

# Inclusion, Disability, Equality and Action for Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (IDEA for SMEs)

Leonard Cheshire's IDEA for SMEs works with for Small and Medium-sized Enterprises in the West of England area to increase their capacity, knowledge, and understanding of disability, supporting them to proactively employ disabled people more actively, confidently, and successfully.

## Client testimonial: 1625 Independent People

### The client

1625 Independent People (1625IP) is a Community Benefit Society. Founded in 1983 and working with over 1500 young people per year and 500+ at any one time, to provide support and a safe place to live for some of the most vulnerable young people aged between 16 and 25 in the Southwest. This includes care and custody leavers, and children seeking asylum. All have experienced significant disadvantage and multiple adverse childhood experiences; most have experienced trauma. Services range from preventing homelessness, through to advice, education work and intensive one-to-one support. From their first point of crisis, until they are ready to live independently, 1625IP colleagues are trained to consider the psychological and emotional needs of young people, providing the holistic support they need to transition to independent adults.

### The brief

1625IP identified that they would like to become a Disability Confident Employer which is Level 2 in the Government's Disability Confident scheme. They wanted to improve their training programme for their managers, whilst ensuring that their recruitment practices are inclusive and accessible for all.

1625IP wanted to ensure there was consistency in how colleagues are supported across the organisation and that their people managers have the knowledge they need to remove barriers for disabled colleagues.

## The solution

It was important that the right people had the tools at all stages of the employment journey, from recruitment, right through to day-to-day working. Over the course of five months, we delivered a comprehensive package of support to 1625IP including in-depth training sessions on Disability Means Business, Disability Confident Recruitment and Disability Confident Managers, alongside short workshop sessions like Accessible and Inclusive communications, Barrier-free Training and Disability & Performance Management.

## The outcome

As a result of working with Leonard Cheshire, 1625IP have changed a number of their processes for disabled employees. During the last year 1625IP have also been designing and implementing their first ever values-based competency development framework. Doing an Equality Impact Assessment for this led 1625IP to conclude that knowledge of disability and how that can impact on colleagues would be hugely beneficial. Leonard Cheshire's training programme helped bridge this knowledge gap.

"I would highly recommend the training. The facilitator has been accommodating to our needs in every way. She has been flexible, really supportive and just an all-round legend. The training itself has been excellent and we have all learnt so much."

"We have had half day sessions for people managers and an all colleague one. We have also had a series of what we have called 'lunch and learns' which have been one-hour sessions on individual topics. Both sets of sessions have been amazing – the facilitator was a hugely engaging trainer. She is utterly knowledgeable and that really comes across in the sessions. We have loved working with Leonard Cheshire, and I am super grateful for this programme which has enabled us to deliver such good quality training at no financial cost to 1625IP."