



PADDY
STANLEY &
ASSOCIATES

PROJECT REPORT

**THINK
DIFFERENTLY**

CITB PROJECT REF MPM 16 - 02



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1. INTRODUCTION TO THINK DIFFERENTLY

THE TERM THINK DIFFERENTLY WAS ORIGINALLY CHOSEN BECAUSE WE WANTED TO ENCOURAGE CONSTRUCTION MANAGERS, AND ESPECIALLY THOSE ABLE TO INFLUENCE HIRING OF NEW STAFF, TO “THINK DIFFERENTLY” ABOUT HOW THEY RECRUIT, WHO THEY RECRUIT AND TO LEARN HOW TO ACTIVELY SUPPORT INCLUSIVE RECRUITMENT.

As we began the project, though, we realised that the term “think differently” applied to a lot more than just the ‘hiring managers’. Organisations and charities remarked how as they got involved in the project, they began to realise that they also should think differently about how they supported their candidates, and often saw new traits and hidden abilities their candidates demonstrated during the ‘challenge’ part of the employers’ engagement day.

Thirdly, during and after the engagement days the candidates often said they had begun to “think differently” about themselves, their employment chances and the wide range of potential careers available in construction. So, it seems the term Think Differently could be adapted to suit a wide range of meanings.

2. THE ORIGINAL PROJECT

THINK DIFFERENTLY WAS A PROJECT FIRST SUBMITTED IN 2016 BY MY THEN-COLLEAGUE MARK MCCAFFERTY IN THE GLASGOW OFFICE. MARK WORKED FOR THE MITIE PAINTING DIVISION AND RECOGNISED THERE WAS A NEED TO SUPPORT PEOPLE WITH AUTISM AND ASPERGER'S TO IMPROVE THEIR EMPLOYMENT CHANCES

Marks initial idea was to offer them work experience with the painting and decorating division, ideally leading to apprenticeships and paid employment opportunities. He submitted a proposal for Structured / Flexible fund support and the original contract between CITB and Mitie Property Services was signed on 1 August 2016 and was set to run until January 2018. Extract from the Original submission "Mitie Property Management responded to a request from a young man with autism who was seeking his first job in the construction industry. A bespoke training and work experience program was designed, supported and delivered for him. This project builds and expands on the progressiveness of the program, in partnership with Mitie are Geason (training provider), four construction companies (all CITB levy payers), the National Autistic Society and Remploy. Sixty disabled adults across Scotland and England will have an opportunity to enter the construction industry with the support of employers, employee mentors and a structured training and work experience program." "The cohesion in the approach being applied is that both trainees; employees and employers will receive mentoring and support which will ensure that challenges to the project will be significantly reduced and benefits enhanced. The miss-informed prejudices and misunderstandings that often surround disabled people; especially where the disability is not visible will be dealt with in a sensitive way."



"The partners' drive for this project builds on one disabled person's determination to work in the construction industry. This project sets the following aims;

1

TO ENCOURAGE MORE DISABLED PEOPLE INTO THE CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRY

2

TO DELIVER AND FURTHER DEVELOP A STRUCTURED TRAINING AND WORK EXPERIENCE PROGRAM THAT IS TESTED FULLY, PROVED SUCCESSFUL AND CAN BE ADAPTED BY CONSTRUCTION COMPANIES AND OTHER BUSINESSES IN THE INDUSTRY

3

THAT THE PROJECT CHALLENGES AND MEASURES OF POSITIVE CHANGES IN ATTITUDE AND BEHAVIOUR, AND IS, A MODEL OF EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY

4

TO DEVELOP AND LAUNCH ONLINE THE VIRTUAL TRAINING CENTRE (VTC)"

Mark began offering work experience in the Glasgow and Airdrie area, and then expanded the program to include all the regions of the UK covered by Mitie Property Services teams. As the program developed he realised that one of the major barriers to employment for these candidates was in fact the unconscious bias of senior and middle-managers. It was decided to offer some training to address this, which included autism and Asperger's awareness, improving their knowledge around learning difficulties and this learning was enhanced by meeting potential candidates in a workshop setting. Although this original format provided c.32 work experience placements, having been extended for 12 months; after the fourth cohorts of candidates completed the program it became apparent that the Property Services division would struggle to provide the 60 hoped-for work experience placements. Mark approached Paddy Stanley, then Head of the Mitie Foundation; Mitie Group's independent charity with a proven track record on supporting people with barriers to employment, and they discussed how best to widen the program across the Mitie business, including teams working in social housing, property management, maintenance, plumbing and heating and engineering maintenance. The double benefits of this change were to increase the geographical coverage of the program and to also widen the scope of opportunities to better match the preference of candidates, thereby improving sustained outcomes for the project. Case studies, "Jason's story" and "Joseph's story" below are examples of the success of the original version of the Think Differently project.

CASE STUDY: JASON'S STORY

Published by MITIE 2017



Case study

Think Differently: Jason's story

Think Differently provided Jason, who struggles with agoraphobia, a safe environment to work.

"I have struggled to find work since leaving school. I suffer with Agoraphobia around difficult. I have been involved with many work experience placements on Job Seekers Allowance. Each of these did very little to help me overcome my limitations, it made finding work difficult"

Jason, Think Differently Graduate



What is Agoraphobia?

Agoraphobia is a severe anxiety disorder, that can result in regular panic attacks. The triggers of Agoraphobia can vary, making this a huge barrier to employment.

What is Think Differently?

Think Differently is a program to help people with a range of mental health issues and disabilities get into work. At Mitie, we understand that no two conditions can be treated the same, each candidate would need tailored support to work to the best of their ability. Each candidate on the Think Differently program has a designated, trained Mitie mentor to take them through the programme, on a one-to-one basis. The mentors are trained by our partners in a range of things including, Mental Health First Aid, Disability Awareness and TSI; using different methods of training for people facing different adversities.

How we helped Jason

In Jason's case, he was first assisted by family who bought him a ticket for public transport – a common trigger of his Agoraphobia. Mitie Paid Enterprise, then assisted Jason in getting to and from work until his journey independently.

Think Differently: Jason's story

Case study

Think Differently: Jason's story



Mitie employees volunteer to be disability coaches and mentors. They are trained in disability awareness, mental health first aid and training in systematic instruction to become a friendly face for candidates during the programme.

How we helped Jason (cont.)

Throughout the course of the programme, candidates use their on-site work to evidence the necessary elements required to complete a NVQ. Initially, Jason was apprehensive about taking part in Think Differently. "Having been placed on numerous voluntary positions over the years, I wasn't too enthusiastic, but willing to give it a try." However, after completing the programme, and his NVQ level 2 in business administration, Jason reflected "[Think Differently has shown me] that there are some programs out there that sympathise with people in similar situations as myself, and are willing to give them a chance to prove themselves and better their lives. Think Differently helped me better my life and I'm very grateful"

Results

Since the end of the programme, Jason has been employed as a Payroll and Administration Assistant part-time in Mitie's Cramlington Office. His mentor through the programme, Isaac Parr said, "Jason fits well within the office and is bettering his knowledge of the business daily, [he] seems a lot more confident in all aspects."

Jason has been employed for over a year and is an asset to the team. "Jason has developed himself to his role beyond even his own expectations. Every day brings new challenges and Jason is able to beat every one." Said Isaac.

Isaac himself has experience with the barriers those with disabilities face, his own family have a hereditary Asperger's gene. "I have seen first-hand how difficult it is for members of my family to gain employment and integrate within a work team environment. Many times, they have left due to not feeling comfortable within their environment, and I wanted



Jason has been employed at Mitie for over a year, after completing Think Differently.

to see if I was able to help with people struggling to get work." With more staff opting to take part in the programme, Think Differently is not only designed to help candidates, but to empower our staff to seek a more inclusive work force who are stronger because of their diversity.

"
Think Differently helped me better my life and I'm very grateful

Jason, Think Differently Graduate

Think Differently: Jason's story

CASE STUDY: JOSEPH'S STORY



WHY IT PAYS TO SEE THE POTENTIAL IN EVERYONE

Homeless, unemployed and fearful for his future, Joseph was desperate to break into the world of work.

he suspected that due to a genetic visual impairment, employers were failing to see his true potential.

despite his frustration, Joseph knew he had a lot to offer and got in touch with the employment charity, Remploy, this proved to be the turning point he longed for.

Remploy staff could tell that with a little help, Joseph would become a valued employee, and they suggested that he attend the Construction Industry Training Board (CITB) funded Think Differently programme, delivered by MITIE. The project aims to alert employers to the talent and potential often overlooked in those who have struggled to find work for a variety of reasons.

Jumping at the opportunity, Joseph began the eight-week scheme in July 2017, and thrived in the structured environment of on-the-job training with MITIE Property Services, supported by Remploy and training provider Geason.

As he progressed from scanning documents to invoice preparation and finally data entry, Joseph's confidence grew along with his enjoyment of the role. In turn, he went on to achieve NVQ Level Two in Business Administration.

Joseph's MITIE mentors, Clair Beckinsale and Lisa Brookes, were quick to notice his potential. In fact, they were so impressed with his attention to detail and output, that Joseph was offered a permanent role as Financial Administrator with MITIE Property Services on London-wide contracts, a position he accepted in September 2017.

Now Joseph is excited about the future and acts as a Think Differently ambassador, giving talks to other potential candidates about the benefits of the scheme.



3. HOW THE PROJECT EVOLVED

FOLLOWING THE DECISION TO AMEND THE PROJECT DELIVERY TO IMPROVE OUTCOMES FOR CANDIDATES, MARK MCCAFFERTY AND PADDY STANLEY PROPOSED A VARIATION WHICH WAS SIGNED AND AGREED BY CITB IN JANUARY 2019.

As well as extending the contract to November 2019, the project lead role would switch to Paddy Stanley and a new three-step approach was proposed, and accepted by CITB.

Extract from variations dated January 2019

“Project delivery will switch to the Mitie Foundation where there is sufficient resource to deliver the remainder of the project: especially at the toolkit. There will still be support from Mitie Property Services who will remain an active part of the project” “The Mitie Foundation has links with a greater number of disability support organisations, which will increase the pool of available registrations, which will ensure that the planned number of registrations for the project are met”

“All candidates will have access to internal vacancies and Mitie Foundation support to apply for these roles. Additional vacancies will be available from SMEs who take part in each location” It is apparent that having potential employers trained to become Disability aware has positive benefits when supporting candidates, so it is proposed that this training is rolled out to Mitie and participating SMEs hiring managers” “Whilst the additional training is being conducted, we would work closely with our supporting partners to identify suitable candidates to fill the remaining registrations.” “A three-step approach is proposed;



1. Present to regional CITB forums and Mitie colleagues. 12 locations circa 192 people.
2. Provide Disability Awareness training to six locations, circa 96 people.
3. Run three cohorts of eight candidates in three locations, so circa 24 candidates with Mitie and SME mentors in support."

"The Mitie Foundation has good links to the DWP, MOJ, Home Office and other influential organisations, both public and private sector, where this CITB-funded program can be held as the 'Gold standard' on how to improve outcomes for vulnerable people, people with disabilities, with learning difficulties or who may be seen as 'different' in some way." Initially the ambition was to deliver the project in

London, Birmingham, the East Midlands and perhaps Manchester, but this evolved to also include one-off enquiries from candidates and employers across the UK

As part of 'Step One' of this new format and to publicise the intended good work of the CITB-funded Think Differently project, Paddy began attending various major events as guest speaker: including the Westminster Forum on Disability (140 guests), Sky television suppliers Forum on Diversity and Inclusion (180 guests), the Atomic Weapons Establishment Diversity and Inclusion meeting (16 senior managers), the West Midlands BITC event on 'Recruiting with a Difference' (12 attendees), the CITB quarterly meetings in Bromsgrove and Shrewsbury (42 attendees).

In subsequent months, the Think Differently team went on to present the project to the Bounce Back Foundation - London, at Sandwell Colleges 'Construction Business Breakfast' - West Midlands, Groundworks - Nottingham, Balfour Beatty (East Wick & Sweetwater) - London, Briggs and Forrester Ltd - Northampton, Mace - London, Wates Construction - London, SERCO - West Midlands, Lendlease - West Midlands and Tideway West London.

These presentations were designed to raise awareness and to publicise forthcoming Disability Awareness workshops planned for Nottingham, the West Midlands and London. Examples of publicity used to promote the workshops and an example of the slide presentations used are provided in the next section of this report.

'Step Two' began slowly, with poorly-attended "Disability Awareness Workshops" in Nottingham, Birmingham and London in June, July and August, before the team re-launched the workshops rebadged as "Autism & Asperger's Awareness Workshops" and evolved to include presenting directly to senior teams of major construction companies. This helped to improve uptake, but employers were time-poor and we later found combining the 'awareness session' with a 'meet the candidates' event much more popular with employers and candidates alike. In total the team delivered 10 workshops of this kind in Nottingham, Birmingham and London, with c.80 attendees. Examples of slide presentations used are provided in section five of this report and included in the appendices (Think Differently - Disability Awareness.pdf) and (Think Differently - Autism & Aspergers.pdf). Workshops were advertised on social media - Twitter, LinkedIn and Eventbrite, and included short MPEG-4 movies (Appendix - "London short").



"Step Three" quickly evolved into two separate steps;(3a) being Employer Engagement Days, sometimes referred to as 'Business Challenge Days', where around 30 candidates with autism, Asperger's, learning difficulties and other barriers to employment, met around 16 local and national employers. The event is also attended by work coaches and representatives of charities, who provided fantastic support and information to employers and candidates. Addressing the time-poor nature of employers, the day would begin with an autism and Asperger's awareness session for the employers, followed by a full day workshop, where employers mixed with candidates in an interactive Dragon's Den style event and six teams created a business plan complete with marketing, finance, operational delivery meetings, culminating in a short presentation to the room. Teams were scored for teamwork and best product, and following the prize-giving candidates were encouraged to speak directly to potential employers in a relaxed 1-2-1 short interview, and employers are encouraged to offer advice support and work experience to some of the candidates. Employer Engagement Days, also referred to as Business Challenge Days, were very successful in converting hearts and minds, as well as allowing our candidates to showcase their talents to potential employers which they may never have met by following the usual recruitment process. Typically, our candidates' CVs do not stand out and may have gaps in experience. If our candidates do get shortlisted, they often struggle with the traditional interview process. The employee engagement days bypass CVs and formal interviews, and allow our candidates to improve their

employment chances. Two employer engagement events, held in Birmingham in December 2019 and in London in January 2020, were filmed – links are provided in the appendix (BCD Dec 2019 and BCD Jan 2020).

For examples of slide presentations used for Employer Engagement Days see the appendices. The “wordy” version was used to improve inclusion at a Birmingham event where a proportion of the candidates had hearing impairments; we also arranged for half a dozen sign interpreters to attend the event to improve inclusivity.

Step 3b. The second part of the step three and the primary focus of all that had preceded; is the work placements, work experience and job interviews for current vacancies. As the project progressed in 2019, candidates and employers contacted the Think Differently team enquiring about how to arrange work experience placements, and some candidates were employed to help deliver the Think Differently project, giving them a chance to showcase their skills to potential employers as the project progressed. The majority of candidates put forward came from longstanding relationships between Paddy Stanley and charities and organisations that had years of experience in supporting people with barriers to employment. They included ;

UNITY WORKS (FOUNDED BY THE CAMDEN SOCIETY)

Registered charity 1185113. My contacts there were Suzanne Thomson and Terry de Willers. (London-based)

THE BOUNCE BACK FOUNDATION

Registered charity 1144297. My contacts there were Armando “Leo” Vinci and Paula Shaw. (London-based, with links to Leeds and the West Midlands)

BID SERVICES

registered charity 1053184. My contacts there were Megan Alexander, Adam Breeze and Mark Woodall. (Birmingham-based)

GATEWAY COMMUNITY TRAINING CIC

Who deliver construction training including CSCS cards and support people with barriers to employment. My contact there was Leroy Joseph. (London-based, but can deliver across the UK)

DWP

Have Disability Employment Advisors across the UK, but Lyril Rawlins in Selly Oak, Birmingham was especially supportive.

Following the successful events in December and January further offers of work experience were in the pipeline, and an additional engagement day was planned for April, when the COVID 19 virus struck the world and momentum was lost. Post-COVID 19, and predicting that there may be labour and skill shortages we adapted the Think Differently format to prepare our candidates for the expected large recruitment drives for construction organisations and associated industries. In early April 2020, we reached out to all our charities, referral agencies and supportive organisations to engage with their candidates and to arrange to convert their traditional 'paper' CVs to video-CVs using online technology such as Zoom, Skype and Hangouts. Our digital video-editing team, led by

Anita, recorded short interviews with potential candidates and edited them into a short elevator-pitch type CV, in readiness for the upturn in employment opportunities expected to arrive in August 2020, or beyond.

In this way, we hoped to be ahead of our competitors, and for our candidates to gain more work placements, work experience, job interviews and paid employment, with the support of Think Differently and our partner organisations. One benefit of this new approach was that we could support candidates across a wider spread of the UK including remote areas where it was previously inefficient to do so. All candidates taking part signed a GDPR disclaimer, allowing Anita to film, edit, store and share the resultant CV with potential employers.

Summary

The original project, predominantly painting & decorating and Airdrie / Glasgow-based, evolved into a UK wide project that invited major construction companies and their supply chain to consider offering work experience and guaranteed job interviews to candidates with autism, Asperger's, learning difficulties and other barriers to employment such as hearing or visual impairment. Post-COVID, this then evolved further to recording potential candidates via Zoom and creating virtual CVs ready for the upturn in construction recruitment.

Valuable lessons learnt include;

- Partnering with charities and organisations who understand the candidates is vital; to gain candidates' trust but also to reassure employers that support is available
- Awareness training for managers is vital for success
- Employers cannot always spare the time to attend multiple events
- Combining awareness training with candidate engagement days is the most effective use of everyone's time
- Major employers can leverage their supply chain to support wider candidate opportunities
- Adapting quickly to prevailing situations is a useful skill to adopt

4. CITB PRESENTATIONS

From the variation agreed in January 2019, Step One's ambition was to present to regional CITB forums and Mitie colleagues in 12 locations and reach circa 192 people. Quite quickly, with existing contacts hearing about this, Paddy was invited to major events as guest speaker: including the Westminster Forum on Disability (140 guests), Sky television suppliers Forum on Diversity and Inclusion (180 guests), the Atomic Weapons Establishment Diversity and Inclusion meeting (16 senior managers), the West Midlands BITC event on 'Recruiting with a Difference' (12 attendees), as well as the originally intended CITB quarterly meetings in Bromsgrove and Shrewsbury (42 attendees). So, circa 390 people heard about how CITB were funding this innovative project. Many of these events were attended by building management managers from Mitie, and also their client counterparts, both able to influence recruitment considerably.



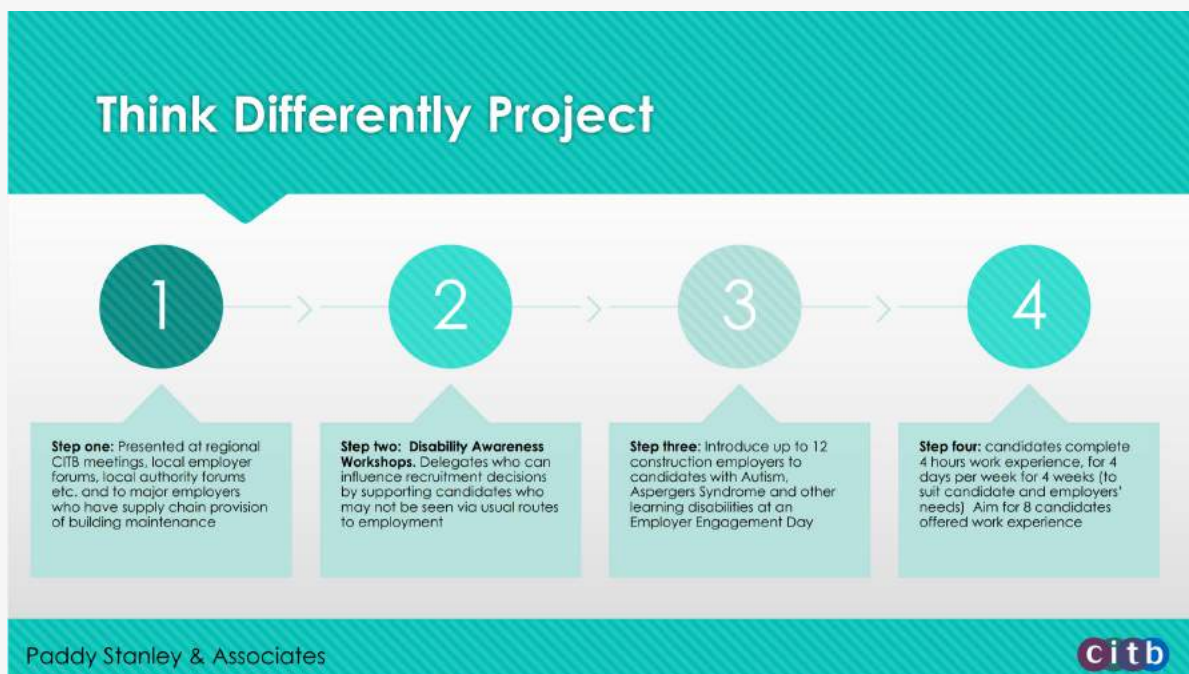
Example slides used at these events



**Think Differently –
a stepped approach to
recruiting people with barriers
to employment**

Paddy Stanley & Associates
07957 170104
paddy@paddystanleyandassociates.com

Opening slide - Introduction, where I would explain that the CITB had funded this project, "Think Differently" from their levy paying members, saying thank you and do get involved with this project that you have all contributed to.



Think Differently Project

- Step one:** Presented at regional CITB meetings, local employer forums, local authority forums etc., and to major employers who have supply chain provision of building maintenance
- Step two: Disability Awareness Workshops.** Delegates who can influence recruitment decisions by supporting candidates who may not be seen via usual routes to employment
- Step three:** Introduce up to 12 construction employers to candidates with Autism, Aspergers Syndrome and other learning disabilities at an Employer Engagement Day
- Step four:** candidates complete 4 hours work experience, for 4 days per week for 4 weeks (to suit candidate and employers' needs). Aim for 8 candidates offered work experience

Paddy Stanley & Associates

The second slide would take them through the project, step by step, explaining how they could benefit by receiving free Disability Awareness training, learning how to become Disability Confident accredited, and how offering work experience to candidates they would meet, could help them become an inclusive employer; all at no extra cost to their business.

Example slides used at these events

How the 'Think Differently' Project works

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Slide three provided more detail on each of the steps

Thank you for listening

<http://bit.ly/BirmDisAware>

Paddy Stanley & Associates
07957 170104
paddy@paddystanleyandassociates.com

The final slide invited companies to attend one of the Disability Aware workshops (this link related to a Birmingham Disability Aware event)

Advice for employers



DisAbility awareness workshop



SUBJECTS COVERED

- DEFINITION OF DISABILITY
- LEARNING DISABILITIES
- NEURODIVERSITY
- REASONABLE ADJUSTMENT
- DISABILITY CONFIDENT
- NEXT STEPS

Think Differently

Friday 21st June 9am to 2.30pm

Middle Street Resource Centre,
Middle Street, Beeston, Nottingham
NG9 2AR (next to tram stop)

Buffet lunch provided

Paddy Stanley & Associates 07957 170104 Paddystan@hotmail.co.uk

As this example shows, leaflets were also provided at these CITB events giving details of upcoming events; this one was a Nottingham event for the East Midlands companies.

Similar content was used at the many other presentations delivered at this stage, publicising the CITB funding and encouraging engineering and facilities organisations to adopt inclusive recruitment practices.

5. AWARENESS WORKSHOPS

Following the first iteration of these workshops, as Disability Awareness, we evolved to label them Autism & Asperger’s Awareness Workshops, and received a greater uptake from employers.

Welcome – Disability Awareness Workshop

Timings: 09:00 – 14:30

Paddy Stanley & Associates
07957 170104
paddy@paddystanleyandassociates.com

CITB

We included the slides showing Think Differently’s stepped approach, for those who had not attended one of the initial CITB meetings, or had heard about Think Differently via another route.

Welcome – Autism and Asperger’s Awareness Workshop

Paddy Stanley & Associates
07957 170104
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disability confident
COMMITTED

Think Differently Project

- Step one:** Presented at regional CITB meetings, local employer forums, local authority forums etc. and to major employers who have supply chain provision of building maintenance
- Step two: Disability Awareness Workshops.** Delegates who can influence recruitment decisions by supporting candidates who may not be seen via usual routes to employment
- Step three:** Introduce us to 12 construction employers to candidates with Autism, Aspergers Syndrome and other learning disabilities at an Employer Engagement Day
- Step four:** candidates complete 4 hours work experience, for 4 days per week for 4 weeks. (to suit candidate and employer needs) Aim for 8 candidates offered work experience

We then provided definitions and statistics, to remove some of the misconceptions and stigma around this subject

Definition of Disability

- You are disabled under the Equality Act 2010 if you have a physical or mental impairment that has a 'substantial' and 'long-term' negative effect on your ability to do normal daily activities.
- Useful links:
 - <http://www.dibservices.org.uk/definitions-disability>
 - <https://www.jisc.ac.uk/guides/equality-disability-and-the-law/the-legal-definition-of-disability>
 - <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Disability>

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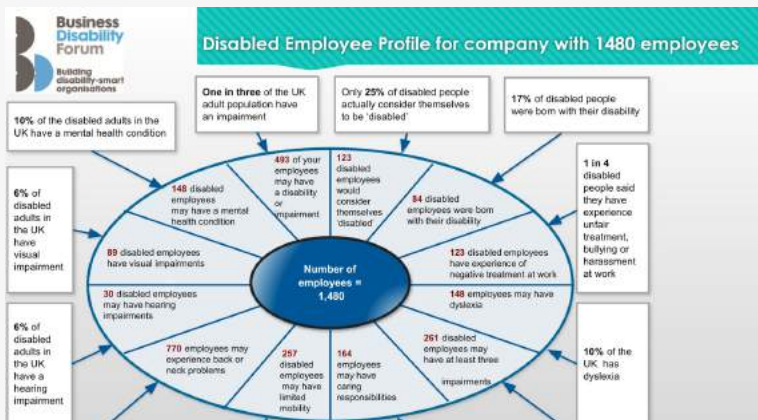
Disability statistics

- Key facts : People with disabilities
 - There are around 13.3 million disabled people in the UK (almost one in five of the population) [1]
 - Only 17% of disabled people were born with their disabilities. The majority of disabled people acquire their disability later in life [2]
 - Around 7% of children are disabled, compared to 18% of working age adults and 44% of adults over State Pension age [3]
 - There are two million people with sight problems in the UK. That's around one person in 30. It is predicted that by 2020 the number of people with sight loss will rise to over 2,250,000 [4]
 - There are approximately 10 million people (1 in 6) in this country with a hearing loss. 6.5 million of these are aged 60 and over. Around 2 million people use hearing aids. [5]

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One slide demonstrated a typical company of 1,480 employees and how many would typically have a disability, often hidden from their employer. We then moved on to neurodiversity; this is where Mike Donaghy's knowledge on the subject was invaluable



What is neurodiversity?

Definition:

What does that mean in the workplace?

How can we support people?

<http://www.citb.org.uk/media/1440000/1440000.pdf>

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Learning disabilities/difficulties

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Types of Learning difficulties

- Five of the most common learning difficulties in classrooms today.
 - Dyslexia. Dyslexia is perhaps the best known learning difficulties
 - ADHD. Attention Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder has affected more than 6.4 million children at some point
 - Dyscalculia
 - Dysgraphia
 - Processing Deficits
- <https://www.mencap.org.uk/learning-disability-explained/what-learning-disability>

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Other subjects covered included people with learning disabilities, and how this was often misunderstood by employers

We then moved on to how making reasonable adjustments was often at nil cost or very low cost, and how funding was available to support people in to work.

Reasonable adjustments in the Workplace

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What is reasonable and how can employers support individuals' needs in the workplace?

- 'Reasonable' =
- Most adjustments involve no costs to the employer
- Access to Work support £1000+

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Becoming a Disability Confident Employer

Paddy Stanley & Associates
07957 170104
paddy@paddystanleyandassociates.com



Becoming Disability Confident

- 1. Disability Confident Committed**
 - includes offering work trial
- 2. Disability Confident Employer**
 - Self-assessment against set standard.
 - Once completed Disability confident employer for two years
- 3. Disability Confident Leader**
 - have your self-assessment validated by someone outside of your business (not including DWP employees in jobcentres)
 - show what you have done as a Disability Confident Leader

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At this stage, we offered our services to assist any company present to become 'Disability Confident' accredited employers. The process takes less than one hour and any work experience offered via Think Differently would qualify employers towards becoming accredited.

The three levels were discussed.

We finished by inviting employers to an Employer Engagement Day, where they would meet 30+ candidates with autism, Asperger's or learning difficulties.

Next Steps

Employer Engagement Day – Meet the candidates

- No preparation, no obligation
- Met 36 candidates with various conditions
- Support the 'challenge' set on the day
- Select candidates you wish to offer 4-week Work Trials
- Offer 1-2-1 advice or mock interviews

Paddy Stanley & Associates



Find out more
Pledge support
Attend Employer Engagement Day

Paddy Stanley & Associates
07957 170104
paddy@paddystanleyandassociates.com



After we re-branded these days as 'Autism & Asperger's Awareness Workshops, we found the slightly amended language resulted in a greater uptake by employers. The presentations were delivered by Paddy Stanley, Karen Govier, Mike Donaghy and Anita Brooks, who each have a personal section in this report. Mike has worked with the Camden Society and latterly Unity Works and has considerable expertise in supporting employment for candidates with neurodiversity. Anita joined the Think Differently team as video editor, but quickly stepped in front of the camera too, to share her personal journey with attendees. The team's blend of experience in construction, inclusive recruitment, diversity and disability knowledge, coupled with lived experience meant that employers who attended gained some real insight into all aspects of inclusive recruitment.

6. EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT DAY

Step three, employer engagement days, proved to be the most popular step with employers, candidates, work coaches and my team. The blend of 'fun workshop' activities with a construction theme and meeting real people face-to-face for 4 - 6 hours, allowed the candidates to demonstrate real skills to employers without the formal, and often daunting prospect, of a job interview. If future construction companies wanted to adopt just one element of this Think Differently project, adapting this event to suit your particular needs would be our advice. Typically, we would invite 30+ candidates from local organisations & charities who supported people with autism, Asperger's and learning difficulties; supplemented by

a few extra candidates put forward by local DWP Das and others. One such organisation, BID Services in Birmingham, met Paddy at a DWP event and agreed to host an EED in December 2019, with many of the candidates having hearing impairments. At the event, we had 84 people attend, made up of 52 candidates, 15 local construction employers and 17 assorted sign language interpreters and work coaches, and the Think Differently team had to adapt our presentation style and slides to ensure the hearing-impaired candidates were included in all parts of the day. The result was an amazing day for all with the additional bonus of our film crew capturing a record of the day

FORMAT OF THE DAY

The room is set up cabaret-style 6-12 tables with a power point presentation able to be seen by all. We aim to have 4 - 6 candidates and 2 construction employers on each table, and anywhere from 6 - 12 tables/teams. If you have a blend of construction / engineering / associated trades, we tend to spread people evenly so each table has at least one construction employer. We also aim to have an even gender mix of candidates and employers. Although we would like to mix up the candidates similarly, this is not always possible because some candidates need the familiarity of people they know to reduce their anxiety. We begin by briefly introducing our team and then encourage the tables to do the same; the employers tend to take a lead on this.



Employer Engagement Day

Paddy Stanley & Associates
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paddy@paddystanleyandassociates.com



Business Challenge Day

• Introduction (30 secs)

- Employers – Name, job title, interesting fact
- Candidates – Name, ideal job, interesting fact

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Citb

We then introduce the 'Challenge' and explain that neither the candidates nor the employers know what to expect from the day, and this is useful to create a level playing field for candidates and employers alike. Teams, made up of candidates and employers, are invited to create a gadget, product or service with a construction theme; we explain that in this room the laws of physics do not apply, so anything they invent will work, there are no bad ideas.

Business Challenge Day

• The Challenge

- Design a gadget, product or service
- There are no bad ideas, so be creative !!

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Business Challenge Day

• Design stage (30 mins)

- Business name?
- Product name?

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After the design stage, which includes brainstorming and agreeing on one final product or service per team/table, we provide 'monopoly money investment bonds' to the employers and designate them as honorary "Dragons" with millions of pounds to invest in good ideas. We then ask the employers to move to the next table. The candidates have three minutes to impress the Dragons and get investment of 1, 2 or 3 million pounds. Employers then move to the next table and repeat. You can repeat this until the employer returns to their own table, if you have enough time and not too many tables, but we strongly suggest that Dragons do not act as Dragons to their own team, as they tend to be over-generous! This stage should last no more than 15 mins, and finishes with a count of the total investment each table has accumulated. The winner was generally awarded with a box of Cadbury roses or similar. Sometimes we gave out two prizes.

• Investment stage

- Business volunteers become 'Dragons'
- 1 million – 2 million – 3 million ??? (max 3 million)

• Finance

- Cost of production
- Mark-up & Profit
- Sales deals?

Once the investment stage is over, the employers should return to their 'home' table. We then have three ten-minute advice sessions, beginning with 'finance', then 'delivery' and 'marketing'. It may be useful to rotate employers further during the 'finance', 'delivery' and 'marketing' advice sessions, especially at larger events, to ensure candidates get to meet all the employers in the room. Finance – we reassure employers that we just want to cover simple finance here, how to make a profit and perhaps have multi-buy discounts etc. Delivery – Often difficult for attendees to understand, so we talk about operational delivery and ask 'where will you make it?', 'how will you get it to your customers?' Again not in too deep a way. Marketing – Most people's favourite, 'how will you advertise it?' and they are asked to create a jingle and a short advert. Some really enjoy this part and provide good humoured acting or spoofs of well known adverts. We even had a rap song created at one event.

• Delivery

- Shops, on-line, factory, mobile vans ???

• Marketing

- Advert – Social media, TV, Radio, Leaflets?
- Jingle – Beanz Meanz.....memorable !!

Whether we have continued to move employers around the room or not, following the 'marketing' meeting it is important to bring them back to their 'home' table now, to hold a board meeting and put together the whole team's pitch to sell their ideas to the room. At this stage, it is also important to recognise that not all candidates, and not all employers, are comfortable to stand in front of a room-full of people and present. So, the Think Differently team made a point of speaking with each team to give them a pep talk along the lines of "No one in this room knows your product better than you do, in fact you guys are the world experts on this gadget, product or service, so be confident." We also said we understood that presenting wasn't everyone's forte, so if they wanted to stand down and let the team present without them, that was OK. With the new-found confidence candidates had gained during the morning, we had very few decide not to present their ideas to the room.

Business Challenge Day

- Board meeting
- Preparing the pitch
- Include finance, delivery and marketing
- Work as a team

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Business Challenge Day

- Presentations (10 mins)

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As well as detailing the benefit of the product or service, each presentation included an element of finance, delivery and marketing. Often the advert dominated the presentation, but we allowed each team to present to their own strengths. After each presentation, the other teams award scores for 'best team' and 'best product' and we gave out small (£2) Cadbury's Roses to each winning candidate, so £20 - £30 worth of prizes.

Business Challenge Day

• Prizes

- Best product
- Best presentation
- Feedback from business volunteers

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Business Challenge Day

• 1-2-1 s

- Find a quiet corner and have a chat with someone you have met today (5 minutes)
- Advice and guidance

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Whilst everyone is in a celebratory mood; candidates and employers are invited to find a quiet area and have a 1-2-1 / mock interview. It is here where candidates with their new-found confidence, get offers of work experience.

It is fair to say that with hindsight, we would increase the focus on this section of the day, as after the prize giving many attendees begin to switch off and prepare to leave the event, so when we call them back for 1-2-1s they perhaps don't approach this with as much attention as we would hope for. For the Birmingham event, which was attended by candidates with hearing impairments, we used a slightly more wordy version. See appendices



APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1 - JASON'S STORY

Case study

Think Differently: Jason's story

Think Differently provided Jason, who struggles with agoraphobia, a safe environment for entering the workplace.

"I have struggled to find work since leaving school. I suffer with Agoraphobia which makes getting around difficult. I have been involved with many work experience programmes in the years I've been on Job Seekers Allowance. Each of these did very little to help me into finding work and due to my own limitations, it made finding work difficult "

Jason, Think Differently Candidate, 2017 - 2018



What is Agoraphobia?

Agoraphobia is a severe anxiety disorder, that can cause sufferers to experience regular panic attacks. The triggers of Agoraphobia can be experiences in everyday life, making this a huge barrier to employment.

What is Think Differently?

Think Differently is a program to help people with a range of mental health issues and disabilities get into work. At Mitie, we understand that no two conditions can be treated the same, each candidate would need tailored support to work to the best of their ability. Each candidate on the Think Differently program has a designated, trained Mitie mentor to take them through the programme, on a one-to-one basis. The mentors are trained by our partners in a range of things including, Mental Health First Aid, Disability Awareness and TSI; different methods of training for people facing different adversities.



How we helped Jason

In Jason's case, he was first assisted by family who bought him a motorbike to eliminate using public transport - a common trigger of his Agoraphobia. Mitie Partners, Azure Charitable Enterprise, then assisted Jason in getting to and from work until he was comfortable to do the journey independently.

Case study

Think Differently: Jason's story



Mitie employees volunteer to be disability coaches and mentors. They are trained in disability awareness, mental health first aid and training in systematic instruction to become a friendly face for candidates during the programme.

How we helped Jason (cont.)

Throughout the course of the programme, candidates use their on-site work to evidence the necessary elements required to complete a NVQ. Initially, Jason was apprehensive about taking part in **Think Differently**: "Having been placed on numerous voluntary positions over the years. I wasn't too enthusiastic, but willing to give it a try." However, after completing the programme, and his NVQ level 2 in business administration, Jason reflected "[**Think Differently** has shown me] that there are some programs out there that sympathise with people in similar situations as myself, and are willing to give them a chance to prove themselves and better their lives. **Think Differently** helped me better my life and I'm very grateful"

Results

Since the end of the programme, Jason has been employed as a Payroll and Administration Assistant part-time in Mitie's Cramlington Office. His mentor through the programme, Isaac Parr said, "Jason fits well within the office and is bettering his knowledge of the business daily, [he] seems a lot more confident in all aspects."

Jason has been employed for over a year and is an asset to the team. "Jason has developed himself to his role beyond even his own expectations. Every day brings new challenges and Jason is able to beat every one." Said Isaac.

Isaac himself has experience with the barriers those with disabilities face, his own family have a hereditary Asperger's gene. "I have seen first-hand how difficult it is for members of my family to gain employment and integrate within a work team environment. Many times, they have left due to not feeling comfortable within their environment, and I wanted



Jason has been employed at Mitie for over a year, after completing **Think Differently**.

to see if I was able to help with people struggling to get work." With more staff opting to take part in the programme, **Think Differently** is not only designed to help candidates, but to empower our staff to seek a more inclusive work force who are stronger because of their diversity.

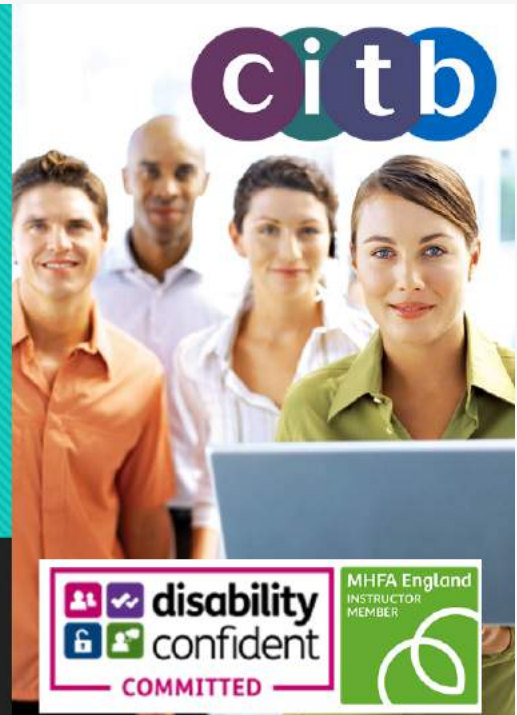
“
Think Differently helped me better my life and I'm very grateful

Jason, *Think Differently* Graduate

APPENDIX 2 - BCD WORDY VERSION

Employer Engagement Day

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Business Challenge Day

• Introduction (30 secs)

- Each person to give a very brief introduction, max 30 seconds each.
- Employers – Your name, your job title and one interesting fact about you
- Candidates – Your name, your ideal job and one interesting fact about you

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Business Challenge Day

• The Challenge

- As a team, we want you to design a gadget, product or service
- In this room the laws of physics do not apply and there are no bad ideas, so be really creative !!
- If you can't think of anything – think of a problem... then solve it with your idea.

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• Design stage (30 mins)

- Brainstorm lots of ideas for approx 10 mins
- Narrow down to one idea – what is it? Why should I buy it?
- What is your product called?
- What is your Business called?

• Investment stage (20 mins)

- Business volunteers become 'Dragons' and have fake investment bonds
- Business volunteers move to next table and the candidates describe the product, gadget or service in 90 seconds
- Business volunteers 'invest' if they like the product £1 million
- If they love the product £2 million
- If they think the pitch was amazing £3 million
- Max 3 million to any one team
- Move tables and repeat, with a different candidates doing the pitch each time

• Finance meeting (10 mins)

- Business volunteers are now 'finance experts'
- How much will it cost to produce one unit?
- What overheads might you have?
- What price will you sell one unit for?
- How many will you sell in year one?
- Will you have promotional 'Sales' deals?

• Delivery meeting (10 mins)

- How / where will you manufacture your product?
- Where will you sell your product?
- Will you have shops, sell on-line, have a factory, need engineers in vans ???

• Marketing (10 mins)

- Create an Advert – Social media, TV, Radio, Leaflets?
- Create a Jingle – Like Beanz Meanz..... Make it memorable !!

• Board meeting

- Bring all the ideas together
- Share out the roles - finance, delivery and marketing
- Work as a team
- Prepare a pitch to the room

• Presentations

- Ten minutes max
- To include finance, delivery, marketing and an advert (jingle?)
- In whatever order you like
- There are no 'bad' presentations
- Support your team

• Prizes

- Best product – which would you buy?
- Best team/presentation – which team worked well together
- Feedback from business volunteers – individual feedback

• Next steps

- In the next couple of days we will notify you if an employer has agreed to ---
- Guarantee you an interview
- Invite you to complete a work trial
- Offer mentor support

• 1-2-1 s

- Your opportunity to ---
- Find a quiet corner and have a chat with someone you have met today (5 minutes)
- Seek their advice and guidance