



ALP Member Brief 205 May 2021

Introduction to Open Recruitment

ALP

Association of Labour Providers

WHAT IS OPEN RECRUITMENT?

In today's ever changing labour market, there are significant populations of people who could and want to be working - whether they are UK resident workers affected by the pandemic, carers or care leavers, young people or the older generation, people with disabilities or single parents, refugees or asylum seekers. By removing barriers to employment and making it possible to welcome such groups into your company, you could be creating happier, healthier and more successful work environments.

Open recruitment involves removing unfair and unnecessary barriers to job applicants – opening up opportunity to all people from all kinds of backgrounds to contribute to your organisation.

There is an indisputable moral case for adopting an open recruitment policy – everyone should have a right to equal access to employment, training and development based on merit – but the business benefits of adopting this approach go much further than that:

- Businesses employing a wide range of people have access to more voices, ideas, viewpoints and experiences, reflecting the communities they trade in and with
- 92% of inclusive employers say it has enhanced their reputation – often helping them to win new contracts
- Open recruitment can help to resolve skills and labour shortages by widening your potential candidate pool
- Evidence from business suggests that employees from disadvantaged groups go the extra mile to secure results, stay with their employer for longer, have a strong commitment to the organisation and lower rates of absenteeism
- Actively hiring people who have faced barriers to work helps to reduce social problems, and demonstrates your commitment to your local community
- Two thirds of employers say becoming more inclusive has boosted skill levels across the workforce and almost 60% said it had improved employee engagement and satisfaction.

[Help for Employers](#) provides information on the government's guidance and support available to employers to protect, support and create jobs across the country. The [Inclusive Recruitment Support](#) encourages employers to give people from different backgrounds the opportunity to work and turn their lives around. There are tips for recruiting, support available and video case studies demonstrating the benefits of inclusive or open recruitment.



**employer
help**

OPEN TO OPPORTUNITY (O2O)

[O2O](#) is an ALP led programme to support labour providers and employers in providing employment opportunities to harder to reach groups of UK workers, including the economically inactive, long term unemployed and those impacted by the pandemic.

The labour market is very different today because of Brexit and the pandemic. Free movement has ended and there is no low skilled worker route in the UK immigration system except for the Extended Seasonal Agricultural Workers Pilot. Unemployment levels in certain sectors have risen and are likely to continue to do so, leading to job applicants needing to look for work in other sectors they have not chosen before. Employers need to be able to attract these job seekers to their vacancies.

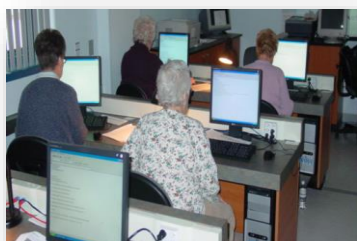




O2O comprises practical tools, guidance and pilot projects to help attract, engage and retain people from all walks of life, who for various reasons, find it tougher to find a job, enter the labour market and remain in work.

The following pages detail some of the communities which you may wish to recruit from and suggestions of organisations that can support you in your efforts.

Older people



Nearly 30% of people aged between 50 and state pension age are out of work. **Older people** who fall out of work, remain out of work for longer than people of other ages and are more likely to say they experience age discrimination.

Halving the employment gap between people aged 50 and state pension age and those in their 40's could see income tax and National Insurance receipts rise by just under £3 billion.

The [Centre for Ageing Better](#) aims to help make employers more age-friendly, promote health at work, and find new ways to support people who want to get back into work.

[No Desire to Retire](#) is a free website where employers can post vacancies or search the database of over 25,000 members looking for work. [Restless](#) connects over 50s job seekers with age diverse employers.

Care leavers

Every year around 11,000 16–18 year olds leave foster or residential care. **Care leavers** are more than twice as likely to be NEET (Not in Education, Employment or Training) as the general population.

[The Learning and Work Institute](#) have produced a [guide](#) to highlight ways in which employers of all sizes, and from all sectors of the economy, can make a difference in supporting care leavers to develop the skills, experience and confidence they need to gain, stay and progress in work.



Young people



The unemployment rate for 16-24 year olds not in full time education is 14.3% meaning **young people** are 3 times more likely to be unemployed than the general population and have been one of the hardest hit by the pandemic.

The government's [Kickstart Scheme](#) provides funding to employers to create new 6-month job placements for 16-24 year olds. The ALP has developed a [brief](#) on using the scheme.

[The Careers and Enterprise Company](#) links schools and colleges to employers and helps them to deliver world class careers support for all young people.





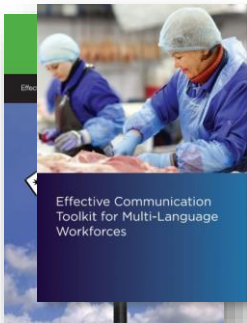
Carers

There are around 5 million **carers** of working age in the UK, supporting a loved one who is older, disabled or seriously ill.

Nearly 1 in 7 workers is a carer, and half of working age carers live in a household where no-one is in paid work. [Carers UK](#) offers advice on [how employers can support carers in the workplace](#), as well as research, advice and support for carers.



English language learners



770,000 people living in England **speak no English** or hardly any. There is a clear business case for promoting effective communication within the workplace. Effective communication leads to better performance, higher productivity and more staff buy-in. Engaging with staff and supporting their basic skills mean they feel valued and recognised and therefore generally do more to support the business.

ALP and others have produced a [practical toolkit](#) to provide help and guidance on how to better communicate with a workforce where more than a single language is spoken.

Non-readers

It is estimated that up to 9 million adults in the UK are **functionally illiterate**.

Adults with poor literacy skills are more likely to be unemployed or in low paid jobs. A [report](#) by the OECD found that England is the only country in the developed world in which adults aged 55 to 65 perform better in literacy and numeracy than those aged 16 to 24.

[The National Literacy Trust](#) works to improve the reading, writing, speaking and listening skills in the UK's poorest communities, where 1 on 3 people have literacy problems.

The National Careers Service offers an [online search facility](#) to look for different types of learning opportunities. Literacy, numeracy and English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) are often free of charge.





People with disabilities



There are 14.1 million **people with disabilities** in the UK, and only 52.3% of them are in employment, compared with 81.1% of people without disabilities.

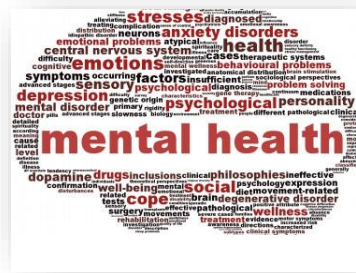
The government has set a target of 4.5 million people with disabilities in employment by 2027. At the end of 2020, there were 4.3 million people with disabilities in employment.

[Disability Rights UK](#) is led by people with diverse experiences of disability and health conditions from different communities. One of their key priority headlines is Career Opportunities – getting work, education and skills.

People with mental health problems

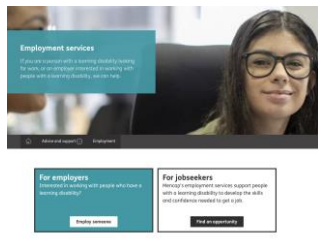
Approximately 1 in 4 people in the UK will experience a **mental health problem** each year and the number of people who self-harm or have suicidal thoughts is on the increase.

Research by MIND shows that work is the biggest cause of stress in people's lives; 14% of workers have resigned due to workplace stress. [Mind's 'The Mental Health Emergency'](#) reported 60% of adults and 68% of young people said their mental health got worse during lockdown due to the pandemic.



[Mind](#) campaigns to improve services, raise awareness and promote understanding of mental health issues. [Mental Health at Work](#) offers free downloadable resources, toolkits and case studies to help improve mental well-being in the workplace.

People with a learning disability



There are 1.5m people with a **learning disability** in the UK. Only 17% of them are in paid employment, compared with over 50% of all people with disabilities, and 81% of people without disabilities.

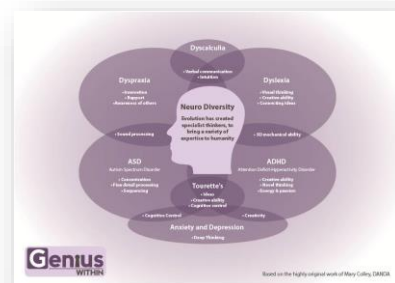
[Mencap](#) works with organisations to improve the employment prospects of people with a learning disability and provide a number of [factsheets, guides and resources](#).

People with neurodiversity

Around 1 in 7 people (15%) are **neurodivergent**, meaning that the brain functions, learns and processes information differently.

People with neurodiversity are more likely to be long-term unemployed and convicted of crimes than their neuro-typical peers.

[Genius Within CIC](#) is a social enterprise established in 2011 to help people with neurodiversity to fulfil their potential in employment. They offer a range of services to both employees and employers including information, coaching and training.





Single parents



Almost 22% of economically active **single parents** are underemployed – twice that of the whole population. Single parent employment is at a record high, however, they have been disproportionately impacted by the pandemic restrictions.

Personnel Today calls single parents 'the largest underutilised talent pool in the UK.'

Gingerbread runs programmes to equip single parents with the skills and opportunities to gain employment.

People without adequate housing

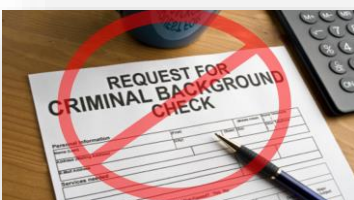
According to the charity Shelter, more than 280,000 people in England are **without adequate housing** – a figure which has risen each year since 2010. The lack of a stable and settled home makes it extremely difficult for individuals to find and maintain employment

Crisis supports homeless people into meaningful, sustainable employment, by building partnerships with organisations and through its recruitment service.

Project Speranta is a collaborative project between Camden Council, Change Grow Live and the ALP to link transient migrant workers with GLAA licenced labour providers.



People with a criminal record



There are more than 13 million people recorded as having a **criminal record** on the Police National Computer. This equates to more than 20% of the working age population.

Despite this, 75% of employers admit to discriminating against applicants on the basis of their criminal record.

ALP has published comprehensive guidance on how to recruit and employ people with convictions to ensure your business offers fair opportunities irrespective of offending history.

Prisoners

63% of the prison population have no work experience – employment reduces the desire, the opportunity and often the need for re-offending. 63,000 **prisoners** are released each year and three quarters of them do not have a job to go to. ALP worked with both government and third sector organisations to produce guidance on how employers can work effectively with serving prisoners. We have worked with the DWP and Jobcentre Plus on a programme to link prisoners with prospective employers.





Refugees and Asylum Seekers

A refugee is someone who has been forced to leave their country in order to escape war, persecution, or natural disaster. An asylum seeker is a refugee who has arrived in a country and asked for asylum, but their refugee status has not been granted. In 2020, over 20,000 people were granted asylum in the UK.



Refugees have the right to work in the UK in any profession and any skill level. Asylum seekers are not permitted to work for the first 12 months whilst their application is being processed. After this time, they can apply for permission to work but only in jobs that are on the shortage occupation list.

The [Refugee Council](#) provides support for refugees to find employment.

© ALP Briefs and Guidance are available free of charge to members on the [ALP website](#)

