

People with Asperger syndrome may have difficulty in picking up cues from other people's behaviour, emotions and body language so building relationships can be more difficult.

#### **How Workstep helped Dave:**

Because Asperger syndrome can affect a person's ability to communicate effectively, accessing employment can be extremely difficult as traditional recruitment procedures tend to rely on communication and interpersonal skills.

Allowing Dave to try a variety of different work placements enabled him to gain valuable work experience. At the same time it provided us with real work-based evidence from which to build up an accurate picture of his skills, abilities and also some of the areas where he would need additional support. This information is extremely valuable when anticipating what kind of employment would be suitable for an individual, and what kind of work-based support might be needed in order for Dave to be successful.

An opportunity came up at a local hotel and leisure complex as a male leisure cleaner. Dave's placement officer asked the hotel if he could try the job on a **working interview** basis. A working interview allows an individual to prove they are capable of doing a job by being observed rather than going through the traditional interview procedure where Dave would clearly be at a disadvantage given his difficulty with communication. Dave was successful and was offered the job on a permanent basis.

#### **Dave Today:**

A structured approach to training proved very successful. Dave was 'buddied up' with the most experienced member of the Male Leisure cleaning staff for a week. Under the guidance of the placement officer, the "buddy" trained Dave in the practical tasks of the job. Everyone used easy and straightforward language when working with him.

The assistant HR manager from the hotel commented, **"With the support of Bury EST, we were able to teach Dave all the possible answers to most of the questions he was likely to be asked by customers. In addition, his colleagues were made aware of Dave's difficulties with communication so they could help him, thus building in a natural support mechanism in the workplace."**

Dave is delighted with his new career.

## Embracing **Diversity**

Dave is a very gregarious 22 year old who is extremely hard working and very willing to help anyone who asks. He has a condition known as Asperger Syndrome which is a type of Autism. People who have Asperger Syndrome are generally highly intelligent but can often have difficulty with day to day communication of the kind that most people take for granted.



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# Workstep

## What is Workstep?

WORKSTEP provides national job support to over 26,000 disabled people who have difficulty getting or keeping a job, but who can work with a bit of support. It can help disabled people to realise their full potential at work giving them, wherever possible, the opportunity to progress in their career. The programme also offers practical assistance to employers. Workstep is funded through Jobcentre Plus.

### Employers Overview

- Workstep offers employment solutions to companies wanting to meet their diversity targets
- We will aim to fill any vacancy an employer has to offer
- Our officers will work closely with you to match the right people to suitable vacancies
- We will develop tailor-made support packages for both the individual worker and employer, involving you at every stage
- We can offer advice, training or support on issues such as disability awareness, reasonable adjustments and meeting legal requirements such as those of the Disability Discrimination Act.

## Who's it for?

It's for you if you have a recognised disability and would like to get a job or are having trouble keeping your existing job. If you're not working at the moment, you must be claiming Incapacity Benefit or Jobseekers Allowance. Workstep is for people wanting to work more than 16 hours per week.

Bury EST delivers the Workstep service in partnership with Stockport, Wigan and Oldham Councils. Here's what you can expect from us either as an employer or potential jobseeker:

### Jobseekers Overview

Workstep offers:

- job tasting or work experience to help you decide on the best job for you
- help with improving your work skills or basic skills such as literacy
- support from a job coach or job trainer
- mentoring from your colleagues
- help with arranging any other support you may need such as "Access to Work" funding to pay for travel costs
- a personal development plan that will guide you towards employment and career development
- support in reviewing your progress and deciding on the next steps

## I'm interested. What happens next?

If you are a potential employer, contact Bury EST to discuss your individual requirements. We'll do our best to match the right person to your job.

If you are a jobseeker, please contact your local Jobcentre who will put you in touch with the Disability Employment Adviser (DEA). The DEA will be pleased to discuss how WORKSTEP could work for you and can refer you to a local provider such as Bury EST.

## Factsheet 07 ◀

# Embracing Diversity

is a project working to support disadvantaged people into employment and achieve greater diversity in our workplaces to reflect the communities in which we live.

If you are an employer or potential client who would like further details about what we could do for you please contact us.

Bury Employment Support & Training

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