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# Opportunity for access, growth & progression - resource pack

Resource pack

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# Give your employees opportunities for access, growth & progression



For individuals, the benefits of access to good quality work and relevant learning and development opportunities are clear. Having opportunities not only to work, but to develop and grow within their role can significantly improve their life chances, determining their employment and earnings potential and creating more opportunities for social mobility.

But what about the benefits for you as an employer?

Here are just some of the ways in which giving your employees the opportunities they need for access, growth and progression can benefit your business performance:

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- By taking an inclusive approach to recruitment and workforce development, such as applying the social model of disability and removing barriers to participation and progression, employers can build diverse organisations where talents from all sections of the labour market, including those with protected characteristics are valued, developed and utilised.
- Workers whose skills and learning are invested in are more likely to be loyal and committed to their jobs.
- High levels of workforce skills are critical to business productivity and economic prosperity and will allow your organisation to meet both current and future business demands.
- Supporting learning in the flow of work is high on the agenda of policy-makers and employers across the globe. It helps to motivate your employees and increases staff satisfaction and retention levels.
- Having transparent promotions procedures in place will incentivise staff to progress within the organisation and stay with the company for longer.
- There are wider societal benefits too. Providing fair opportunities breaks down labour market and related inequality, reduces the costs of inefficient resource allocation and helps to create a more equitable, inclusive and cohesive society.

## What can I do as an employer to ensure opportunities for access, growth & progression for my staff?

So you understand how giving your employees opportunities for access, growth and progression can benefit your business as well as the employees themselves, but what steps can you take to make this a reality in your organisation?

Here are some practical things to consider:

**Capitalise on national schemes that support inclusive participation to fair work**

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Not everyone across society gets the same opportunities to access fair work and to progress in their jobs. Groups who are more likely to face barriers are those with protected characteristics (these are age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, and sexual orientation), those affected by socio-economic disadvantage, and those living in rural areas.

As an employer, you must remove these barriers to make it easier for a wide range of people from different backgrounds to apply to work with you and to ensure equality of access and opportunity for those with protected characteristics.

Applying the social model of disability and talking to employees about reasonable adjustments at work may help remove some of these barriers.

The difference between the employment rates of disabled and non-disabled people - or disability employment gap - in Wales in 2020/21 was 32.9 percentage points, considerably higher than the UK average of 27.9. To try to reduce this gap, incentives are available to employers in Wales who recruit disabled people, for example, a £2,000 payment for employers who take on a disabled apprentice.

**Create an environment where progression is supported, addressing barriers including skills and flexible working**

Research shows that organisations with strong learning cultures are 92% more likely to develop novel products and processes, and are 52% more productive.1 But it’s not always easy for employees to access learning opportunities, particularly if they have caring responsibilities at home.

Having to look after either younger or older dependants can be a huge hindrance to progression at work, particularly for women. Employers are now introducing much more appropriate and co-designed caring policies for staff, to ensure their family responsibilities don’t stop them being able to progress in work.

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### Partner with schools and colleges to embed essential skills

There are a whole host of things employers can do to build relationships with local educational establishments to attract and inspire future talent and teach them essential skills before they enter the world of work.

Ideas range from attending careers fairs and giving careers talks at schools, to running employability workshops which provide work-readiness training (punctuality, confidence, workplace expectations etc) and offering work placements, either for local students or for disadvantaged groups.

### Ensure good quality and relevant learning and development is accessible to all workers

Having a comprehensive training plan in place for employees at every level will help you future-proof your company by building the skills you'll need to meet current and future business demands.

As well as training, offer regular feedback, well-structured and clear promotion paths to your staff as well as mentoring schemes, to make it as easy and as attractive as possible for employees at every level of your workforce to thrive.

### Measure the impact of your training and development activities

Make sure you introduce processes to cost and benchmark any learning and development activities you undertake, and promote the benefits to staff to encourage participation.

According to What Works Wellbeing, taking a part-time course for work over 12 months is estimated to give wellbeing benefits equivalent to £1,584 of income per year.

### Conduct mid-career reviews to allow employees to identify appropriate career goals and development opportunities

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Age should not be a barrier in work. Despite having a wealth of lived experience and invaluable skills, older workers are often overlooked for promotion and are not given the opportunity to maximise their contribution in work.

By committing to mid-career reviews and ensuring opportunities remain open to workers as they approach the second half of their careers, you will get the best out of your more experienced employees by encouraging them to keep developing new skills and taking on more responsibility.

**Ensure all workers have access to and receive training in equality, inclusion and diversity**

By making sure all your staff are trained in equality and diversity, you'll build a more diverse and inclusive workforce. There is a clear business case for this as having more diverse voices around decision-making tables allows better decisions to be made that support more people's lives.

You can often overcome the cost of training barrier by accessing free or subsidised programmes such as the **Flexible Skills Programme**, **Advanced Apprenticeships** and **ION Leadership programmes**.

## Toolkit - Opportunities for access, growth & progression

We've prepared these handy resource packs – one for each Fair Work principle – to help you on the path to becoming a Fair Work employer.

If you're keen to give your employees a range of opportunities to access work, grow and progress, it can be hard to know where to start. There's a wealth of online tools and resources to help you implement this principle across your organisation but knowing how to navigate your way through all the information can be a challenge so we've compiled some of the most useful ones here:

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## Skills Development in the UK Workplace | Factsheets | CIPD

To ensure sustainable and effective talent and succession planning, it is vital that employers understand both their current and future business needs. However, they must also be aware of the wider skills context and policy environment in Wales and across the UK.

This factsheet examines the nature and **key aims of the UK's skills policy**. It explores the skills situation in the UK, covering the issue of low productivity, as well as careers advice, the graduate labour market, and skills mismatch.

## Recruit an apprentice: guidance for employers: Funding and eligibility | GOV.WALES

Taking on an apprentice can help you expand your workforce and its skills base. This online resource outlines the **benefits and process for recruiting an apprentice** and explains how employers can access Welsh Government support towards the cost of training and assessments.

## Learning in the Flow of Work | Factsheets | CIPD

This factsheet examines what 'helping people learn' means in a workplace context. It **focuses on the economic importance of workplace skills** and lists tangible ways in which employers can measure the skills and capabilities of their workforce.

It also signposts evolving theories on supporting learning, looking at the move away from training to learning.

It will help you to consider the strategic and practical issues involved in helping people learn, while also looking at the extent to which learning initiatives are the most effective.

## Social Model of Disability | Welsh Government

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The **Social Model of Disability** distinguishes between ‘impairment’ and ‘disability’. It recognises that people with impairments are disabled by barriers that can exist in society or the workplace.

Find out more here or **sign up to training here**.

## Costing and benchmarking learning & development | Factsheets | CIPD

Learning and development will inevitably incur both direct and indirect costs for employers, and while the intangible benefits are clear, it can be difficult to measure an actual return on this investment.

This factsheet **provides guidance on how to cost learning and development activities**, giving information on how to benchmark these activities and briefly looking at the strengths and weaknesses of benchmarking.

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