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## Promoting Inclusive Employment: Luminate Education Group

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## Promoting inclusive employment: Luminate Education Group

**(FE) Communities of Practice**

### Introduction

Luminate Education Group is a leading education provider in the Leeds City Region, supporting over 20,000 students. We prioritise the needs of students with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND), providing personalised support and opportunities.

The group's ethos is to foster partnerships between individuals, communities, and businesses to create a thriving region. We work closely with organisations like Leeds Museums and Galleries to promote inclusivity in the workplace.

*This case study aims to explore the barriers faced by SEND students in accessing employment within the museum and heritage sector. By conducting focus groups and analysing recruitment practices, Luminate Education Group seeks to identify ways to improve the inclusivity of the recruitment process and better prepare students for success.*

### Implementation

We have run various focus groups with our World of Work students in Foundation Studies at Leeds City College, Leeds Industrial Museum Panel group and with local education providers and organisations that support people with SEND across Leeds to get insight and feedback on what the barriers are and what could be changed. The benefit of focus groups is to develop new ideas which may not be possible through one-to-one interviews or other research methods, and we wanted to gather the views. From this, Carl Newbould, Learning and Access Officer at Leeds Museums and Galleries has then trialled new recruiting and interview methods to support people applying for jobs at Leeds Museums and Galleries.

Focus groups identified key challenges, including inaccessible job descriptions, online applications, and interviews. Potential solutions discussed included individual support, video submissions, job trials, and providing interview questions beforehand. These findings are based on feedback from 7 World of Work students, 6 Leeds Industrial Museum Panel Group members, and 10 attendees from local organisations and education providers.

## Outcomes

Overall, from the feedback given it was clear that participants felt most recruitment practices are inaccessible to people with SEND. Participants believe they don't feel like they have a fair shot and are afraid of discrimination throughout the process. This then links to the lack of confidence and whether they have the right skills to be successful. Feedback given demonstrated applicants are not supported throughout the process and employers did not understand what adjustments could or should be made.

Focus groups identified several barriers faced by students with SEND in the recruitment process, including inaccessible job descriptions, online applications, and interviews. Potential solutions discussed included individual support, video submissions, job trials, and providing interview questions in advance. These findings highlight the need for more inclusive recruitment practices to ensure equal opportunities for individuals with SEND.

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## Impact and Next Steps

The partnership between Leeds City College and Leeds City Council has achieved significant success in placing students with SEND into full-time employment. Three learners from the college's specialist provision secured jobs in Leeds City Council's cleansing department, surpassing the national average of 5.1% for individuals with learning disabilities in paid employment.

To share our findings and inspire other organisations, we attended the Museum and Heritage Conference in 2023. We presented the successful strategies and encouraged other museums and heritage organisations to adopt more inclusive recruitment methods.

In addition, Leeds City College launched Supported Internships in 2023 for students aged 16-25 with EHCPs. These internships provide learners with valuable workplace experience and job coaching to develop essential skills. The college actively works with employers to improve their inclusive practices.

Moving forward, Leeds City College will continue its collaboration with Leeds Museums and Galleries to create opportunities and promote inclusive recruitment. The college will also participate in the "Leeds City Council accessible recruitment" meeting to work on improving practices across the council. The group is currently exploring ways to modify the council's application process and will share guidance in early 2024.

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## Key Learning

This case study highlights the successful partnership between Leeds City College and Leeds City Council in providing inclusive employment opportunities for individuals with SEND. Through collaborative efforts, tailored support, and inclusive practices, the partnership has achieved significant outcomes, including increased employment rates and positive experiences for individuals with SEND. The case study offers valuable recommendations for other organisations seeking to create more inclusive workplaces.

