I may face if employed.”

Olly, 21,
Environmental Policy Advisor
and Change100 student

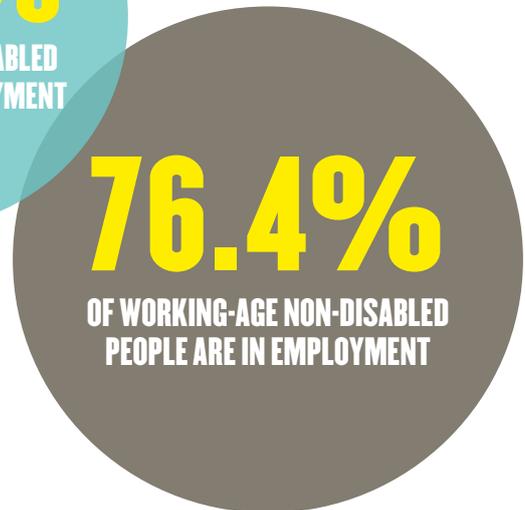
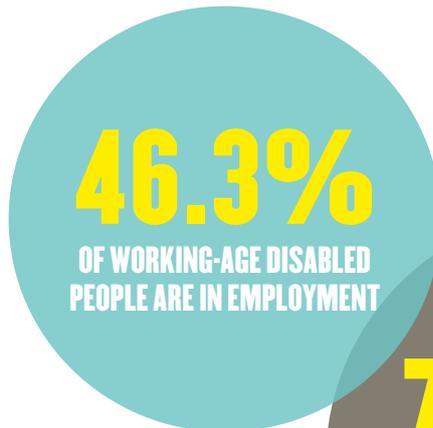
CHANGE100

Change100 is a Leonard Cheshire Disability scheme offering paid work placements and mentoring for talented disabled university students and recent graduates.

The programme benefits both disabled candidates and employers. Candidates are offered a fantastic work experience opportunity that develops and challenges them, while employers can tap into a talent pool that can otherwise be overlooked.

In offering different methods of assessment, Change100 aims to bring out the best in every candidate and gain insight into their abilities.

Why do we need to consider disability in relation to employment?



Find out more about Change100 at:
www.leonardcheshire.org/change100



Leonard Cheshire
Disability's Can Do
volunteers

VOLUNTEERING

At any stage in your career, volunteering is a great way to gain experience. You could volunteer in your preferred area of work, or use it as a chance to try something different.

What can volunteering do for me?

Volunteering offers you the opportunity to develop abilities that employers are looking for, such as:

- teamwork and communication
- organisational skills and problem-solving
- project planning and task management

It is a great way to:

- enhance your CV and make it stand out from the crowd
- gain accreditation in a specific field

Volunteering also helps you to meet people and expand your network, which can help you get into your field of interest.

What types of volunteering opportunities are available?

Anyone can volunteer and there are roles to suit all interests and abilities, such as:

- **One-off volunteering:** this is a useful way to experience volunteering without making a long-term commitment. You can try something new for a short time. Work placement volunteering is one example of this, where you spend a set amount of time - usually three months - supporting an organisation. And there are also many ways to one-off volunteer outside the workplace, such as helping out with charity fundraising, organising a community event and more – the list is endless!

- **Ongoing volunteering:** If you know how you want to volunteer and are ready to make a commitment, you can agree to a fixed amount of time every week or month

For more information about volunteering and organisations that can help you get started, see the useful links section at the end of this guide.

How will my disability be treated in my volunteering role?

Your disability should be treated the same as it would if you were in a paid job. It is essential to discuss with the volunteering organisation what your role would entail and what adjustments can be provided to ensure that you are not disadvantaged.

Tip: there will often be a dedicated volunteering programme within your university. Check out your university's website or student services centre for more information.

Take a look at the range of great opportunities at:
www.leonardcheshire.org/volunteering

“I found my volunteering opportunity through ‘Deafway’. At the time, they were working with Voluntary Service Overseas to employ deaf 18-24 year olds. I worked in Cebu - the second largest city in the Philippines - for three months. My volunteering experience has helped me to develop the skills and confidence to improve my chances of getting a job. I always use this experience when I apply for opportunities and it has also helped me recognise my strengths and weaknesses and identify my career goals.”

Karar, 21,
International Volunteer
and Change100 student



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THE APPLICATION PROCESS

This section discusses disclosing your disability to potential employers and requesting adjustments in the interview and assessment processes.

DISCLOSING DURING THE APPLICATION PROCESS

Should I put my disability on my CV?

There is usually no benefit in declaring your disability on your CV, except where it has affected your exam performance, work experience or left a gap in your employment history. In these cases, disclosing may prevent your application being disadvantaged at an employer's CV screening stage.

We would advise making an appointment with a careers advisor or disability officer at your university for further advice if you feel uncertain about disclosing when applying for jobs.

Should I mention my disability on an application form?

Most application forms will include a diversity questionnaire that asks about race, gender, sexual orientation religion and disability. This is for the employer's Human Resources (HR) department to monitor the diversity of candidates they are attracting. It is important to remember that:

- the recruiter should not have access to answers given on the diversity monitoring form (the HR department should separate this from the main application form)
- the employer is not allowed to ask whether you have a disability during application or interview, unless to offer adjustments

Should I disclose my disability at all?

There is no straightforward answer to this. It is entirely your choice at which point you disclose, or if you disclose your disability at all. You are under no legal obligation to tell a potential or actual employer that you have a disability (unless there are very specific health and safety risks, which are rare).

What are the potential advantages of disclosing?

The advantage of disclosing your disability is that it entitles you to reasonable adjustments, which can remove barriers that you face. It can allow you to show yourself to the best of your abilities in the recruitment process and to go on to achieve your potential in your role.

It is also worth noting that you are only covered by the Equality Act from the point that you disclose. The Act entitles disabled people to reasonable adjustments (see right) arising and is in place to prevent discrimination during both the recruitment process and employment.

What are the potential disadvantages of disclosing?

The potential disadvantage of disclosing is that you could be looked upon less favourably because you have declared a disability. This shouldn't happen, and there are many employers that realise the value of disabled candidates, but is something to think about when making the decision to disclose.

What are reasonable adjustments?

Employers are required by the Equality Act 2010 to make any adjustments that are deemed reasonable to the recruitment process and in the workplace. This is to remove barriers faced by disabled applicants and employees.

Examples of adjustments that could be made follow in the sections below.

What determines whether an adjustment is 'reasonable'?

The definition of reasonable is dependent on:

- how effectively it will remove the problem caused by an employee's disability
- the practicality of the action
- the extent of disruption caused by making the adjustment
- the extent of the company's financial and other resources

The aim of reasonable adjustments is for an employer to support you in any way that is practically possible.

Should I be concerned if an employer doesn't mention reasonable adjustments?

It is worth considering that some employers are more familiar with the support available to disabled candidates and employees than others. Just because an employer doesn't ask if you need reasonable adjustments, does not mean they are unwilling to provide them.

How do I request reasonable adjustments during the recruitment process?

The best way to request reasonable adjustments is to email the recruitment team that you have been in contact with. Briefly explain the effects of your condition that are relevant to the assessment or interview, and the adjustments that you are requesting.

It is helpful to do this as far ahead of the assessment or interview as possible so there is time to put any adjustments in place.



“I didn’t disclose my disability in my first job, and it caused me a lot of trouble. I was a lifeguard and my employers didn’t understand why I would sometimes need to leave the poolside, and the urgency of the situation. This meant that my condition worsened and I had to leave the job altogether - still with my employers thinking that I was a terrible worker. Since then, I have always disclosed and have generally found people to be really accepting and helpful. Most people have some experience with disability and are more than willing to help. My next employer was able to adjust my shift lengths, breaks and even my role to make sure that I was able to work well. It can be daunting, but with disability I would say that honesty is definitely the best policy!”

Lucy, 20,
Fundraising Officer
and Change100 student



“Psychometric testing is often a struggle for me. I have dyslexia and a lot of the tests used to sift candidates are actually the same as the ones used to diagnose dyslexia. It’s frustrating as often these tests sift candidates before the application is even read or considered. It’s a shame - not only for the applicant, but for the employer - as they are missing out on talented individuals because they do not perform well in these tests. Reasonable adjustments have helped me with psychometric testing. Some employers have given me extra time to complete tests, while others have more usefully allowed me to skip certain tests and do assessments more relevant to a working environment, like email simulations. This has meant that I was able to show my ability without being disadvantaged by my disability.”

Tony, 25,
Policy & Campaigns Assistant
and Change100 student

ONLINE ASSESSMENTS AND INTERVIEWS

Once you have submitted your application, you may receive an invitation to complete online assessments, such as:

- multiple choice competency questionnaires
- numerical reasoning tests
- verbal reasoning tests
- logical reasoning tests
- simulated email exercises
- situational judgement exercises

If your disability could affect your performance in any of these tests, it is often advisable to let the recruiter know before attempting them. You may be entitled to adjustments such as using different formats or transcripts, extra time or exemption from certain tests.

What adjustments could I receive for a phone interview?

A phone interview is a chance to make a good first impression with a potential employer. However, if communication by phone is difficult for you because of your disability, the employer can make adjustments to support you.

Examples of reasonable adjustments you can request are:

- alternative interview formats (e.g. face-to-face, Skype, email)
- extra time to answer questions

What adjustments could I receive for a face-to-face interview?

An interview in person may be your final opportunity to present yourself, so making sure that you feel comfortable is important. The best way to do this is by being well-prepared, whether this means by practising interview questions, arranging reasonable adjustments or arriving early to find the location in good time.

It is important to think carefully about what you will be doing in the interview and what you will need in order to perform to your potential.

Some examples of adjustments you could request are:

- a different interview room (e.g. a lighter or quieter space)
- alternative formats (e.g. written interview questions)
- communication support (e.g. BSL interpreter or scribe)
- extra time to think through answers

These are common examples but by no means an exhaustive list.



ASSESSMENT CENTRES

Assessment centres offer you an opportunity to demonstrate your key skills, and allow employers to see your abilities in person. It is therefore important to make sure you feel as confident and supported as possible - reasonable adjustments can help with this. The arrangements and timetable of the assessment day should be communicated to you well in advance. If they have not been provided, ask the employer.

What reasonable adjustments can I request at an assessment centre?

Some common reasonable adjustments made at assessment days include:

- the provision of extra notes with detailed instructions
- adjustments to premises (e.g. adapted furniture or modified equipment)
- extra time for specific tasks
- infrared system/portable loop for hearing aid users

- Support workers (e.g. a guide or BSL interpreter)
- Alternative timings (e.g. giving you an afternoon appointment if your condition is worse in the morning)
- Breaks during exercises and tests
- A quieter room to ensure optimum focus and understanding

This is not an exhaustive list. All disabilities and needs vary, so it is important to consider any adjustments you may need based on how your condition affects you. If you are unsure about what could be useful for you, talk to a careers or disability advisor at your university if possible.

How can I make others aware of my needs in group work?

You may find it helpful to make your requirements clear to other candidates if you are taking part in group work.

For example, if you are visually impaired you might want to make people aware that you can only read things in

large print. Showing strong communication skills in this setting can benefit everyone in your group. If people don't know what adjustments you need, they can't help...

Tip: some universities have dedicated resources for disabled students to guide them through the application process. Get in touch with your university's career or disability office to find out about how they can support you.

“The main issue for me as a person who is hard of hearing is making sure the other candidates taking part in a group task are aware of my disability. I always need to explain to others that I lipread and they need to face me while they speak clearly and slowly. The stress and competition of the assessment centre tends to influence the other applicants’ ability to focus on anything but their own performance, and that sometimes means I am excluded from discussions. The key is to never let it upset me - I just remind other candidates to adjust, which enables me to take part and present my abilities. The companies that have interviewed me always knew about and catered for my needs; since I want to work for a company that values me for who I am, I always disclose.”

Kornelia, 24,
Procurement Analyst
and Change100 student



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ON THE JOB

This section covers approaching your employer about your disability, reasonable adjustments and the Access to Work scheme.

TALKING TO YOUR EMPLOYER ABOUT YOUR DISABILITY

Should I tell my employer about my disability or health condition?

If you haven't already, our advice would be to disclose your disability when you have received a formal job offer - if you will require additional support due to your disability. This will mean:

- you will be protected by the Equality Act 2010 from this point onwards
- your employer can make reasonable adjustments that you need from the beginning of your employment and will be required by law to do so
- you could avoid unfair negative criticism or even disciplinary action if your disability impacts upon your performance at times
- your employer can support an Access to Work application

You can of course disclose at a later point (or not at all!), but you will not benefit from the above until you do so.

Who should I disclose to?

This depends on what you feel comfortable with. You may want to request a meeting with either the HR department or your manager.

Your main purpose is to make your employer aware of the relevant effects of your condition and discuss any adjustments they can put in place to support you.

How do I approach the subject of my disability?

When discussing your disability with your employer, giving practical and relevant information is key.

A proactive and useful approach may be to outline the ways that your disability affects you in a work setting. This can lead on to giving examples of adjustments that could facilitate you in your role effectively.

It might seem daunting, but they will most likely be impressed by the initiative taken. Also don't forget that you have been offered this job because you were judged to be the best person to do it!

Again, getting the support of your university's careers and disability services in disclosing, if you still have access to these services, can be helpful.

Tip: when disclosing, don't be afraid to stress to employers the strengths that your disability gives you in the workplace - increased creativity, determination, versatility and any others that apply to you.

“One of the hardest things about starting work was getting used to using assistive technology routinely; it was a whole new experience from using it at university. Also, it took some time before all of my workplace adjustments were put in place, which meant working without it put limitations on what I was able to do. The first few weeks were difficult - however I found that with time and practice I began to get used to my new office set up.”

Clifford, 24,
Impact & Communications Assistant
and Change100 student

What kind of adjustments can be made in the workplace?

Reasonable adjustments can address all kinds of things - it depends on what you need because of your disability. Some common examples include:

- doing things another way, e.g. receiving all correspondence by email rather than phone
- making physical changes, e.g. installing ramps or audio-visual fire alarms
- providing special equipment, e.g. screen-enlarging software or larger keyboards
- allowing for flexible working times or the option to work from home.

If there is anything that an employer could alter in order to help you work effectively, you have the right to ask for it.

Tip: the adjustments that you need in the workplace could be different or additional to those you need in the recruitment process. This is because the demands are different in each of these settings - so it is worth noting this when thinking about the adjustments that you need.

How can I go about requesting reasonable adjustments in my role?

Before requesting any adjustments, take some time to consider your environment and how you work.

You can then approach your manager or HR team to discuss this - or perhaps do so via email if you have not yet started in your role.

It is worth pointing out that just because your employer is not familiar with making the adjustments that you require, it does not mean that they will be unwilling to.



THE ACCESS TO WORK SCHEME

Access to Work is a government scheme run by Jobcentre Plus. It offers a non-repayable grant to cover all or part of the costs of workplace adjustments necessary to support a disabled employee.

Am I eligible?

You are eligible for Access to Work if:

- you are over 16 years old
- you have a disability or long-term health condition that affects your ability to do a job or which incurs additional work-related costs
- you are in a paid job/self-employed/about to start a new job or Jobcentre Plus Work Trial

What kind of support can Access to Work cover?

Access to Work can cover the costs of:

- a support worker in the work place, e.g. BSL interpreter or guide
- communication support in interviews
- special aids and adaptive equipment
- additional travel costs
- disability awareness training for colleagues
- a support service if you have a mental health condition and you're absent from work or finding it difficult to work

How do I apply?

- contact Access to Work
- print an eligibility letter and take it to your employer or to a job interview
- once your application has been processed, an Access to Work advisor will call you or arrange an appointment for a workplace assessment to be carried out
- a written report, outlining the approved grant, will be sent to you and your employer

“Your workplace will make some reasonable adjustments to help you, but if you feel you need extra assistance, Access to Work can provide this. Some smaller companies may be less inclined to make changes, but Access to Work can provide a letter about what they will do in terms of IT, travel and sometimes support workers. To apply for this support you need to first contact Access to Work. They then take details about what you may require. It’s great when it works, but be prepared to be challenged, and have as much info as possible about your disability and job to hand! I couldn’t work without it!”

Anonymous

Access to Work advice

- It is best if the initial enquiry comes from you rather than the employer.
- Spend some time analysing your needs in your role before the assessment. The assessor will have some disability knowledge, but everyone is different and no one knows your circumstances better than you do!
- The more an advisor is told about your situation and barriers - even trivial ones - the better the support you could receive.
- It is an employer’s responsibility to cover the cost of support during an application and then to reclaim expenses from Access to Work.

For further details on applying for Access to Work visit:
www.gov.uk/access-to-work

USEFUL LINKS

Volunteering

National Council for Voluntary Organisations:

www.ncvo.org.uk

The NCVO champions championing volunteering and civil society.

CSV

www.csv.org.uk

A UK volunteering and social action charity.

GOV.UK

www.gov.uk/volunteering

vInspired

www.vinspired.com

Volunteering opportunities for young people.

VSO

www.vso.org.uk

Volunteering opportunities abroad.

Graduate Prospects

www.prospects.ac.uk/work_experience_volunteering.htm

Advice on volunteering while adding valuable work experience to your CV.

Recruitment

Leonard Cheshire Disability

www.leonardcheshire.org/what-we-do/work-and-skills

Leonard Cheshire Disability is a charity running various projects to support disabled people into employment:

- Change100 connects disabled students and recent graduates with paid work placements at top UK companies.
- The Work Choice voluntary employment programme supports disabled people to become ready for work
- Worksmart is a project for young disabled people living in London, supporting them into employment, education or training. It enables them to grow in confidence and live more independently.

EmployAbility

www.employ-ability.org.uk

EmployAbility was established in 2006 as a not-for-profit organisation dedicated to assisting students and graduates with all disabilities, including dyslexia or long-term health conditions, into employment.

Blind in Business

www.blindinbusiness.co.uk

Blind in Business is a charity operating across the UK. They help blind and partially sighted people into work through their training and employment services, encouraging them to identify and achieve their ambitions.

Deaf Unity

www.deafunity.org/jobs

Deaf Unity works with all who are keen to support and empower deaf communities around the world, whether on an individual basis or at an organisational level.

United Response

www.unitedresponse.org.uk/to-get-a-job

United Response can support you to make applications, write a CV, prepare for interviews and get into work. They can also support you on the job.

Shaw Trust

www.shaw-trust.org.uk

Shaw Trust is a national charity helping disabled people to gain work experience, find a job and live more independently.

Evenbreak

www.evenbreak.co.uk

Evenbreak match disabled jobseekers with suitable job opportunities. They work in partnership with employers to ensure that the needs of the individual are taken seriously.

Access to Work

www.gov.uk/access-to-work

This is the government Access to Work website, which covers all of your rights and entitlements.

Business Disability Forum

www.businessdisabilityforum.org.uk

Business Disability Forum builds disability-smart organisations to improve business performance by increasing confidence, accessibility, productivity and profitability.

Great with disability

www.greatwithdisability.com

This site guides you through recruitment and employment if you have a disability, lists opportunities and hosts an online forum.

Equality and Human Rights Commission

www.equalityhumanrights.com

Provides free and independent advice on a wide range of issues including disability and employment.

Acas

www.acas.org

Acas offers free and impartial information and advice to employers and employees on all aspects of workplace relations and employment law.

Disability Rights UK

www.disabilityrightsuk.org

An organisation working to create a society where everyone with lived experience of disability can participate equally as full citizens. There is a dedicated section on finding work and being employed when you are disabled.

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THIS IS YOUR FUTURE. KICKSTART YOUR CAREER TODAY.

Find out more at:
www.leonardcheshire.org/change100

For more information about Leonard Cheshire
Disability's work and skills programmes:

Call: **020 7112 1489 (option 1)**
Email: innovation@leonardcheshire.org



#Change100



www.facebook.com/LeonardCheshireDisability

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