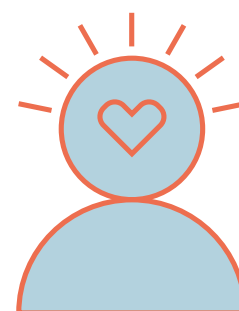


The SEND Education and Career Landscape

SEND stands for Special Educational Needs and Disability and applies to young people who have a learning difficulty and/or disability that means they need special health and education support. This is sometimes written as SEN, as not everyone with a special educational need has a disability. Many young people with SEND will have an education, health and care plan (EHCP), which identifies their educational, health and social needs and the additional support to meet these. Those who do not have an EHCP will receive SEN support from their school. In adulthood, 'learning disability or difficulty' is used rather than SEND.



There are **1.3 million** young people with SEND



- around **15%** in every mainstream school



- plus over **100,000** aged 13-18 in Special Schools.

There are different types of special schools and they all need employer engagement for work encounters and experiences of the workplace:

- SEN school: special educational needs.
- SEMH school: social, emotional and mental health.
- PRU school: Pupil Referral Unit. [Click here](#) to read a case study from Engie who worked with High Well School, as part of the Building Positive Futures project.
- ASD school: Autism Spectrum Disorder.
- SLD school: Severe Learning Difficulty.
- PMLD school: Profound and Multiple Learning Difficulties. [Click here](#) to read a case study from the New Wolsey Theatre and The Bridge School.

Young people with SEND or who are vulnerable are:

- Less likely to achieve qualifications
- More likely to be NEET (not in education, employment or training)
- More likely to suffer from mental health problems
- More likely to be homeless
- More likely to be represented in the criminal justice system.



It's important to note that not all young people with SEND and/or an EHCP will attend a specialist school, such as a SEN school. Some will attend a mainstream school, but still receive the additional support they need. If you already have a relationship with a mainstream school, you could ask about the opportunity to provide work encounters and experience of work for their SEND students.



SEND broadly covers 4 areas of need and support and some individuals will have a combination of these:

1. Communication and interaction, such as speech, language and communication needs or Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD).
2. Cognition and learning, such as a specific, moderate, severe, profound or multiple learning disability.
3. Social, emotional and mental health (SEMH) difficulties
4. Sensory and/or physical, such as visual or hearing impairment, multi-sensory impairment and physical disability.



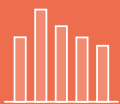
In relation to their career, young people with SEND can be divided into two groups:

- Those with communication, interaction or cognition and learning difficulties who **typically will not** take GCSEs/Level 2 qualifications, and
- Those with social, emotional and mental health difficulties, or behavioural sensory and/or physical needs who **typically take** GCSEs/Level 2 qualifications.

There are a number of conditions that are referred to as learning disabilities and these include Autism and Asperger's syndrome, Down's syndrome and Cerebral Palsy amongst others. Learning difficulties are different and do not affect general intellect. Like learning disabilities, there are many different types of learning difficulty, including dyslexia, attention deficit-hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), dyspraxia and dyscalculia. If you want to find out more about learning disabilities and learning difficulties, [Mencap's website](#) has some great information, as does the [National Autistic Society](#).



Did you know that only **5.9% of people with learning disabilities are in work?**



The employment rate for **disabled people is 49.2%** and **80.6% for the rest of the population** not classed as having a disability.

This is a shockingly low statistic and one that highlights the challenges young students with SEND face as they transition from education into employment.

There are a number of reasons for this employment gap:



Lack of aspiration from the young person, their families/carers.



Concerns over loss of benefits.



Lack of flexibility and accessibility in the workplace.



Career support provided by school doesn't always prepare these young people for employment.



Uncertainty and fear of whether an employer will be supportive of their needs.

In addition, [The National Audit Office](#) estimates that **£1 million** of lifetime costs could be saved for every young person with the relevant life and employability skills that enables them to live in semi-independence. By supporting someone with a learning disability into employment, it could increase their income by between 55 and 95 percent, as well as improving their self-esteem. The majority of young students with SEND want to work and live a happy and fulfilled life.

These statistics alone provide a compelling reason for wanting to improve the employment outcomes for young people with SEND, even without considering the benefits you as an employer can gain which are explored in the Business Benefits section.