

# youth futures

FOUNDATION

## Supporting young people with a learning disability and/or autism into employment

### Summary report

Cordis Bright  
October 2023



CordisBright

## Supporting young people with LDA into employment: Summary report

- Youth Futures Foundation is an independent, not-for-profit organisation established with a £90m endowment from the Reclaim Fund to improve employment outcomes for young people from marginalised backgrounds. Our aim is to narrow employment gaps by identifying what works and why, investing in evidence generation and innovation and igniting a movement for change.
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# Contents

<b>1</b>	<b>SUMMARY: A CALL TO ACTION</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>2</b>	<b>INTRODUCTION</b>	<b>9</b>
2.1	OVERVIEW	9
2.2	SUMMARY OF RESEARCH AIMS AND OBJECTIVES	9
2.3	REPORT STRUCTURE	11
<b>3</b>	<b>UNDERSTANDING OF NEED</b>	<b>12</b>
3.1	OVERVIEW	12
3.2	UNDERSTANDING THE SCALE OF NEED	12
3.3	STAKEHOLDERS' UNDERSTANDING OF NEED	13
3.4	OBSTACLES TO EMPLOYMENT	14
<b>4</b>	<b>UNDERSTANDING OF PROVISION</b>	<b>16</b>
4.1	OVERVIEW	16
4.2	RATIONALE FOR SUPPORTING YOUNG PEOPLE WITH LDA INTO EMPLOYMENT	16
4.3	WHAT DOES SUPPORT AIM TO ACHIEVE?	17
4.4	WHAT TYPES OF SUPPORT ARE AVAILABLE FOR YOUNG PEOPLE WITH LDA?	18
4.5	HOW IS SUPPORT ACCESSED?	20
4.6	WHO IS PROVIDING SUPPORT?	21
4.7	HOW IS SUPPORT BEING COMMISSIONED AND FUNDED?	24
4.7.1	<i>National funding sources</i>	26
4.7.2	<i>How can funding be improved?</i>	27
4.8	WHAT SUPPORT IS THERE FOR EMPLOYERS?	27
4.9	WHAT SUPPORT IS AVAILABLE AT A SYSTEM LEVEL?	28
<b>5</b>	<b>UNDERSTANDING OF WHAT WORKS</b>	<b>30</b>
5.1	OVERVIEW	30
5.2	EIGHT PRACTICE PRINCIPLES TO SUPPORT YOUNG PEOPLE	30
5.3	FOUR PROMISING MODELS OF SUPPORT FOR YOUNG PEOPLE	32
5.4	SUPPORTING EMPLOYERS	33
5.5	FIVE PROMISING SYSTEM-WIDE RESPONSES	33
<b>6</b>	<b>IMPROVEMENTS AND ACTIONS</b>	<b>35</b>
<b>7</b>	<b>REFERENCE LIST</b>	<b>43</b>

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Cordis Bright provides research, evaluation and consultancy aimed at improving public services. You can find out more here:

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## Glossary

Term	Definition
<b>Accessible / inclusive apprenticeships</b>	An apprenticeship designed for young people who have an EHCP. They operate in a similar way to a traditional apprenticeship but offer opportunities for young people with a lower threshold of Maths and English qualifications required.
<b>Autism</b>	<p>The National Autistic Society (NAS) define autism as: <i>"a lifelong developmental disability which affects how people communicate and interact with the world."</i><sup>1</sup></p> <p>Autism is a spectrum condition, which means that people are affected in different ways and some may need more support than others in different aspects of life. Some difficulties that autistic people may experience include: challenges with social communication and interaction; sensory sensitivity; repetitive and restrictive behaviours; anxiety.</p>
<b>Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP)</b>	An EHCP is a plan created for children and young people who need extra support in school than is usually provided through Special Educational Needs (SEN) support. It is a legal document drawn up by the relevant local authority, health and social care team and the family. These children and young people may have a learning disability and/or other physical disability, health care needs or social care needs. <sup>2</sup>
<b>Employability support</b>	Support that helps people to prepare for, gain and sustain employment. In this report, we distinguish between support targeted towards young people with a learning disability and/or autism (LDA), employers and actions taken at a system-level which are intended to help people access work.

<sup>1</sup> National Autistic Society, *What is autism*, available at: <https://www.autism.org.uk/advice-and-guidance/what-is-autism> [accessed October 2023].

<sup>2</sup> UK Government, *Children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND)*, available at: <https://www.gov.uk/children-with-special-educational-needs/extra-SEN-help> [accessed October 2023].

## Supporting young people with LDA into employment: Summary report

Term	Definition
<b>Further Education (FE) Colleges</b>	Further Education Colleges provide education to those aged 16 years and older.
<b>Learning disability</b>	<p>The Department of Health and Social Care (2001) define a learning disability as:<sup>3</sup></p> <p><i>“a significantly reduced ability to understand new or complex information, to learn new skills (impaired intelligence), with a reduced ability to cope independently (impaired social functioning), which started before adulthood.”</i></p> <p>Learning disabilities can vary greatly depending on the individual and therefore the level of support needed will also vary.</p>
<b>Special Education Needs (SEN) and Disabilities (SEND)</b>	SEND is a term used to refer to children and young people with learning difficulties or disabilities that make it hard for them to learn at the same speed as other children/young people their age. Sometimes the term SEND is used interchangeably with SEN.
<b>Stakeholder</b>	<p>In this report, stakeholders refers to the commissioners, providers, employers and policy experts/academics who were consulted as part of this research.</p> <p>The views of stakeholders are reported collectively, unless there were views that were specific to an individual group.</p>
<b>Supported employment</b>	Supported employment is a model of provision designed to help a young person identify a suitable job and provide them with tailored on-the-job support, commonly via a job coach. Supported employment follows a five-stage process: (1) client engagement; (2)

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<sup>3</sup> Department of Health and Social Care, *Valuing people – A new strategy for learning disability for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century* (2001), pp. 14, available at: <https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/5a7b854740f0b62826a041b9/5086.pdf> [accessed October 2023].

## Supporting young people with LDA into employment: Summary report

Term	Definition
	vocational profiling; (3) job finding; (4) employer engagement; and (5) on and off the job support. <sup>4</sup>
<b>Supported internships</b>	<p>Supported internships are for young people with learning difficulties or learning disabilities, who need extra support to get a job.</p> <p>Typically, a young person spends the majority of their time on placements with an employer, learning skills for work.</p> <p>They also receive support from a tutor and a job coach in college or with a specialist provider. They are aimed at young people aged 16-24 with an EHCP and last a minimum of six months.<sup>5</sup></p>
<b>Work trials</b>	<p>A work trial is a short period of work that can be offered to see whether someone is suitable for a job. The jobseeker must volunteer to do the work trial, which is unpaid and will remain in receipt of their benefits during this period. The work trial must be for a job that is at least 16 hours a week for 13 weeks. The work trial can last up to 30 days depending on the length of employment on offer, although it is usually five days or fewer.<sup>6</sup></p>
<b>Young people with LDA</b>	<p>In this report when we use the term 'young people' we are referring to those who are between 16 to 24 years of age, unless otherwise specified.</p> <p>We use 'young people with LDA' as an umbrella term to refer to young people with a learning disability as well as autistic young people and autistic young people with a learning disability.</p>

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<sup>4</sup> British Association of Supported Employment, *What is supported employment?*, available at: <https://www.base-uk.org/what-supported-employment> [accessed October 2023].

<sup>5</sup> Department for Education, *Guidance: Supported internships, 2022*, available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/supported-internships-for-young-people-with-learning-difficulties/supported-internships> [accessed October 2023].

<sup>6</sup> UK Government, *Jobcentre Plus help for recruiters: Work trials*, available at: <https://www.gov.uk/jobcentre-plus-help-for-recruiters/work-trials> [accessed October 2023].

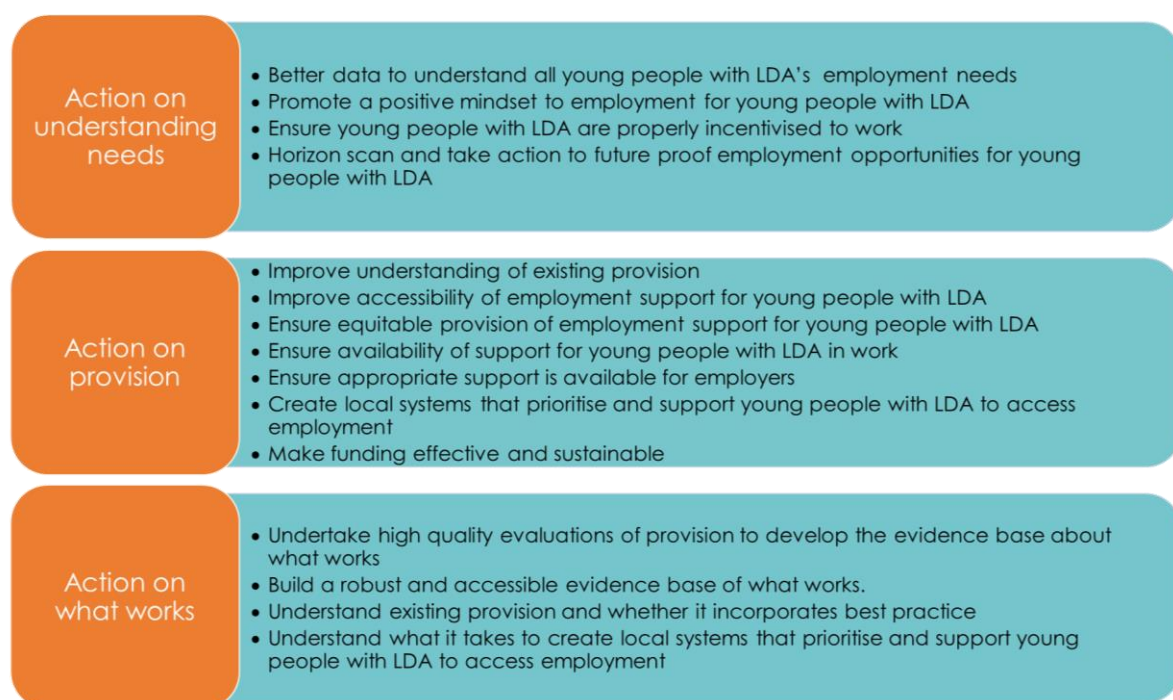
# 1 Summary: a call to action

Youth Futures Foundation commissioned Cordis Bright to carry out research to understand provision of support to help young people with a learning disability and/or autism (LDA) enter and maintain employment in England.

A mixed-method approach was taken, which included input from young people with LDA, providers of support, commissioners of support, policy makers and academic experts, and employers.

Based on the findings in this research, the diagram below summarises a call for action across three key areas:

Figure 1: Summary of actions



To implement these actions will require resource, political will and leadership and the co-ordination and input of a wide range of stakeholders – including national and local government, service providers, employers, other funders/commissioners, research organisations and experts, schools and colleges and young people with LDA and their families.

Not everyone will agree with everything in Figure 1 but the suggestions and proposed actions are designed to support the improvement of employment outcomes for young people with LDA.



## 2 Introduction

### 2.1 Overview

This report provides a summary of key messages from a wider research project into the provision of support to help young people (aged 16-24) with LDA into employment. The research was conducted by Cordis Bright and funded by the Youth Futures Foundation (YFF).

**The report is informed by five other standalone research outputs that should be read in conjunction with this summary. These are summarised in Figure 2.**

Figure 2: Summary of research series



### 2.2 Summary of research aims and objectives

This report aims to better understand what can be done to support more young people with LDA into employment. Multiple reports by government and the voluntary sector,<sup>7</sup> have established that young people with LDA are missing out on opportunities for work.

As a What Works Centre, the Youth Futures Foundation is committed to developing an evidence-based approach to support young people from marginalised backgrounds into work. This report aims to contribute to that evidence base, by exploring the following key areas:

- **Need:** what is the need for support for young people with LDA into employment?<sup>8</sup>

<sup>7</sup> Department for Education, *Summary of the SEND review: Right support, right place, right time*, 2022, available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/send-and-ap-green-paper-responding-to-the-consultation/summary-of-the-send-review-right-support-right-place-right-time> [accessed October 2023]; Mencap and NDTi, *Resources from research about work and learning disability*, 2022, available at: <https://www.ndti.org.uk/resources/research-project/resources-from-research-about-work-and-learning-disability> [accessed October 2023].

<sup>8</sup> The research includes a high-level assessment of need using prevalence data, existing research and the views of stakeholders and young people with LDA we consulted. A more detailed national and local assessment of need was outside the remit of the research.

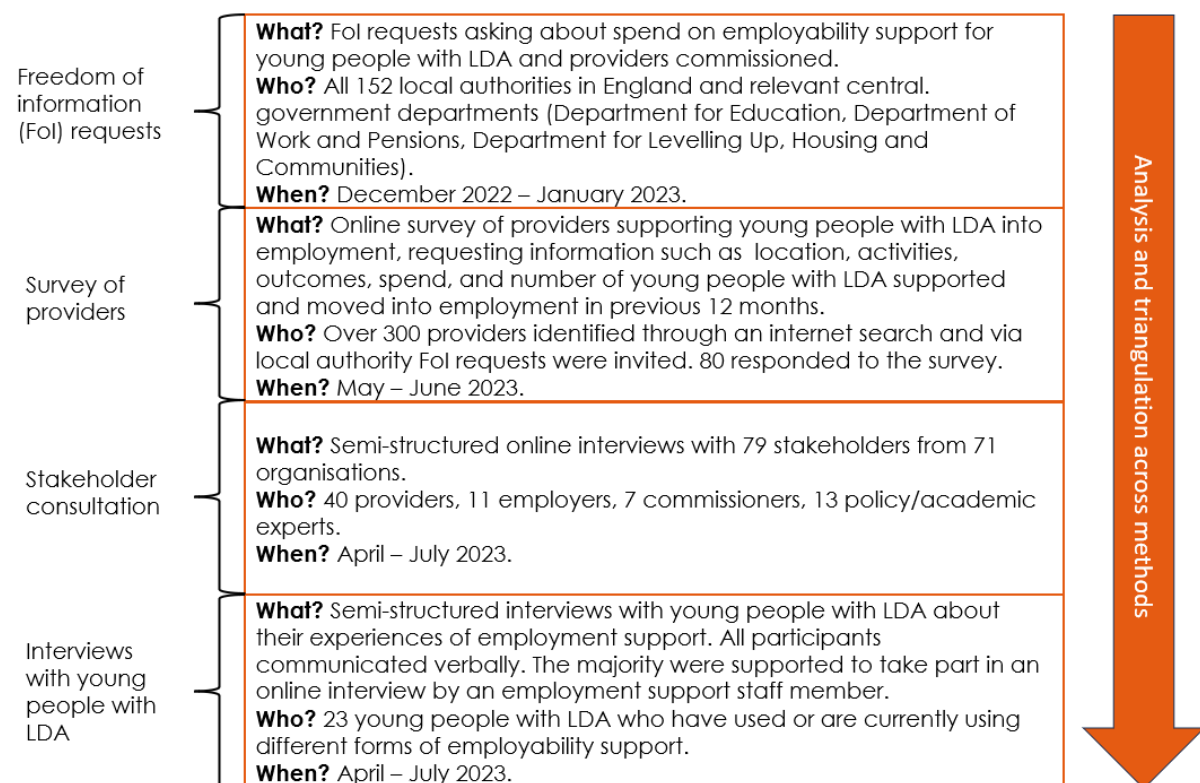
## Supporting young people with LDA into employment: Summary report

- **Provision:** what is the availability of provision that aims to support young people with LDA into employment?
- **What works:** what works and what is promising in supporting young people with LDA into employment?
- **Improvements and actions:** what are the gaps in support for young people with LDA into employment? How could these gaps be addressed? What improvements are needed?

The research is based on a mixed methods approach, summarised in Figure 3. In line with our collaborative approach, all approaches, methods and tools were design by Cordis Bright and agreed with YFF before use in the field. This report has been informed through triangulation of findings from each of these methods. While we spoke to a variety of stakeholders, they are often referred to collectively because there was substantial overlap and agreement in what they said. The main difference between stakeholders tended to be in the level of detail they were able to provide. For example, support providers tended to have more in depth knowledge than employers.

A detailed methodology can be viewed in the standalone Technical Appendix.

Figure 3: Research methods



### Definitions and terminology

Throughout this report, we often refer to young people with a learning disability and/or autism (LDA). This includes young people with varying degrees of support needs and intellectual abilities. Data sources, previous research and stakeholders often tend to address these groups together rather than differentiate between them. Similarly, eligibility criteria for some support programmes also do not necessarily differentiate, for example those that are open to young people with an Education and Health Care Plan (EHCP). Where findings relate specifically to autistic young people, or young people with a learning disability only, or young people who experience a specific challenge in relation to their autism or learning disability, we specify.

### 2.3 Report structure

The remainder of this report covers the following:

- **Chapter 3:** Understanding of need.
- **Chapter 4:** Understanding of provision.
- **Chapter 5:** Understanding of what works.
- **Chapter 6:** Improvements and actions.

## 3 Understanding of need

### 3.1 Overview

This section presents findings in relation to the need to support young people with LDA into employment. It covers:

- Understanding the scale of need.
- Stakeholders' understanding of need.
- Obstacles to employment.

*For a more detailed analysis of the understanding of need, see Report A: Need for employment support.*

### 3.2 Understanding the scale of need

*“The figures are shocking. This is the group we should be helping the most and we're not.”*

*Employer*

There is broad consensus across stakeholders we spoke to, supported by national data, that young people with LDA often miss out on the opportunity to work.

Existing data shows that there has been extensive exclusion of all people with LDA from employment and it is likely true of young people as well.

In England, there are approximately 5.4 million people aged 18-24, of whom an estimated 76,361 are autistic and/or have a moderate to severe learning disability.<sup>9</sup> There is no data available specifically showing how many of these young people are in employment and/or education. However, NHS Digital data – known as the *Short and Long Term (SALT) data* – showed that in 2021/22 **just 4.8% of adults with a learning disability known to their local authority in England are in paid work, compared with 75% of working age adults.**<sup>10</sup>

While the employment rate for people aged 18-24 may vary, not least because many young people will continue in education until 25, if we apply this rate to the population of young people aged 18-24, it can be estimated

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<sup>9</sup> Projecting Adult Needs and Service Information 2021 (PANSI), see: <https://www.pansi.org.uk/> [accessed October 2023].

<sup>10</sup> NHS Digital, *Social care collection materials 2022*, available at: <https://digital.nhs.uk/data-and-information/data-collections-and-data-sets/data-collections/social-care-collection-materials-2022#short-and-long-term-support-salt-> [accessed October 2023].

that **just 3,665 young people with a learning disability may be in paid employment in England.**<sup>11</sup>

Other research sets the employment rate for people with a learning disability higher than SALT data. For example, research conducted by Mencap in 2019 found:<sup>12</sup>

- 32% of those with the lowest support needs have a paid job.
- 9% of those with medium support needs have a paid job.
- Fewer than 5% of those with the highest support needs have a paid job.

All these sources of data point to the same challenge: a significant and disproportionate number of young people LDA are failing to access paid work.

There is a challenge to quantify the extent of need with existing data sources, not least because it is not always clear who is and is not being counted. The data is likely to be most reflective of those with more moderate to high support needs, and that sources such as SALT data will omit certain young people with lesser support requirements.

### 3.3 Stakeholders' understanding of need

Stakeholders noted that the limited availability of standardised national data meant that they could only really attest to their own specific situation and experience. In particular, employers indicated that they and their peers tend to have low awareness of the situation.

Based on their experience, they identified the following groups of young people with LDA as requiring more focus. These included:

- **Young people with LDA who are in transition between education and employment:** Stakeholders reported that young people who miss out on support to transition from education to work find it more difficult to find a job.
- **Young people with LDA without Education Health and Care Plans (EHCPs):** Commissioners identified that an EHCP is a pre-requisite to accessing certain forms of support. However, they raised concerns that not everyone who should receive an EHCP does receive one and that this affects the accessibility of support later on.

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<sup>11</sup> This figure is calculated using the SALT rate of 4.8% applied to the PANSL data, i.e., 4.8% of 76,361=3,665. It is likely an underestimate, as figures will include young people in education rather than employment and it will likely miss a proportion of young people with a mild LD who don't access support from the local authority.

<sup>12</sup> N/B data included working age adults, not only those aged 18-24. See Mencap, *Big learning disability survey 2019*, available at: <https://www.mencap.org.uk/about-us/what-we-think/employment-what-we-think> [accessed October 2023].

- **Young people with LDA with higher levels of need:** Commissioners reported that young people with LDA with higher levels of need are often not considered regarding employment as a possibility for them (*although stakeholders reported such prejudice generally as a challenge for most young people with LDA*).

### 3.4 Obstacles to employment

Stakeholders and young people identified a wide variety of obstacles to employment related to young people with LDA's needs, many of which are supported by existing research.

The first challenge are the **practical obstacles to employment**. The obstacles that a young person experiences likely varies depending on their particular challenges and level of support needs. This may also differ depending on whether they are autistic, have a learning disability or if they have both. Our findings provide an overview of commonly discussed obstacles that those with LDA may experience but we do not have evidence about how each group experiences these differently. These obstacles occur at every stage of the employment pathway including:

- **Preparing young people for work.** Obstacles may include young people lacking key skills or qualifications, or not believing work is for them.
- **Supporting young people to get work:** Obstacles can include inaccessible job criteria or application processes.
- **Supporting young people to thrive in work:** Obstacles can include difficulties travelling to and from a job; learning workplace and interpersonal skills; or arranging adjustments for a young person with LDA.

Stakeholders identified that there are **challenges with employers** too. An employer's willingness and openness to employ people with LDA is a fundamental prerequisite of young people gaining and retaining employment. If employers do not want to provide opportunities, then there is limited leverage to make them do so. Stakeholders reported that a lack of understanding of the challenges faced by young people with LDA and a lack of awareness of the support available to employers who recruit young people with LDA is a problem.

Stakeholders and young people identified three obstacles that are more **systemic or societal by their nature**. These are:

- Misaligned incentives, such as the benefits system which may create fears of losing support, discourage families or education providers from encouraging young people to work.
- Poorly coordinated support which prevents young people with LDA from accessing the right support, compounding other challenges.
- Negative misconceptions about young people with LDA's ability to work.

### Impact of Covid-19 on work opportunities

Stakeholders were concerned that the Covid-19 pandemic has made it more difficult for young people with LDA to find work. They were concerned about the amount of missed learning that some young people experienced and that employers are less open to providing opportunities for young people with LDA, as they have moved to more remote working.

*“We have had employers who have always been supportive, but now said they can't do it for reasons like 'jobs have changed', 'less work available'.”*

*Funder/Commissioner*

## 4 Understanding of provision

### 4.1 Overview

This section provides an understanding of provision which aims to help young people with LDA into employment. It covers:

- Rationale for supporting young people with LDA into employment.
- What types of support are available for young people with LDA.
- How support is accessed.
- Who provides support.
- How support is funded.
- What support is there for employers.
- What support is available at a system level.

*For a detailed analysis of the understanding of provision, see Report B: Understanding of provision. For further information on the provider survey and Freedom of Information (Fol) request analysis, see the Technical Appendix.*

### 4.2 Rationale for supporting young people with LDA into employment

*"I wanted employment support mainly to get me out of the house, make sure I'm contributing. It makes me feel like I'm getting active... I would like to work to help with my mental health."*

*Young person*

*"It has been transformational for the culture of the organisation. We are more compassionate and understanding. It has changed ways of doing things."*

*Employer*

Stakeholders and young people we spoke with identified that supporting young people with LDA into employment can have a range of benefits, to them as individuals, but also to a wider range of stakeholders and society. Benefits discussed are summarised in Figure 4. Unsurprisingly, the benefits that young people with LDA identified concerning why they want to work, are very similar to most people in the general population.



## Supporting young people with LDA into employment: Summary report

Figure 4: Benefits of supporting young people with LDA into employment – views of young people with LDA and other stakeholders

Benefits to young people with LDA	Benefits to employers and wider society
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Achieving personal and financial independence.</li><li>• Building new skills that can be used in work or taken into daily life, e.g., money management or travel confidence.</li><li>• Promoting and maintaining positive mental health.</li><li>• Greater social connection and role in the community.</li><li>• Broader sense of fulfilment through meaningful occupation.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Creating a more inclusive workforce.</li><li>• Benefitting from the insights and skills of a more diverse workforce.</li><li>• Accessing a larger pool of labour.</li><li>• Reduced demand for other support services.</li></ul>

### 4.3 What does support aim to achieve?

Our survey of employment support providers shows that the support they provide is more focused on work readiness than on supporting young people in work. It shows that the large majority of the 64 employment support providers that responded to the question on skills/other outcomes in our survey, aim to:

- Improve independence (n=63, 98%).
- Improve confidence (in themselves and their ability to find and sustain work) (n=63, 98%).
- Improve wellbeing (n=62, 97%).
- Improve aspiration and motivation (n=62, 97%).
- Improve social skills (n=60, 94%).

Fewer than 70% of the 62 providers that responded to the question on employment outcomes reported that their provision focused on starting supported employment (69%), starting a non-supported employment role (68%) or starting a supported internship (50%).

This may indicate that more providers are focusing on supporting young people to be ready for work, relative to the number that are focused on supporting young people to access work or thrive in work.

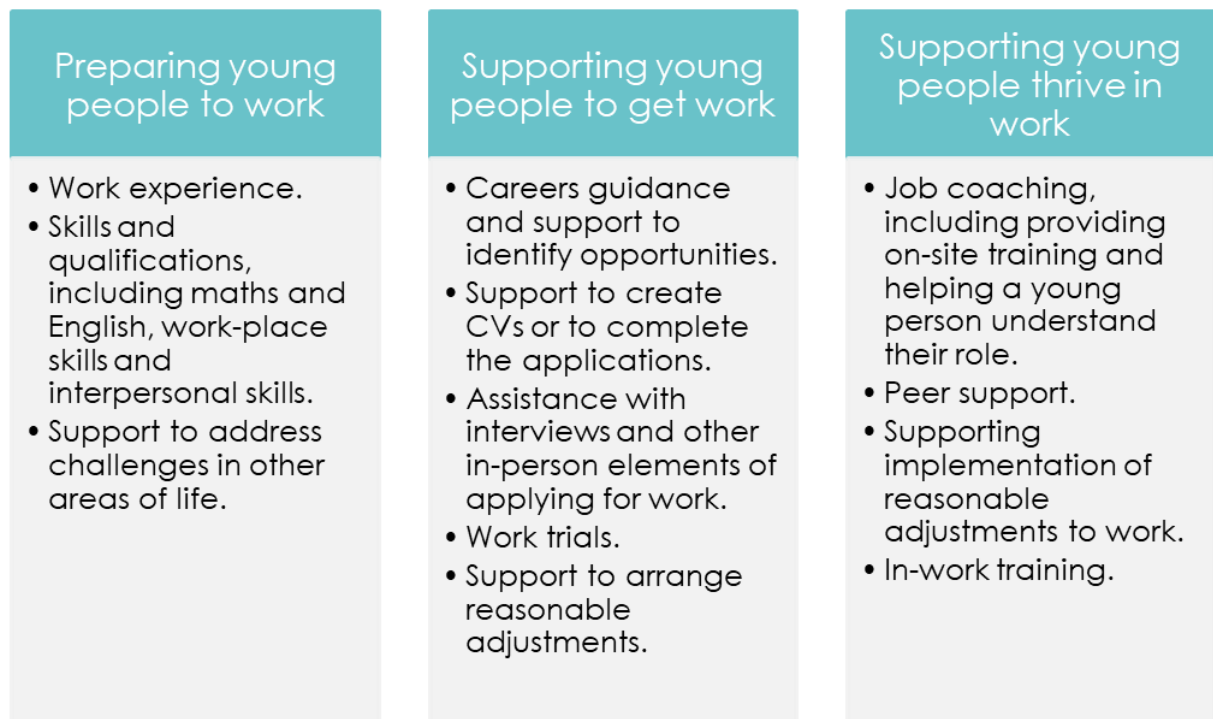
### 4.4 What types of support are available for young people with LDA?

Commissioners and providers reported a range of employment support options which are available to young people with LDA. This included support to:

- Prepare young people for work.
- Help young people to get work.
- Help young people to thrive in work.

To support young people at each stage, stakeholders and young people identified different activities that were available. These included examples summarised in Figure 5.

*Figure 5: Summary of activities to support young people into employment*



Stakeholders reported that support would often include a range of different activities that would be delivered in combination, or as part of a progression from pre-application through to in-work support (they may be delivered concurrently/overlapping or consecutively). Examples of models of support discussed by stakeholders during consultation are outlined in the call out box below.

### Models of support

Stakeholders identified several models of support which are being delivered across the country:

**Supported internship:** Supported internships are for young people with learning difficulties or learning disabilities who need extra support to get a job. Typically, a young person spends the majority of their time on placements with an employer to support them learn skills for work. They also receive support from a tutor and/or a job coach in college or with a specialist provider.

They are aimed at young people aged 16-24 with an EHCP and last a minimum of six months.

**Supported employment:** Supported employment is a similar model to supported internships, which help a young person identify a suitable job and provides them with tailored on-the-job support, commonly via a job coach. Supported employment follows a five-stage process: (1) client engagement; (2) vocational profiling; (3) job finding; (4) employer engagement; and (5) on and off the job support.

Supported employment roles are permanent jobs, rather than placements. Unlike other models of support that seek to help people be 'work ready', supported employment take the approach of 'place, train, maintain' – i.e., helping people to learn on the job.

**Apprenticeship:** There are a range of different types of apprenticeships, depending on the academic qualifications and aims of learners. Typically, these involve spending approximately 80% of time in a workplace and 20% studying. For many young people with LDA, the Maths and English requirements (or other qualifications) mean that certain apprenticeships are not accessible.

*Inclusive Apprenticeships* are also available for young people with an EHCP, who are not in education. These require less stringent Maths and English qualifications.

Stakeholders reported that provision varies considerably in the approach taken to delivery by different providers. Commonly identified distinctions between how support is provided included:

- **Generic employment support versus support designed for young people with LDA.** Stakeholders reported that there is specialist support available which is designed for young people with LDA, as well as generic employment support, which is available to all job seekers, and as such is also an option to young people with LDA. They tended to favour specialist

## Supporting young people with LDA into employment: Summary report

support over generic support but recognised that some young people with less complex needs could successfully access generic support.

- **Tailored support versus manualised programmes.** Stakeholders reported that there are certain providers who are offering programmes of support that have been manualised (i.e., a programme is delivered to specific guidelines and specifications) whereas other support is more flexible. Stakeholders reported that the manualised programmes often had a stronger evidence base, but in all support, it was important to adapt the offer to the needs of each young person. For instance, a manualised programme should still be delivered in a way that meets the needs of a young person.
- **Support delivered in groups versus support delivered to individuals.** Stakeholders reported that support is provided in a mix of one-to-one and group settings. Stakeholders did not have strong views about the advantages of one over the other but noted that different support lent itself to different approaches. They did report that support of peers can be important, which would be part of group work.
- **Short-term support versus longer-term support.** Stakeholders reported that support varied in length. There was no clear conclusion about what the 'right' duration of support is, to support young people with LDA into employment. Rather, stakeholders highlighted the importance of a) allowing enough time to get to know a young person with LDA and build trust; and b) to allow some flexibility, particularly after support finishes so that young people can access additional help should they need it in the future.
- **Classroom-based support versus support provided in a workplace.** There is also a variety of classroom-based and workplace-based interventions available, including some models (e.g. supported internships) which include both.

Classroom-based interventions may be used for some pre-employment group training, such as CV-writing or general workplace etiquette training. Workplace interventions typically involve finding a young person a placement where they can learn and practice skills in a real workplace setting.

Some stakeholders argued for the 'place-and-train' model, where young people learn in a job. Other stakeholders felt options with classwork better suited young people who were further from the job market.

### 4.5 How is support accessed?

The research highlighted there is typically not a 'single front door' that connects young people with LDA to appropriate support. Stakeholders reported that young people with LDA access support via a range of different points in the system, with different criteria for different types of support. Often

## Supporting young people with LDA into employment: Summary report

families navigate the system based on local contacts and informal connections. Services may operate as self-referrals or take referrals from different professionals. Stakeholders reflected that this approach is often suboptimal and leads to young people with LDA missing out on opportunities simply because neither they nor someone in their network was aware of it.

To access certain support, a young person needs to meet specific criteria. Common criteria include:

- **EHCP:** Having an EHCP was a requirement to access a number of schemes. For some programmes, the EHCP was a convenient method to identify those young people with appropriate needs. For other programmes, like supported internships, it was required by providers because it allowed them to apply for funding to deliver the placement.
- **Mathematics and English qualifications:** Some programmes, such as apprenticeships, required formal qualifications.
- **Programmes open to learners from a specific school, college, or programme:** Some employers have relationships with an individual school, college or voluntary and community sector-led programme.

Stakeholders were concerned that not all young people who need an EHCP get one, especially young people who do not have a formal diagnosis, girls whose needs are more often missed and young people who struggle to engage with services. For these groups, stakeholders were concerned about the accessibility of support available.

### 4.6 Who is providing support?

There is a complex provider market, including organisations with a wide variety of characteristics. Survey data shows that:

- **Type of provider.** More than half of the 79 providers who responded to our survey categorised their organisation as being **voluntary and community sector (VCS) (56%)**, followed by education providers (23%, including secondary and further education), local authority (14%) and private sector (5%). Stakeholders reported, though, that services are often delivered in partnerships between organisations potentially from different sectors. This is in line with how employment support in this area has been structured previously with a lead contractor, who is commonly a private provider, who then sub-contracted more challenging aspects of employment support, for example support for young people with LDA, to VCS organisations.
- **Variance in scale of operations.** 18% of the 57 providers who responded to the relevant question in our survey, supported more than 100 young people with LDA, while 14% work with fewer than 10 young people. Stakeholders highlighted that for some – often smaller organisations –

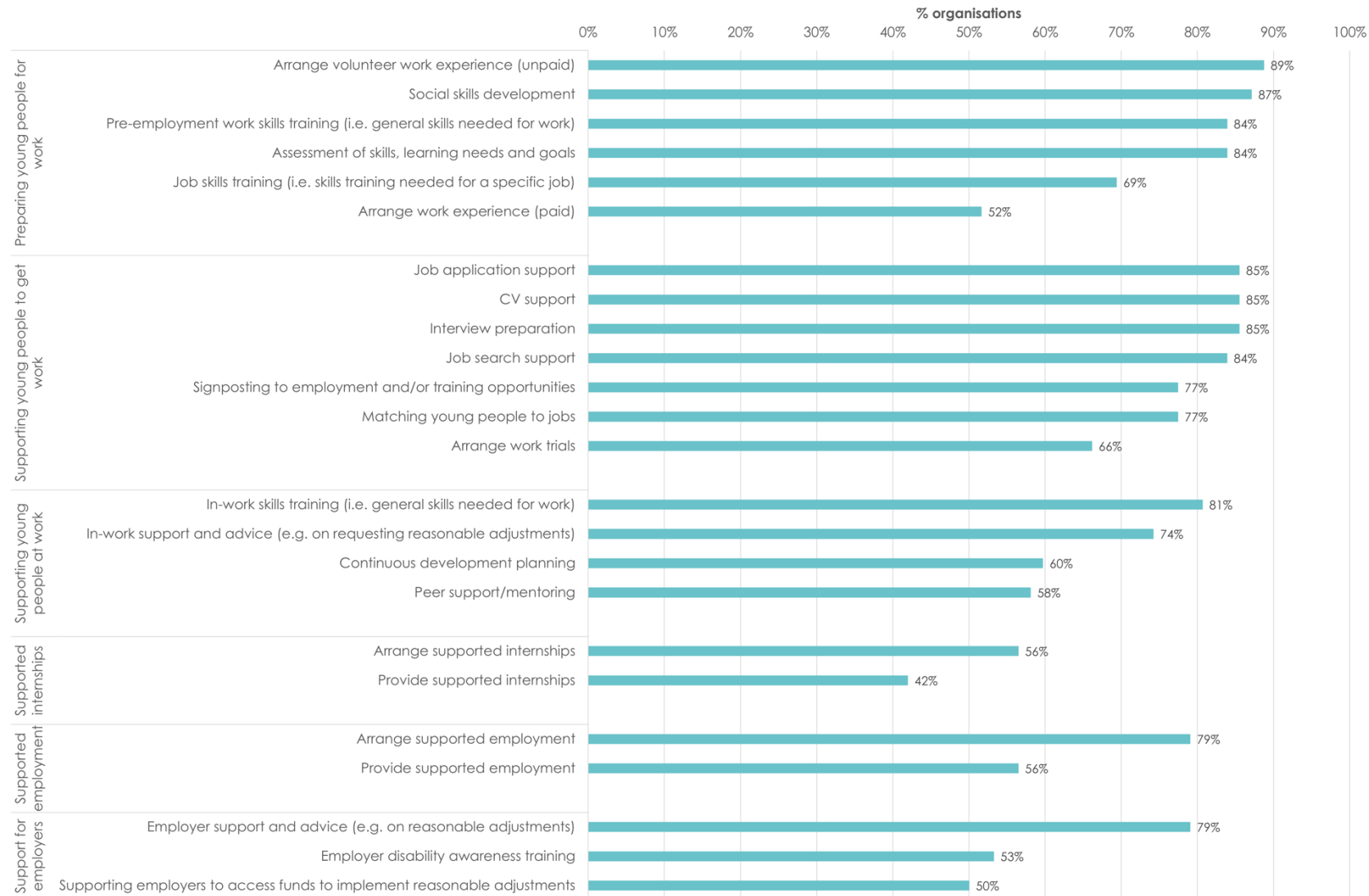
## Supporting young people with LDA into employment: Summary report

employment support will be their primary business. For other providers, it will be one of a range of services they deliver.

- **Geographic distribution.** The 69 providers who responded to the relevant question in our survey reported that they operate services in 390 locations across all Tier 1 local authorities. On average, based on our survey responses, local authorities had 2.5 providers operating in their area and at least one provider reported that they operate in each local authority. Around a third of providers (35% of the 69 that responded to this question) reported that they work in the South East region, whereas just 9% reported working in the North East, suggesting a possible disparity of availability.
- **Ages providers work with.** Almost two thirds (59% of the 68 respondents to this question) of providers work with adults with LDA of any age. Only around a third (34% of those 68 respondents) work specifically with young people with LDA.
- **Complexity of need:** A majority of providers who responded to our survey reported that they work with people with mild LDA (88% out of 66 respondents to this question) or moderate LDA (92%). Fewer than half of providers reported that they work with young people with severe/profound and multiple LDA (47% of the 66 respondents to this question). This aligns with the views of stakeholders who reported that young people with the most complex needs cannot access much of the support available and have fewer alternatives.
- **Providers offer a wide range of support** with the majority offering multiple different activities. Figure 9 shows that more providers reported offering support to prepare young people for work, than offering support for young people in work or support for employers. This corresponds with the finding around outcomes reported earlier where providers less commonly focussed on achieving “hard” employment outcomes.

## Supporting young people with LDA into employment: Summary report

Figure 6: What type of activities does your service/programme offer to help young people with a learning disability/autism into employment? (n=62)

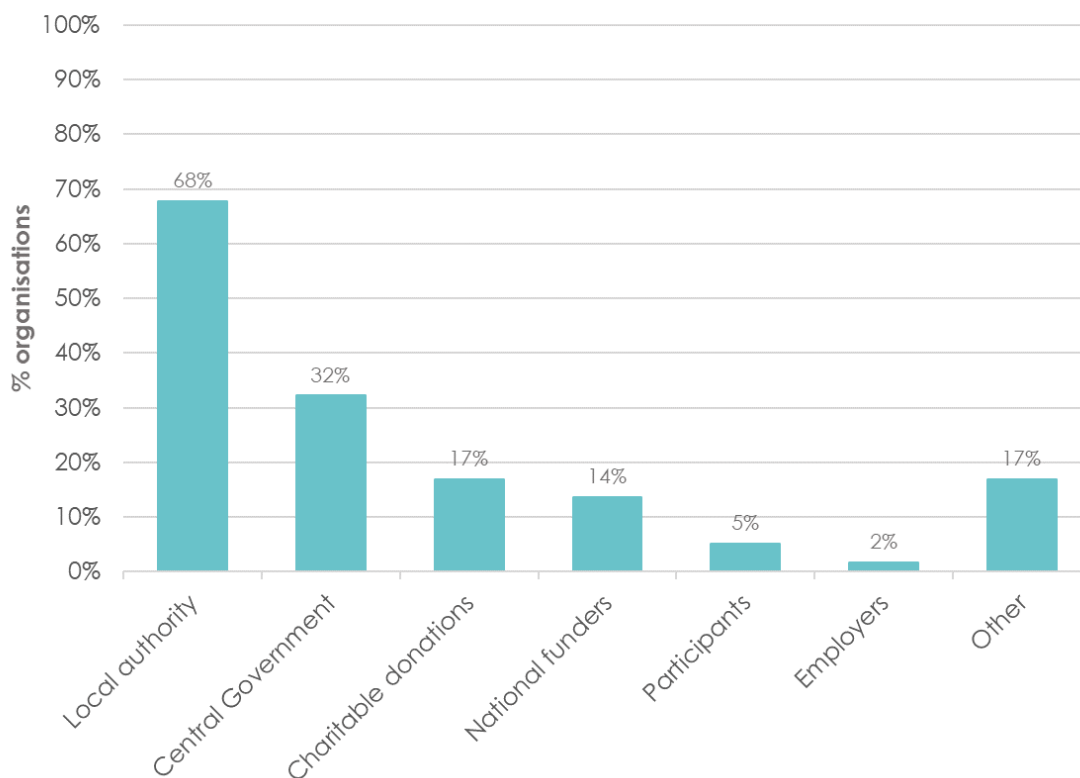


## 4.7 How is support being commissioned and funded?

Stakeholders reported that when it comes to commissioning and funding of employment support for young people with LDA, there are a range of different funding sources and commissioners operating across England.

Figure 7 shows that the most common source of funding for most support providers, based on our survey, is the local authority (68% out of 59 responses to this question), followed by central government (32%), charitable donations (17%) and other national funders (14%). Please note that the survey did not ask questions about the volume of funding received from each funding source.

Figure 7: Who is the primary funder of your service(s)/programme(s)? (n=59)<sup>13</sup>



While local authorities are the most frequent funder of support based on our survey, Figure 8 based on a FoI request as part of this research shows that there is wide variation by area in funding employment support for young people with LDA.

<sup>13</sup> Survey respondents could tick multiple boxes which explains why the percentages in the graph do not add up to 100%. Please note, national funders are non-governmental operators such as The National Lottery, the Youth Futures Foundation, or other such bodies. 'Other' responses included: Access to Work; Trust/Grants; FE College/education partners; Integrated Care Board; social impact bond; and self-funded.



## Supporting young people with LDA into employment: Summary report

Figure 8: Local authority expenditure on employability support 2021-22

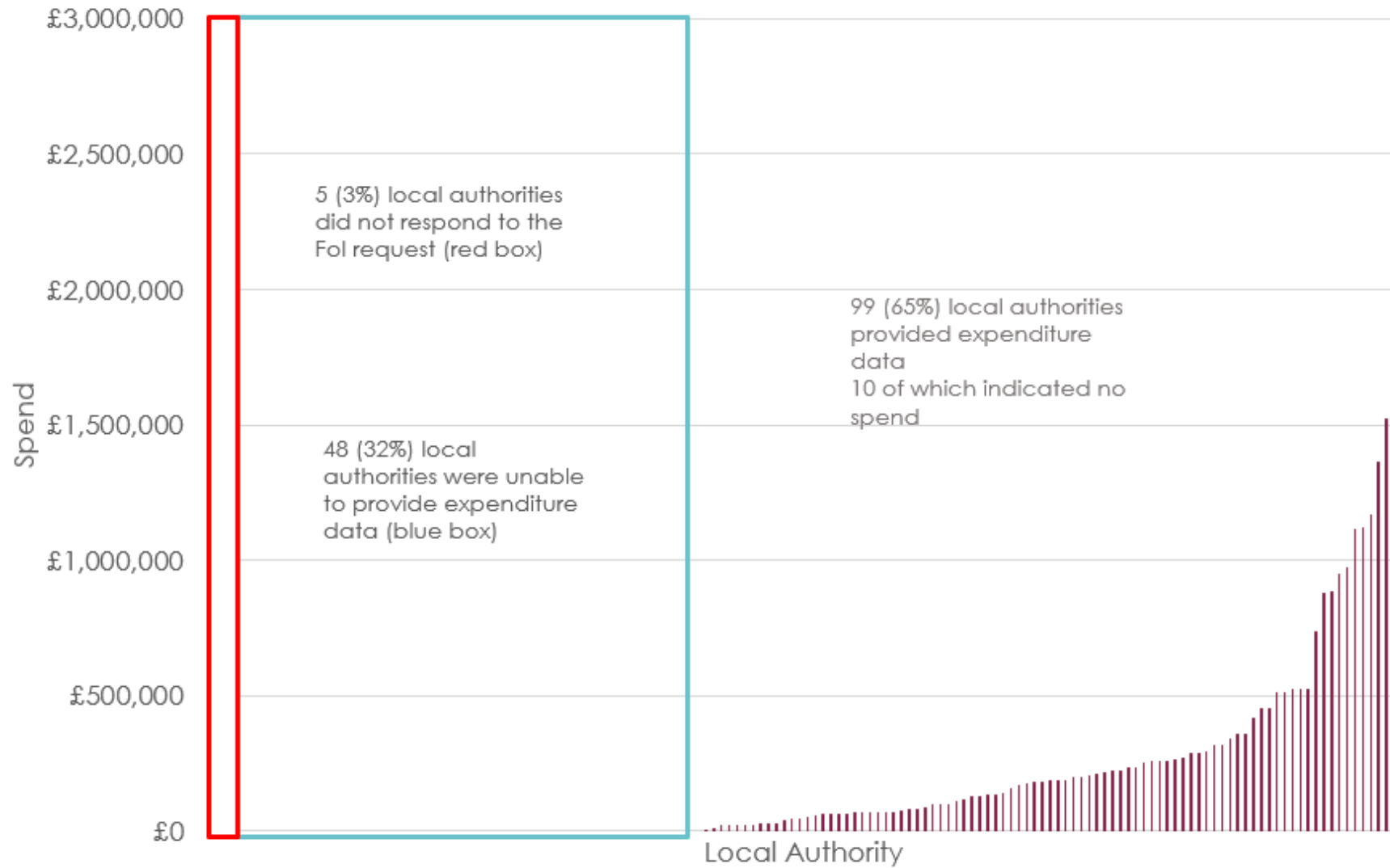


Figure 8 shows:

- Of the 99 (65%) local authorities who provided data, 10 local authorities reported no spend on employment support for young people with LDA.<sup>14</sup>
- The total estimated spend is £27,843,078.
- The average expenditure (including those who spent £0.00) was £281,243.
  - The minimum spend reported (above zero/nil) was £404.
  - The maximum spend reported was £2,952,188.
- Further analysis of the responses by region shows that East of England has the highest average expenditure on this type of support per local authority (£562,500, based on responses from 8 out of 11 Tier 1 local authorities) and Yorkshire and the Humber has the lowest (£153,818, based on responses from 13 out of 16 Tier 1 local authorities).

### 4.7.1 National funding sources

Stakeholders reported that there is a range of funding which is available directly from the national government. They most commonly discussed Access to Work funding, which provides support to individuals with physical or learning disabilities, or mental health conditions in employment.

They also identified a series of other programmes designed to boost the delivery of certain types of support, including:

- **Supported Internships Programme – Internships Work:**<sup>15</sup> This is a programme funded by the Department for Education (DfE) and being delivered by a collaboration between the British Association of Supported Employment (BASE), DfN Project SEARCH and the National Development Team for inclusion (NDTi). It is intended to expand the availability of supported internships.
- **Careers advice and guidance:**<sup>16</sup> In 2021-22, the DfE provided The Careers and Enterprise Company (CEC) with £28 million in grant funding in the financial year 2021-22 to provide careers guidance to schools across England.
- **Local Supported Employment:** In 2022, the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) provided grant funding for approximately 20 local

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<sup>14</sup> 53 local authorities did not provide data on spend, including 5 who did not respond to the FoI and 48 who reported, for various reasons, that they were unable to provide such data.

<sup>15</sup> For more information see NDTi, *What is Internships Work?*, available at: <https://www.ndti.org.uk/change-and-development/internships-work> [accessed October 2023].

<sup>16</sup> For more information see Department for Work and Pensions, *Local supported employment: Guidance for local authorities*, available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/local-supported-employment-guidance-for-local-authorities> [accessed October 2023].

## Supporting young people with LDA into employment: Summary report

authorities to take part in a pilot to boost the roll-out of local authority-led supported employment programmes in their area.

Providers also reported that there are non-governmental sources of funding, such as The National Lottery or Youth Futures Foundation, which may also fund support.

### 4.7.2 How can funding be improved?

*“Policy vacillating is a pain - services begin and then withdraw, never quite long-term.”*

*Policy expert/academic*

Stakeholders reported that when it comes to funding, providers find it challenging to access:

- Sufficient funding.
- Flexible funding.
- Sustainable and reliable funding.

Stakeholders reported that certain skilled roles, such as job coaches, are particularly difficult to recruit and retain due to funding constraints. Stakeholders reported that they would be keen to see more flexible, long-term (or recurrent) streams of funding.

### 4.8 What support is there for employers?

*“We go into employers and talk about Access to Work, supported internships, job coaches. We’ll show how it’s possible to employ young people with LDA and how it can enrich their workforce. Having people looking at things in a different way can be key to helping businesses look at things in different ways.”*

*Support provider*

Stakeholders reported that support for employers aims to improve their understanding, awareness, skills and confidence so that they can successfully recruit and employ young people with LDA. If employers do recruit a young person with LDA, the aim is to provide them with the assistance to support that young person well.

Typically, stakeholders reported that this will involve:

- **Events and promotional activity to raise employers’ knowledge of young people with LDA who could be employed.** A key activity involves providers, commissioners and often colleges and schools, making employers aware of the options to support young people with LDA. Building relationships with employers to help them see this as a possibility is

## Supporting young people with LDA into employment: Summary report

often time consuming and involves working with many employers individually. Stakeholders reported that if more could be done at scale, it would make it easier to approach employers when they have talented young people ready to work.

- **Workforce training/support with policies:** Stakeholders identified a range of formal and informal support that is offered to help train or advise employers' staff and assist with policies and procedures to be more accessible. Stakeholders were concerned that overall, there may not be enough of this type of support available and options such as Disability Confidence schemes may not be intensive enough.
- **Direct support or access to funding to support individual young people with LDA.** This might include a job coach who can assist both the young person and the employer together. It could also include using funding to implement reasonable adjustments to make the work environment more accessible to a young person with LDA.

### 4.9 What support is available at a system level?

*“We mapped out services in our area. There was a lot but none talking to each other, so they are trying to bring together organisations to refer and direct people between them where relevant.”*

*Funder/Commissioner*

Stakeholders reflected that work at a system-level is still quite new in many places. Where local authorities are doing more work, it is commonly because local political leadership has specifically prioritised employment support for young people with LDA. However, stakeholders reported that there are no clear duties on councils to support people young people with LDA into employment, especially those without an EHCP or who do not qualify for support from Adult Social Care.

Nevertheless, stakeholders reported that there is work happening at the system level involving national government, local government, research organisations and providers, which aims to create the environment in which young people will be effectively supported. The key aims and actions are summarised in Figure 9.

Figure 9: System level support – summary of aims and actions



## 5 Understanding of what works

### 5.1 Overview

There is a range of promising practice and different models or activities which stakeholders reported are helping support young people with LDA into employment.

This section outlines the different areas of practice which show potential for delivering effective outcomes. It is drawn from consultation with stakeholders including support providers, employers, funders/commissioners, policy makers and academics and children and young people with LDA.

The type of support that a young person needs to help them enter and thrive in employment likely varies depending on their individual support needs and may differ depending on whether they are autistic, have a learning disability or if they have both. Our findings provide an overview of some of the types of support and principles of good practice that stakeholders indicated generally work well when supporting young people with LDA into employment. We do not have evidence on whether certain types of support work best for certain groups of young people with LDA.

*For detailed analysis of the understanding of what works, see Report C: Understanding what works.*

### 5.2 Eight practice principles to support young people

Stakeholders reported the following eight good practice principles in supporting young people with LDA into employment based on their own experience:

- **The right practitioners:** Stakeholders emphasised the importance of having the right practitioners to support young people with LDA. They need to be: (a) skilled and experienced supporting young people with LDA; (b) have received appropriate training; (c) be enthusiastic and committed; and (d) have the ability to build and sustain trusted relationships.

Stakeholders reported that this relies on robust recruitment and retention approaches, including effective training opportunities and competitive remuneration for skilled roles.

- **Person-centred approaches:** To deliver person-centred support, stakeholders emphasised the importance of investing time to get to know a young person, including understanding their circumstances beyond employment (e.g., health, mental health, housing etc.). Person-centred support is stronger when practitioners are engaged with a young person's wider network (e.g., family and friends) and is focused on finding the right job for them, rather than prioritising working in any job. Young people

indicated that one-to-one support and encouragement that helped them to improve particular skills they struggled with was useful.

- **Provision of wraparound support:** Linked to the importance of person-centred approaches, stakeholders reported that models that provide or are delivered alongside wraparound support have the greatest chances of succeeding. This includes taking steps to connect young people with support outside the employment service that can help them in other areas of their life, which might be holding them back from employment.
- **Co-production of support:** Commissioners highlighted the benefit that co-production can bring to making sure that the right support is being developed for young people with LDA. Working with them and their families can reinforce efforts to personalise support.
- **Early exposure to employment:** Changing the narrative around employment for young people with LDA is a key challenge, which stakeholders reported needs to be tackled as early as possible. This means raising the possibility and planning for employment from a younger age, getting families used to the idea and not starting to think about it only as a young person approaches the end of school or college.
- **Peer support:** Young people and stakeholders reported that having a peer network, whether formal or informal, has helped young people to succeed in a work environment. Peers are able to support one another and can relate to each other's experiences.

*“During my placement, I liked being around these guys [other interns] – I have been in mainstream school, in classrooms with no disabilities, but now there are people around me who have disabilities so we can support and learn from each other.”*

*Young person*

- **A developmental approach:** Stakeholders reported that it is important to have options so that as young people's skills develop, they can move incrementally towards employment. For example, completing a work trial or working in a role designated for young people with LDA in a social enterprise (where the young person can be offered greater support) can be a stepping-stone towards a more intensive programme, such as supported internship.
- **Follow-on support:** Stakeholders reported that providers staying engaged with young people even after they have entered paid employment is very important for ensuring maintenance of employment. This can aid management of any issues or crises that could happen in the role – both in terms of supporting the young person and their employer.

### 5.3 Four promising models of support for young people

Consultation with stakeholders identified the following four models of support as promising:

- **Work trials:** A work trial is a short placement that can serve in place of a traditional recruitment process (e.g., application, interview, etc.) that gives a young person with LDA the opportunity to come into the work environment and demonstrate their suitability for a role. The work trial must be for a job that is at least 16 hours a week for 13 weeks. The work trial can last up to 30 days depending on the length of employment on offer, although it is usually 5 days or less. The jobseeker must volunteer to do the work trial, which is unpaid, and will remain in receipt of their benefits during this period.
- **Supported employment:** Stakeholders reported that supported employment is an effective model, especially for young people with LDA who are close to ready for employment. They reported that the structured approach, which includes vocational profiling and support finding a job, as well as support for the employer and young person once they are working, worked well. They appreciated that there is guidance available about how to implement the model effectively.
- **Supported internships:** Supported internships were another model, similar to supported employment, that stakeholders agreed was promising. Like supported employment, it provides a structured approach to support young people. Unlike supported employment, a young person will receive a mix of classroom based teaching and on-the-job experience. Stakeholders reported that supported internships offer an effectively managed transition into employment, that allows young people to experience a workplace environment. They reported that supported internships improve young people's chances of getting a permanent job with their employer or elsewhere.
- **Job coaches:** The role of the job coach is to provide employers and young people with support in the workplace. A job coach may be recruited by an employer using funding for helping people with additional needs access work. They may be part of a supported employment or supported internship program. Stakeholders valued that job coaches can provide support to both the employer and the employee, including a range of activities such as: arranging for adaptations, specifically to suit the young person; "carving up" tasks into more manageable parts; supporting managers and co-workers to be effective colleagues to a young person; and more.

*"My job coach helped me at the start and my ESO[employment support officer], in fact my ESO suggested this job. Basically they sat with me during my jobs, helped me*



*while I learned. It was good when ESO helped me with jobs at the start.”*

*Young Person (Supported internship participant)*

### 5.4 Supporting employers

When it comes to supporting employers, stakeholders reported that the key is to ensure that there is buy-in from the top of the organisation – once this happens, changes can happen that make it possible to recruit young people with LDA.

Buy-in from senior leadership is needed to confront negative perceptions around employment of young people with LDA at every level of an organisation and takes the emphasis away from young people needing to prove themselves. Stakeholders reported that where there was strong organisational buy-in, this helped young people to feel settled and valued.

*“Our scheme is really well valued by the top level which is important. For individuals on the programme, that level of support and commitment helps to empower and encourage young people to join.”*

*Employer*

To achieve this level of buy-in requires two important factors:

- **Employers must be aware of the possibility and the benefits of employing young people with LDA.** This includes explaining:
  - Companies benefit from the perspectives that young people with LDA bring to the workplace.
  - Employing young people with LDA requires limited ongoing effort, time and cost.
- **There is support available that can make it straightforward to recruit and employ a young person with LDA.** As discussed above in relation to supported internships, supported employment and job coaches, there are different options available to employers to recruit young people with LDA, that are relatively easy to set-up and can help an employer effectively maintain the employment of young people with LDA.

### 5.5 Five promising system-wide responses

Stakeholders identified the following five key elements to support systems to improve employment outcomes for young people with LDA:

- **Prioritising a strategic vision.** Stakeholders reported that a strategic vision is required to improve outcomes for young people with LDA. However, it was

unclear how this strategic vision can be developed and who should be responsible for leading and co-ordinating its development. Some stakeholders reported that local authorities should (and in some areas, do) play a central role in the development of a strategic vision as they can play a critical role co-ordinating locally. However, this role would need to be supported by central government, local employers, local providers, wider-system partners and young people with LDA and their families.

- **Visible and committed leadership:** Linked to the above stakeholders reported that visible and committed local leadership in the system is important to support young people with LDA into employment. Where this issue has been seen as a key corporate priority and where there is leadership buy-in, it is easier to pursue innovative solutions.
- **Understanding the local system:** Stakeholders recognised the importance of understanding local need, local provision and potential gaps alongside what works in supporting young people with LDA into employment. Using system maps to bring stakeholders together can support shared understanding of local provision and gaps among key system partners.
- **Strong local networks:** Stakeholders emphasised the importance of building and maintaining relationships across all parties involved in supporting young people with LDA into employment. This includes education providers, employers and wider local services including the existing support networks of young people and other support providers.
- **Improved funding:** In order to enable and encourage effective and reliable employment support services to improve outcomes for young people with LDA, stakeholders reported that funding should:
  - Be long-term (or recurrent).
  - Be consistent.
  - Be flexible.
  - Allow for innovation in approaches.
  - Provide absolute clarity about the various requirements and criteria for receiving the funding.

## 6 Improvements and actions

This research has identified a **broad consensus that young people with LDA often miss out on the opportunity of employment and that progress to change is happening too slowly.**

The research has also identified that many stakeholders have an in-depth understanding of what young people with LDA's needs are and a range of promising practice that can be built upon to support them more effectively into employment.

Stakeholders we spoke to identified a number of areas for improvement and actions that could help improve employment outcomes for young people with LDA. Specific improvements and actions relating to needs, provision and 'what works' can be seen in Figure 10.

Considering the improvements and actions that are required across all areas in this research, we suggest that the following are areas which need the greatest attention to help improve employment outcomes for young people with LDA:

- **Expand provision to build on what works and address known gaps.**
- **Strengthen local partnership working to maximise the impact of support.**

To support the achievement of the above, the research identified some key areas for further development:

- **Strengthening leadership locally and nationally.**
- **Expanding the use of promising practice and models.**
- **Building the evidence-base about what works including improved understanding of need, provision, data collection and evaluation.**

The improvements and actions set out in this report are based on stakeholders' views and suggestions and our analysis and interpretation of them. Figure 10 provides a consolidated list of all the improvements and actions that were identified through the course of this research. For further details regarding improvements and actions in relation to understanding need, provision, or what works, please read the standalone reports A, B and C, summarised in Figure 2, respectively.

Not everyone will agree with everything in Figure 10 but the improvement suggestions and proposed actions are designed to support the improvement of employment outcomes for young people with LDA.

To implement these actions will require resource, political will and leadership and the co-ordination and input of a wide range of stakeholders – including national and local government, service providers, employers, other funders/commissioners, research organisations and experts, schools and colleges and young people with LDA and their families.

**Suggested audience:** To improve support to help young people with LDA into employment, there are a range of partners that will need to play a role. Different actions will require the input of different combinations of stakeholders. We have identified which stakeholders we think actions might be most relevant to, with a focus on policy makers, commissioner and funders, providers, and employers. This is not a comprehensive list but reflects our interpretation of which stakeholders are best placed to progress the actions recommended by the participants of this research.

## Supporting young people with LDA into employment: Summary report

Figure 10: Summary of all improvements and actions identified by stakeholders

Improvements	Actions informed by discussions with stakeholders	Relevant to:
<b>Improvements relating to understanding of needs</b>		
Better data to understand young people with LDA's needs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review appropriate national and local datasets to ensure they collect data on young people with LDA. Consideration should be given to young people who are not accessing support from local authorities but who may require employment support and how their needs may be reflected in data sets.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Commissioners</li> <li>Employers</li> <li>Policy makers</li> <li>Providers</li> </ul>
Further research to understand need for different groups, e.g., by gender, ethnicity, protected characteristics etc.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review appropriate national and local data sets to ensure they capture data on young people's demographic background including for example, age, gender, ethnicity and other protected characteristics so that analysis can explore the needs of specific groups.</li> <li>Ensure providers have the skills, capacity and funding to collect robust service level monitoring data which takes account of the action above, i.e., including data on young people's demographic backgrounds.</li> <li>Fund research which aims to understand in greater detail the differences in needs or challenges experienced by young people with LDA (e.g. in what ways autistic young people without a learning disability have different support needs to those with a learning disability) and for different groups of young people with LDA, for instance by demographic and socio-economic background.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Commissioners</li> <li>Employers</li> <li>Policy makers</li> <li>Providers</li> </ul>
Promote a positive mind-set to employment for young	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Share evidence and stories which challenge misconceptions about young people with LDA and their motivation and/or ability to work.</li> <li>Ensure that what is known about needs of young people with LDA generally is widely shared and promoted to stakeholders with a role in supporting young people into employment, with a focus on employers to ensure their processes and policies work to be inclusive of young people with LDA.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Commissioners</li> <li>Employers</li> <li>Policy makers</li> <li>Providers</li> </ul>

## Supporting young people with LDA into employment: Summary report

Improvements	Actions informed by discussions with stakeholders	Relevant to:
people with LDA.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensure that employment is discussed as an option with families from an early stage, to ensure that it is being promoted as a viable pathway for young people with LDA.</li> </ul>	
Ensuring young people with LDA are properly incentivised to work.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensure that young people are properly incentivised to work, e.g., ensuring pay and conditions are appropriate.</li> <li>Ensure that there is clear information for young people with LDA and their families about what will happen to their welfare entitlements when a young person starts working and how they could reclaim those entitlements in the event that the young person stops working.</li> <li>Review the process of claiming welfare entitlements to ensure it is flexible and quick, minimising the friction between starting and stopping work.</li> <li>Review the balance of work and welfare payments to ensure that young people with LDA are not financially penalised for working.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Employers</li> <li>Policy makers</li> <li>Providers</li> </ul>
Horizon scan and take action to future proof employment opportunities for young people with LDA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Undertake research to explore how changes in work and the workplace are affecting opportunities for young people with LDA – including the increased use of Artificial Intelligence, automation and remote working post-Covid-19.</li> <li>Undertake research to assess what different or additional support young people with LDA might require to be successful in work environments of the future.</li> <li>Consider what incentives might be necessary to encourage employers to ensure that opportunities are available for young people with LDA.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Commissioners</li> <li>Employers</li> <li>Policy makers</li> <li>Providers</li> </ul>
<b>Improvements relating to provision</b>		
Improve understanding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop system maps to help all parties understand existing provision which aims to support young people with LDA into employment, as part of a robust national</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Commissioners</li> <li>Employers</li> </ul>

## Supporting young people with LDA into employment: Summary report

Improvements	Actions informed by discussions with stakeholders	Relevant to:
of existing provision	<p>and local needs assessment Ensure the system response is rooted in evidence for young people with LDA in relation to employment outcomes.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Document, protocolise and, where possible, manualise their programmes of support so that successful initiatives can be replicated, scaled and spread if they are found to be effective.</li> <li>Review and improve the effectiveness of how information about provision to support young people with LDA in relation to employment is shared across the system.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Policy makers</li> <li>Providers</li> </ul>
Improve accessibility of employment support for young people with LDA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review the eligibility criteria to their programmes to ensure that they are open to young people with LDA who need the support. Consideration could be given especially to young people with LDA but without an EHCP and whether alternative assessment of need could be used.</li> <li>Funder/commissioners and providers should be encouraged to review how referrals are made to different support and examine whether the pathway to support can be simplified and better joined-up between different providers.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Commissioners</li> <li>Employers</li> <li>Policy makers</li> <li>Providers</li> </ul>
Ensure equitable provision of employment support for young people with LDA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Build on improved understanding of local provision, review how available provision compares to local needs. Ensure that resources are targeted towards local areas and regions where there may be insufficient availability of support.</li> <li>Map the current eligibility criteria of support and give consideration to whether the support that is available provides options which meet the requirements of young people with LDA with different levels of need. Give particular attention to those with complex needs or those who do not have an EHCP.</li> <li>Ensure providers have the skills, capacity and funding to collect robust service level monitoring data which takes into account the action above, i.e., including data on young people's demographic backgrounds. This could aid commissioners to better understand whether needs are being met equitably.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Commissioners</li> <li>Employers</li> <li>Policy makers</li> <li>Providers</li> </ul>

## Supporting young people with LDA into employment: Summary report

Improvements	Actions informed by discussions with stakeholders	Relevant to:
Ensure the availability of support for young people with LDA in work	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Build on existing programmes to promote in-work support (such as supported employment and supported internships).</li> <li>● Engage with providers who offer other employment support – and therefore may be well placed to deliver in-work support – to explore any barriers to entering this sector.</li> <li>● Promote and encourage more employers to consider participating in supported internship, supported employment or other programmes that offer in-work support. This should include explaining and promoting the support and benefits for employers.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Commissioners</li> <li>● Employers</li> <li>● Providers</li> </ul>
Ensure appropriate support for employers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Review the availability of support for employers nationally and locally, to ensure that the support is sufficient and meets the different needs that they have.</li> <li>● Review and improve the effectiveness of how information about provision to support young people with LDA in relation to employment is shared with employers, including information about what the benefits are to employers and what support is available to them.</li> <li>● Review how commissioners/funders and providers are recruiting employers and explore whether more action can be taken collectively and at scale, rather than targeting employers one at a time.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Commissioners</li> <li>● Employers</li> <li>● Policy makers</li> <li>● Providers</li> </ul>
Create local systems that prioritise and support young people with LDA to access employment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Clarify the roles and responsibilities of key stakeholders in relation to supporting young people with LDA into employment, with a focus on the role of schools/colleges and local authorities.</li> <li>● Encourage local authorities to develop local strategies which outline how they will improve the rate of employment of young people with LDA in their area, to promote the salience of this issue and provide greater accountability.</li> <li>● Ensure that local authorities have the skills and resources to play a full role in coordinating local provision in their areas.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Commissioners</li> <li>● Policy makers</li> </ul>



## Supporting young people with LDA into employment: Summary report

Improvements	Actions informed by discussions with stakeholders	Relevant to:
<p>Make funding effective and sustainable</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Consider longer-term funding for provision which aims to support young people with LDA into employment. This will also help support recruitment and retention of the workforce, build local expertise and establish sustainable provision.</li> <li>● Review the availability of funding to ensure that it is sufficient to recruit and retain staff with the necessary skills and expertise to deliver high quality support.</li> <li>● Review the criteria associated with national and local funding streams that aim to support young people with LDA into employment. Make funding sufficiently flexible that providers and employers can access resources to meet the full range of needs of young people with LDA.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Commissioners</li> <li>● Policy makers</li> </ul>
<b>Improvements relating to what works</b>		
<p>Improve the evidence base concerning what works.</p>	<p>Building on improvements to evidence base (see improvement suggestion on data gathering):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Ensure providers have the skills, capacity and funding to collect robust data to demonstrate the outcomes they are achieving with young people with LDA.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Commissioners</li> <li>● Policy makers</li> <li>● Providers</li> </ul>
<p>Undertake high quality evaluations of provision to develop the evidence base about what works</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Fund for high quality evaluation of initiatives aimed to support employment outcomes improvement for young people with LDA.</li> <li>● Ensure capacity for providers and employers to take part and support robust evaluation of initiatives.</li> <li>● Review and developing what outcomes young people with LDA should be working towards including employment related outcomes measures.</li> <li>● Review existing outcome measures and/or develop validated outcome measures that can be used by evaluators to measure the impact of provision.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Commissioners</li> <li>● Employers</li> <li>● Policy makers</li> <li>● Providers</li> </ul>

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Improvements	Actions informed by discussions with stakeholders	Relevant to:
<p>Improve understanding of existing provision and whether it incorporates best practice</p>	<p>Building on improvements to data collection and evaluation concerning provision (see above improvement suggestions):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Consider existing evidence of good practice and assess the quality of provision against these benchmarks.</li> <li>● Review how information about best practice is being shared with providers, to ensure it is widely understood and adopted.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Commissioners</li> <li>● Employers</li> <li>● Policy makers</li> <li>● Providers</li> </ul>
<p>Improve understanding on what it takes to create local systems that prioritise and support young people with LDA to access employment</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Build on the promising system responses discussed by stakeholders in the research including prioritising a strategic vision, visible committed leadership, understanding the local system rooted in a needs assessment that could include system mapping, creating strong local networks and improved funding.</li> <li>● Identify local systems where support for young people with LDA is working well and evaluate what works in their system responses. Develop good practice case studies of those systems to share how they are working and what they are achieving more widely.</li> <li>● Encourage central and local government to work with key sector stakeholders to support the development of system responses to support outcomes improvement for young people with LDA.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Commissioners</li> <li>● Policy makers</li> </ul>
<p>Improve understanding of existing funding structures and improving them.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Map the current existing national and local funding streams that aim to support young people with LDA into employment. Make funding more transparent so that it can be used to encourage commissioners, funders, providers and employers to access and use it to support young people with LDA into employment.</li> <li>● Consider longer-term funding for provision which aims to support young people with LDA into employment. This will also help support recruitment and retention of the workforce.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Commissioners</li> <li>● Employers</li> <li>● Policy makers</li> <li>● Providers</li> </ul>

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## Supporting young people with LDA into employment: Summary report

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