

**Engage** | Enable | Empower

Creating  
**meaningful**  
employment  
for persons  
with intellectual  
disabilities



“As a parent of a child with an intellectual disability, you hope for health, happiness and a bright future for them. We started this programme five years ago to try to achieve just that. The outcomes have exceeded our wildest expectations. Seeing the joy on a young person’s face as they show how they can add value and realise their potential has been a revelation for our people and our business.”

**Neil Byrne, Partner and EY Trinity Programme Lead**

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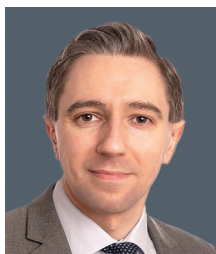
Margaret Turley, EY Parthenon  
Assistant, with mentor Brenda Kealy



1.

“A chance  
to succeed”

Foreword by Minister Simon Harris



At the heart of my Department is an objective to ensure everyone - regardless of their background, age, gender, ability or address - achieves their potential, whether that is through education or work.

– We have been making good progress and in 2022 we took a major step forward by announcing funding to support students with intellectual disabilities (ID) to engage in higher education.

– In these days of progressive diversity and inclusiveness programmes, I am delighted to see a programme that will offer higher education and long-term meaningful employment opportunities for persons with ID.

– Having met many of these graduates first hand, I can vouch for the contribution that these young people can make in the workplace and our community.

– This funding will take many of the lessons learned in centres such as the Trinity Centre for People with Intellectual Disabilities and disseminate them, offering similar opportunities to other students with ID.

This step-by-step guide captures the experiences of EY and Trinity working in partnership over the past five years to give these young people a chance to succeed and work in meaningful roles, just like everybody else. The impact this can make not only on the graduates but on their families, colleagues and society as a whole cannot be overstated.

– As one of the graduates put it, “Working in EY means everything to me. I love being part of society, getting a pay cheque, grumbling about having to pay taxes, being able to save money and work off a budget. I am experiencing life as other people are experiencing it.”

– Together, academia, business and government provide a synergistic foundation for such programmes. I am delighted to see Ireland leading the way and to provide my support. I hope you find this as inspiring as I do and that you will consider adding such wonderful young people to your workforce.

– **Simon Harris,**  
**Minister for Further and Higher Education, Research, Science and Innovation**

2.

“A step  
into the  
unknown”

Introduction by Frank O'Keefe





The Trinity Centre for People with Intellectual Disabilities exists to address the educational and societal barriers experienced by people with ID, creating greater opportunities for meaningful employment and independent living.<sup>1</sup>



In 2017, EY joined forces with the Trinity Centre for People with Intellectual Disabilities to provide a trial internship for one young person with intellectual disabilities (ID). We were driven by a desire to make a change in this neglected area, and by a strong belief that everyone deserves the chance to work, and to make a positive contribution to society.

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It was a step into the unknown, and we faced many challenges – and made more than a few mistakes – along the way. But it also proved to be the first step in what has become a long-term transformational initiative that drives forward our purpose of building a better working world.

In the years since, the initiative has gone from strength to strength, moving beyond the initial pilot phase to become an integral part of how we operate. Our first Trinity graduate, Margaret Turley, has been joined by a further five graduates, working across various different parts of our organisation.

–  
The benefits have been enormous: not just to the graduates who, through having meaningful work, have found a sense of purpose and belief in themselves, but to their families and friends, to our colleagues across EY Ireland – and to our business.

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This guide draws on input from our Trinity graduates, Trinity colleagues, family members, EY managers and mentors and more. It aims to give an insight into the lessons we've learned and to show how people with ID can add immeasurable value to your business. We hope you will find it both useful and inspiring.

–  
**Frank O'Keeffe,**  
**EY Ireland**  
**Managing Partner**



<sup>1</sup> Find out more at [www.tcd.ie/tcpid/](http://www.tcd.ie/tcpid/)

# 3.

“Transformational  
and profoundly  
positive”

The case for a more diverse workforce



“It’s brilliant for a person with a disability to have a job. It’s massive and it gives you that confidence to think you can do anything.”

**Stephen Ryan,**  
Tax Associate,  
EY Ireland



There are currently more than 66,000 people with an ID in Ireland, a significant increase since the last Census. The gap in employment participation nevertheless remains substantial: just 14.7% of people with ID are in employment, compared with 26.2% of people with other disabilities and 62.1% of those without a disability.<sup>1</sup>

– This represents a missed opportunity. Evidence shows that diverse teams are more effective than homogeneous ones. Greater diversity boosts creativity, improves decision-making and delivers better financial returns.

– An inclusive approach helps attract talent, and opens up new markets. It also delivers societal benefits, promoting social mobility and supporting wider initiatives including the UN’s Sustainable Development Goals and Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. In short, it’s a win-win for people, for business and for society.

At EY, our purpose is building a better working world – one where economic growth is both sustainable and inclusive. We believe in embracing difference in all its forms, and in creating an environment where people feel valued and appreciated for that difference. When people feel valued, they are able to achieve and contribute to their full potential.

– This is certainly borne out by our experiences of working with Trinity to create meaningful opportunities for people with ID – opportunities that contribute directly to our success as a professional services organisation. Making necessary accommodations for our candidates has prompted us to look deeper at all our processes and improve the way we work with everyone, whether they have a disability or not. The effect on colleagues has been transformational and profoundly positive. The benefits to all aspects of our business are clear.

<sup>1</sup> <https://tinyurl.com/2r62wnzf>

4.

“Nothing  
about us  
without us”

Key lessons learned



This section of the guide is based on our experience of working with Trinity to provide opportunities for young people with ID. We've separated the journey into three stages:

**Engage** explains how we secured engagement and support within EY, created a robust external partnership with Trinity and made sure we could provide meaningful opportunities for Trinity graduates.

**Enable** focuses on the people and processes we put in place, with Trinity's support, to help graduates feel confident to enter the workplace, from the pre-onboarding phase onwards.

**Empower** moves beyond the pilot phase to look at some of the ways in which people with ID can be supported to become a permanent part of your team, use their skills to the maximum and realise their potential.

Within each stage you'll find key learnings - the lessons we found most valuable along the way. But there are also some general principles that we believe apply throughout the journey:

- All decisions should be made together or, as the title of this section puts it, "nothing about us without us".
- No one size fits all - and adapting to individual needs is an ongoing process, not a one-off event.
- People with ID should be treated like any other employee in terms of development, progression, recognition and reward.
- Allow time for candidates to settle in, to understand what is expected of them and to start to feel confident in their work. Be patient, and take it one step at a time.

# 4.1

# Engage



Aligning goals and creating purpose  
Building sustainable external partnerships  
Creating meaningful work opportunities



## Aligning goals and creating purpose



### Key learnings

**01\_** A C-suite sponsor will boost visibility and accountability

**02\_** Sustainability is vital: make sure your plan includes the resources needed to develop the programme over time

Securing sponsorship and engagement at all levels of the organisation - including senior leaders, business unit leaders and colleagues in HR, legal and DE&I - is an essential first step in creating a robust, sustainable programme.

– When we were looking to secure engagement, we invited representatives from Trinity in to meet EY colleagues and teams who had expressed an interest in providing an opportunity for a graduate. Conversations focused on our actual experience with our first graduate, Margaret Turley, including how we matched the candidate to the job vacancy, the costs involved, how the mentor system was working and the impact on other colleagues.

– Programme design should draw on external expertise. Talk to people within the ID community, as well as managers and potential mentors within your own organisation whose role will include modelling best practice in working with people with ID.

The business case must be about more than the hard numbers. Highlight the positive social impact as well as explaining how it supports your overall strategy, for example by promoting diversity, creating a more inclusive culture, enhancing your brand, helping meet demand for talent, strengthening managerial skills and developing internal expertise.

– The plan should also include goals and measures - both qualitative and quantitative - that are explicitly aligned with your organisation's strategy, values and culture, and tied to relevant key metrics. If you can't measure the impact, you run the risk of your programme being seen as "nice to have" rather than business critical. Be transparent and realistic about the time and resources needed to make it work, too.





## Building sustainable external partnerships



### Key learnings

**03\_** Remember partners can also come from inside your own organisation - speak to lines of business to figure out how to tap into internal resources

**04\_** Sustainable partnerships will help make your programme more resilient, provide access to a broader talent pipeline and enable you to cherry-pick each partner's specific strengths

**05\_** Leverage others' knowledge and experience, and be ready to share your own learnings

Sourcing the right talent is critical to the success of any programme, and it's likely that you will need to work with an external partner to help you reach and engage with people with ID.

– Our programme partner, Trinity, helped us plan, launch and sustain our pilot programme. Trinity graduates have all passed through a rigorous programme designed to prepare them for the workplace while as a partner employer, we received invaluable guidance on how to create an environment that would support candidates to realise their potential.



“When you combine a structured programme such as Trinity's with business partners like EY to create employment, you transform the lives of students and their families as well as society as a whole.”

**Hugo MacNeill, Trinity Ambassador**

Other organisations can offer similar support. External partners may also include community agencies, recruiters, schools and universities. Some - including Trinity - will provide ongoing support and specific services such as occupational therapy, as well as acting as a talent pipeline.

– Look for partners who can flex to reflect your needs and culture, fill gaps in your own expertise and capacity and who will take the time to help you find the right candidate for the right role.

– Learn from experience - leverage others who've been there before, find out who they've worked with and how it went - and share your own learnings. We developed workshops based on our own experiences and ran these with in partnership with Trinity to give their current students a deeper insight into working life.



Stephen Ryan,  
FSO Tax Associate

## Creating meaningful work opportunities



### Key learnings

**06\_** Make sure your job spec only lists the skills and capabilities that are essential to the role, and be open to considering alternatives

**07\_** Take time to look beyond a candidate's CV to get the full picture of what they can offer the business

**08\_** Be flexible - use "job carving" to tweak roles as needed to match a candidate's skills and needs, and increase the chances of finding the right match

The jobs being offered must add value to the candidate, the team and the business. That means clearly defining the skillset you're looking for, and making sure your programme partner fully understands your needs. Trinity provided invaluable support in helping us to identify which roles would best suit which candidates, understanding their capabilities - for example, strong IT skills, or a real talent for engaging with people - and spotting any potential stress points.



"For me, one of the overarching successes of the programme is how we've fitted it into our model. We haven't changed our business. We've fitted our graduates into the roles in which we needed them."

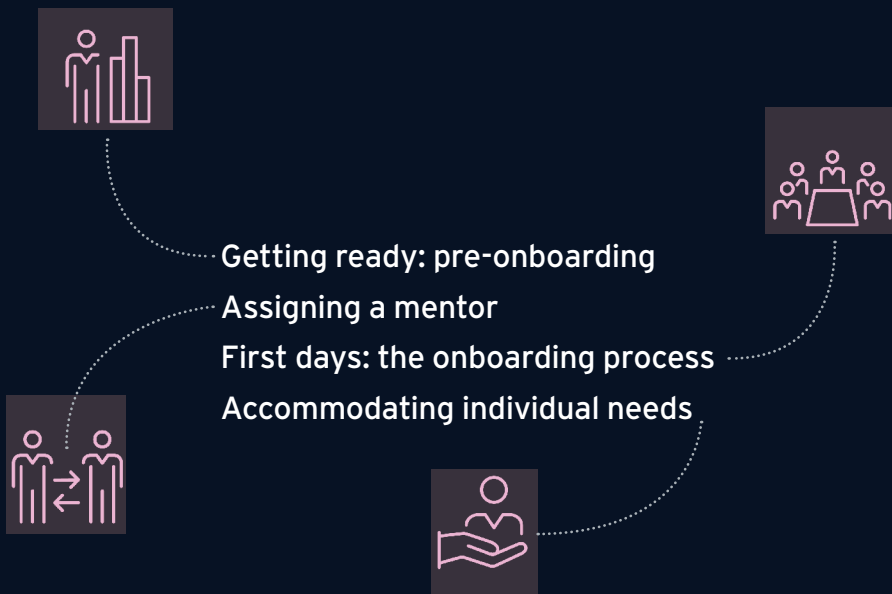
**Marcus Purcell, Partner,  
EY Parthenon**

Flexibility is key. While it's essential that the job meets a business need, it's also important to think about matching the role to the candidate. "Job carving" describes the process of matching a candidate's skills, aspirations and development needs with the needs of the business. Roles can be tweaked and customised; for example, where a candidate can do most of the tasks needed for a particular job, but not all. Carving out a tailored role for them can free up colleagues to focus on other tasks, boosting the team's overall performance.

Our Trinity graduates are working in a range of roles at EY, including supporting client financials, running employee wellbeing programmes, dealing with travel and expenses, managing client codes and providing PowerPoint and Excel reporting systems, and - in some cases - engaging directly with our clients.

# 4.2

# Enable



## Getting ready: pre-onboarding



### Key learnings

09\_If you're working with a partner organisation, try to meet the candidate there first so you can get to know them on familiar territory

10\_Addressing the practicalities of office life - perhaps including a pre-onboarding visit - can help reduce unnecessary anxiety

11\_A flexible work schedule - half days, a later start time - can help to break up the candidate's week and reduce the risk of them feeling overwhelmed

Thorough planning and preparation needs to start before the onboarding stage if candidates are to feel confident and comfortable about starting their new role.

– In the same way as any other colleague, candidates with ID should be issued with a contract before starting work. This is really important in setting clear expectations about the role and requirements from the outset, and also making sure that the candidate understands their rights. We found that it helped to involve a manager and/or parent or guardian at this stage, so they could “walk through” the contract with the candidate.

Contracts should cover the hours and days to be worked, as agreed with the candidate. At EY we have provided internships and part- and full-time roles, in line with the needs of the business and individual candidates' preferences. Bear in mind that candidates with ID who receive Government Disability Support payments will typically be able to work up to a certain monetary threshold without interfering with their benefit entitlement.



“It’s all about the preparation in advance. It could be simple accommodations or it could be invisible things that need to be put in place, like font size on screens being increased.”

**Marie Devitt, Trinity Pathways Coordinator**



Benóg Brady Bates,  
EY Parthenon Assistant

Candidates may benefit from guidance on finances. Mentors should be ready to talk about what it means to earn a salary, help them to understand their payslip and deductions, and potentially guide them through opening a bank account and creating a budgeting plan. It can be helpful to involve a parent/guardian in these conversations, too.

Addressing the practicalities of office life ahead of time can help to avoid unnecessary anxiety. We found our graduates were concerned about issues such as using lifts, what they should wear to the office - and how to get there. Practising the journey a couple of times, with a parent or even a mentor, made a big difference to their confidence.

## Assigning a mentor



### Key learnings

12\_Seat candidates close to their mentor for easy access

13\_Finding out what candidates like doing outside work – pets and hobbies, music and sport – will help build a strong relationship

14\_Assign more than one mentor to extend the circle of support (see page 30) and provide back-up

15\_The emotional impact of a mentor leaving can be significant. Be ready to provide candidates with extra support

16\_Watch your language – make it clear and unambiguous

17\_It's vital that mentors volunteer, rather than being co-opted into the role

The mentor is probably the single most important figure in supporting a smooth transition to the workplace. The mentor builds trust, and creates a safe space for raising concerns and asking questions. They can also provide an important link between the candidate and the HR team.

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The role includes providing support with practical issues such as completing forms, understanding processes and accessing resources, but just as important is helping the candidate to integrate socially and get to grips with workplace culture.

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For example, we told one of our graduates that lunchtime was between 12 and 2; then we noticed that she was waiting each day for someone to give her explicit permission to go to the canteen. The guidance wasn't sufficiently clear or detailed – lesson learned.

Getting the “mentor match” right is crucial, and it's important that those taking on the role have volunteered to do it. The relationship should be reviewed regularly to make sure it's still working for both sides.

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Colleagues taking on a mentoring role will also need support, including being offered training in working and communicating with people with ID (see page 32, Creating and maintaining an inclusive environment), and being allowed enough time to get to know their mentee and understand their needs.



Luke Campion, CBS Associate



“It’s crucial that mentors volunteer for it themselves. It’s very important that they have empathy, patience, kindness and the ability to be able to communicate clearly on what needs to be done. Being a mentor is something that must be within their personality.”

**Marie Devitt, Trinity Pathways Coordinator**

Engage | **Enable** | Empower





## First days: the onboarding process



### Key learnings

**18\_Try to have someone - their mentor, ideally - meet the candidate off their train or bus and walk them to the office on the first day. At the very least, make sure someone is there to meet them at the door**

**19\_A picture map of the office showing where key people sit and the location of services like bathrooms, HR and IT can be really helpful**

**20\_Suggest that the candidate create a list of their own preferences and styles to be shared with their manager and anyone else they'll be working with, and support them to do this if they wish**

**21\_Make charts or lists of the colleagues candidates interact with regularly, and include pictures**

Coming into any workplace for the first time can be a nerve-racking and daunting experience - and especially so for candidates who may never have worked in a formal setting before. Tackling their fear of the unknown is vital to creating a welcoming atmosphere and helping smooth the process of integration. As already mentioned, the mentor has a crucial role to play - along with the rest of the team.

- The practicalities that need to be covered in the first few days will depend on your workplace but could include:

- Obtaining a swipe card.
- Picking up a laptop or other equipment.
- Building logistics - location of toilets, the canteen, IT, HR...
- Introducing the candidate to the people sitting near them and any other colleagues they'll be working with.
- Completing timesheets and other essential forms (this is an area where HR colleagues can help).
- Support to complete any mandatory training.
- The work schedule - start and finish times, times for lunch and any other regular breaks.



“We learned a great deal from our graduates about the entire onboarding process for the office as a whole. We actually realised it was something that we needed to think more about. We need to talk to people more. We need to get a better feel for what skills people have when they join the office. That should be the same for anybody who joins EY.”

**Aidan Walsh, Tax Partner, Financial Services**



Eavan Daly,  
Global Compliance &  
Reporting Assistant

Our candidates told us that this process could often feel overwhelming. So take it slowly. Trickle information through gradually, and give candidates time to absorb it at each stage. Be ready to make accommodations for individual needs (see opposite).

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On the “softer” side, candidates may need guidance on aspects of working life such as confidentiality, preferred modes of communication and dress code. All of this is ongoing, not a one-off information download. Keep listening, and keep learning.

Disclosure - that is, whether and how much information to share about their disability - is another potentially challenging area to be aware of. Reassure the candidate that they are under no obligation to share information, and that anything they do tell you will be treated confidentially.

## Accommodating individual needs



### Key learnings

**22\_** Always respect the employee's privacy when working to put accommodations in place. Communicate needs, not identity

**23\_** Accommodations and support should always be driven by the employee: there is no "one size fits all"

**24\_** Ask the candidate what works for them - they will tell you!

An equitable approach accounts for the uniqueness candidates bring to the workplace. It means recognising that individuals and social groups have different needs, and creating an environment, culture and infrastructure where difference can thrive.

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It takes time to identify what individuals need to feel comfortable and perform at their best. Insights from education partners and from candidates themselves are vital. Some people with ID may also have forms of neurodiversity requiring accommodations that only become clear once they are in the work environment. Don't rush it. Keep an open mind and be receptive to what the candidate is telling you, verbally or otherwise.

Some aspects of the physical environment may have more impact on people with ID. For example, hot desking is the norm in the EY Dublin office, but for our first Trinity candidate this proved very challenging. To feel comfortable, she needed to have her own fixed working space, so we created one for her.

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Security access and swipe cards can be another challenge: some candidates may not want to have their photograph taken. A simple workaround is to have their mentor meet them at the front door when they come in. Keeping track of passwords can be tricky too. Think about having a system in place to help candidates remember them, with instructions on what to do if they forget.



"While I'm delighted to be a mentor, it shouldn't fall on just one person to be responsible for their graduate. The entire team should be responsible for coming up to that person and make sure they're not afraid to ask for help."

**Paula Pegman, Executive Assistant and mentor**



Mark Hogan, EY Staff Assistant, with mentor Paula Pegman

Be ready to provide extra support when implementing changes, whether that's to some aspect of IT or to broader working processes. Our Trinity graduates had to cope with the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and the resulting shift to remote working. We supported them to work remotely with a company laptop, headphones and broadband dongles where needed.



"I sit beside [my mentor] and I am glad to sit beside her because we can talk and have a cup of tea. In EY I can sit beside different people and they help me. We can have a laugh and a joke which is really important."

**Eavan Daly, Global Compliance & Reporting Assistant**

Roles were tweaked to accommodate online working and some tasks were put on hold. Mentors learned to be mindful of candidates during virtual meetings and to actively encourage them to participate when appropriate. We also learned to make sure that everyone had their cameras switched on - being able to put a face to a voice is vital.

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We had to learn on our feet and recognise that the levels of support needed are different and more challenging when working remotely. The more general lesson here is that needs can and will change over time, and that providing accommodations must be seen as an ongoing process.

# 4.3

# Empower



Building the circle of support

Creating and maintaining an inclusive environment

Thinking longer term: development and progression



## Building the circle of support



### Key learnings

**25** Clarify how you will engage with members of the support circle and establish clear feedback channels for their input

**26** Set clear rules of engagement. It's important that the candidate understands why each person in their circle of support is involved and that they're happy with the situation

The mentor may be the most important figure in helping the candidate settle into the workplace successfully (see page 22, Assigning a mentor), but they should also be part of a wider circle of support that includes alternative mentors (to ensure continuity and succession) and other colleagues with clearly defined roles, for example providing work-related information, or helping the candidate get involved in social activities.

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At EY, the circle of support includes the candidate's manager and our HR talent partner, as well as their mentor. The candidate's family may occasionally be involved in supporting the team, especially in the early days.

We've found that over time candidates become more confident in discussing topics such as annual leave, working hours and pensions directly with their manager or mentor, and that contact with parents and guardians reduces to an occasional phone call. Nevertheless, they remain a vital part of the support team.

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Think too about involving educators and other experts with experience of working with the candidate and with people with ID more generally. In our case, this has meant working closely with Trinity's Occupational Therapist and Pathways Coordinator.



## Creating and maintaining an inclusive environment



### Key learnings

**27\_Creating** opportunities to share stories and experiences is vital in confidence-building, strengthening the team and helping everyone get to know each other better

**28\_Communications** must be tailored to the candidate. Be patient, and be prepared to repeat messages as many times as needed

**29\_Make sure** candidates know they can push back; for example, if they feel like they're being given too much work to do or priorities are not clear

**30\_Always listen more** than you talk!

Providing an inclusive, supportive environment goes beyond physical considerations, although those are obviously important too (see page 27, Accommodating individual needs). Training for mentors, managers and the wider support circle can play an important role in raising awareness and promoting effective collaboration. At EY, our goal has always been to ensure that our Trinity graduates are seamlessly integrated into their respective teams.

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Our Inclusion for All e-learning covers topics including mitigating unconscious bias, understanding the impact of our frames of reference, insider/outsider dynamics, and how to create a sense of belonging and psychological safety. The Inclusion and Belonging workshop is required learning for managers and above, and focuses on recognising how bias, power and privilege manifest in the workplace and how we can challenge our own thinking.

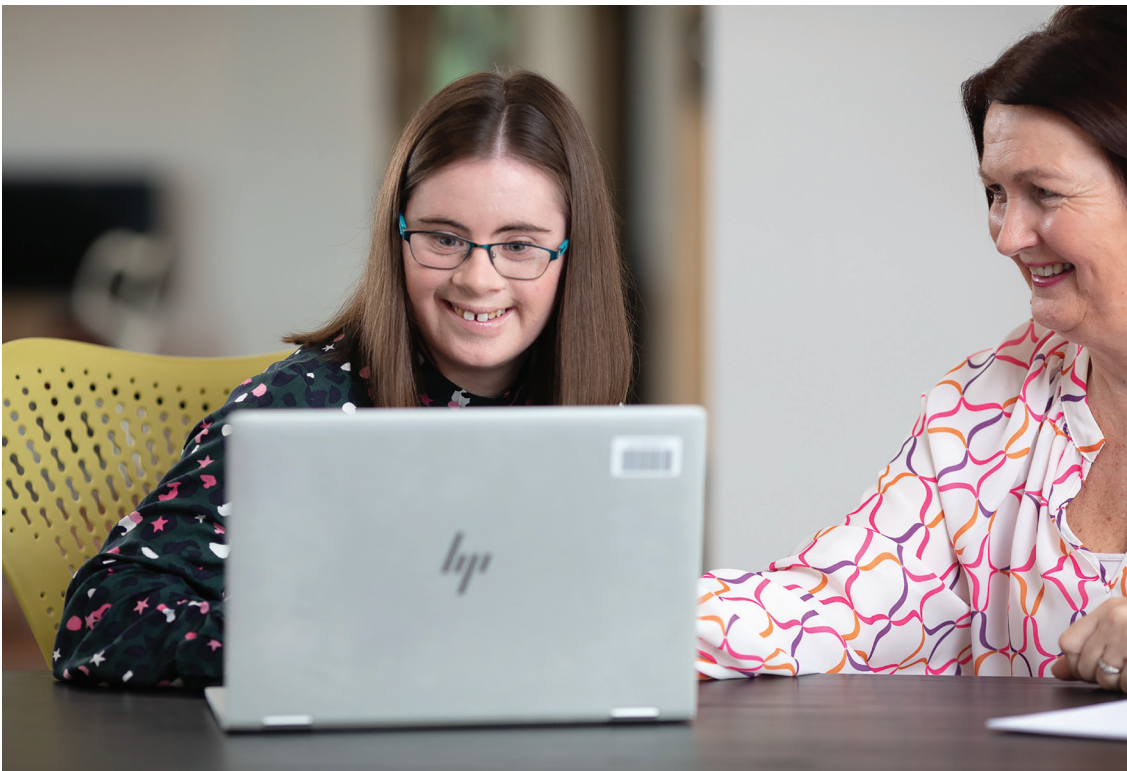
Communications may need to be tailored and tweaked for people with ID. Information may need to be repeated or presented differently. For example, in their standard form some of our mandatory training materials use complex, tech-heavy language, so we took steps to simplify this and make it more accessible. We also found that some of our graduates needed a steer as to which sections of documents were important, so they didn't waste time and energy trying to absorb irrelevant information.



“I feel when I'm in EY that no one cares [that I have special needs]. When someone gives me a task to do they'll email me everything I need and tell me as well. I don't have to ask over and over again.”

**Margaret Turley, Staff Assistant, EY Parthenon**





We also found that it helped to create written guides to using systems and completing tasks, breaking processes down step by step and, where appropriate, using screen shots to avoid any confusion. Mentors then worked through these with candidates, asking them to make notes and repeat the steps back to check understanding. Doing this helped build our graduates' confidence and belief in their ability to take on more - and more complex - tasks.

Creating opportunities to share experiences has a powerful impact too. Schedule regular review meetings for the candidate and everyone working with them to discuss any issues, challenges and solutions, so the whole team can benefit from the lessons being learned. At EY, we also hold four-weekly meetings via Teams - our "Trinners' Winners" calls - where graduates and mentors come together to talk about how things are going.

## Thinking longer term: development and progression



### Key learnings

**31\_Build on the candidate's graduate skills profile with a person-centred review to identify strengths and areas for development**

**32\_Share progression and development plans with the candidate**

**33\_Don't make assumptions about the tasks a candidate will want to take on - involve them in those discussions and decisions**

**34\_Providing support is vital - but so too is knowing when to step back and leave a candidate to tackle something alone**

**35\_Active promotion will raise awareness and encourage people to get involved. Have a dedicated landing page on your website and share successes through internal channels**

Inclusive processes and practices support all employees - not just people with ID - to realise their full potential. A person-centred review will build on the candidate's graduate skills profile, capturing strengths, identifying areas for development and providing a helpful benchmark against which future progress can be measured.

– Set clear but flexible expectations, and check in regularly to make sure graduates understand what's required of them. Goals and targets should be set and performance measured against these, just as with any other employee. Wages - and wage increases - should be in line with rank and role expectations.

More generally, don't be afraid to challenge and push, while ensuring candidates are getting the support they need. Initially, we had some concerns about whether the tasks we'd identified would be stimulating enough - would our candidates get bored?

– In practice that hasn't been an issue. As we've got to know our candidates better, we've learned what suits them and how much they can take on. Setting more complex tasks as and when appropriate has kept them engaged and motivated. Just remember to take it slowly, and keep checking in at every stage to ensure that candidates are still feeling comfortable and confident.



"It's great, I love it, I'm delighted here. I think I've found myself in exactly the right place. I think [my mentor] is happy with how I'm getting on. Every week he's going through harder and harder tasks with me and pushing me to be better. I can see myself going up a new ladder."

**Benóg Brady Bates, EY Parthenon Assistant**



For example, one of our Trinity graduates who had proved extremely competent at her role nevertheless got very anxious when she was offered some training so she could take on new tasks. It turned out that what was bothering her wasn't the prospect of tackling something new, it was the thought that she might have to switch between that and her existing work. When we realised this we agreed that she could focus on one type of task per day. Again, a problem that was solved very easily simply by asking questions and listening.

In some cases, progression will lead to the candidate being offered a permanent role. This shouldn't be seen as the only measure of success - a short placement or temporary contract is also a hugely valuable learning experience for everyone involved. That said, if you are planning to offer a candidate a permanent contract, it may well be one of the most significant events of their life. Don't miss the opportunity to make it an occasion for celebration, including by inviting family and friends as well as colleagues to share the moment.

# 5.

## Conclusion

Thank you for reading this guide. It has been a privilege to be involved with this initiative, developed in collaboration with the Trinity team, and to have the opportunity to share our experiences with you. We hope you have enjoyed the journey.

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In these pages, we have highlighted the benefits of creating meaningful opportunities for people with ID, including the benefits to our colleagues, to our business and to society overall. But perhaps the most profound impact has been on the candidates themselves. To take just one example, Stephen Ryan joined us as an intern after studying at Trinity. He explains what the experience has meant to him, in his own words:



“Stephen always said EY was the first place that ever wanted him as a person. In 27 years he’s never felt that he belonged anywhere. In school he was always seen as a problem and he’s not. He’s a great person. But Trinity and EY were the first places he was ever able to shine or be himself.”

**Brigid Ryan, Stephen’s mother**

“Before I started in Trinity, I was on my own for two years without a job and without education. Trinity really helped my confidence. They thought I would suit EY well because of my computer and technology skills. When they told me I was going there, I thought it was fantastic. I was very excited to start my journey.

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“To start with I was nervous about doing my work because I’d never done it before and I knew I’d need a little bit of extra help. But I found that once you do it a few times, it does stick, and then you can do it without help. I love being part of a team. I also love the social gatherings where I get to meet people on a more personal level.

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“Being at EY has changed my life completely. I’m moving into my own house. For the first time ever my parents won’t be around. It’s overwhelming, it’s amazing. In truth I feel brilliant. I can’t see my future anywhere else but EY. I couldn’t ask for a better, more supportive team. Now I want to go up the ladder and progress within the business.”



Stephen's story really brings our Engage/Enable/Empower model to life and shows how far-reaching the effects can be of simply giving someone a chance to demonstrate what they can do. For us, the challenge now is to continue learning and pushing ourselves to do ever more to make sure we are creating a truly inclusive environment for all our colleagues.

This is very much an ongoing journey. If you've been inspired to start your own, please do get in touch. We'd be delighted to help in any way we can. See page 43 to find out how to contact us. We look forward to hearing from you.

# 6.

## Summary of key learnings

### Engage.

**01\_** A C-suite sponsor will boost visibility and accountability.

**02\_** Sustainability is vital: make sure your plan includes the resources needed to develop the programme over time.

**03\_** Remember partners can also come from inside your own organisation - speak to lines of business to figure out how to tap into internal resources.

**04\_** Sustainable partnerships will help make your programme more resilient, provide access to a broader talent pipeline and enable you to cherry-pick each partner's specific strengths.

**05\_** Leverage others' knowledge and experience, and be ready to share your own learnings.

**06\_** Make sure your job spec only lists the skills and capabilities that are essential to the role, and be open to considering alternatives.

**07\_** Take time to look beyond a candidate's CV to get the full picture of what they can offer the business.

**08\_** Be flexible - use "job carving" to tweak roles as needed to match a candidate's skills and needs, and increase the chances of finding the right match.

### Enable.

**09\_** If you're working with a partner organisation, try to meet the candidate there first so you can get to know them on familiar territory.

**10\_** Addressing the practicalities of office life - perhaps including a pre-onboarding visit - can help reduce unnecessary anxiety.

**11\_** A flexible work schedule - half days, a later start time - can help to break up the candidate's week and reduce the risk of them feeling overwhelmed.

**12\_** Seat candidates close to their mentor for easy access.

**13\_** Finding out what candidates like doing outside work - pets and hobbies, music and sport - will help build a strong relationship.

**14\_** Assign more than one mentor to extend the circle of support and provide back-up.

**15\_** The emotional impact of a mentor leaving can be significant. Be ready to provide candidates with extra support.

**16\_** Watch your language - make it clear and unambiguous.

**17\_** It's vital that mentors volunteer, rather than being co-opted into the role.

**18\_** Try to have someone - their mentor, ideally - meet the candidate off their train or bus and walk them to the office on the first day. At the very least, make sure someone is there to meet them at the door.

**19\_** A picture map of the office showing where key people sit and the location of services like bathrooms, HR and IT can be really helpful.

**20\_** Suggest that candidates create a list of their preferences and styles to be shared with their manager and anyone else they'll be working with, and support them to do this.

**21\_** Make charts or lists of the colleagues candidates interact with regularly, and include pictures.

**22\_** Always respect the employee's privacy when working to put accommodations in place. Communicate needs, not identity.

**23\_** Accommodations and support should always be driven by the employee: there is no "one size fits all".

**24\_** Ask the candidate what works for them - they will tell you!

## Empower.

**25\_** Clarify how you will engage with members of the support circle and establish clear feedback channels for their input.

**26\_** Set clear rules of engagement. It's important that the candidate understands why each person in their circle of support is involved and that they're happy with the situation.

**27\_** Creating opportunities to share stories and experiences is vital in confidence-building, strengthening the team and helping everyone get to know each other better.

**28\_** Communications must be tailored to the candidate. Be patient, and be prepared to repeat messages as many times as needed.

**29\_** Make sure candidates know they can push back; for example, if they feel like they're being given too much work to do or priorities are not clear.

**30\_** Always listen more than you talk!

**31\_** Build on the candidate's graduate skills profile with a person-centred review to identify strengths and areas for development.

**32\_** Share progression and development plans with the candidate.

**33\_** Don't make assumptions about the tasks a candidate will want to take on - involve them in those discussions and decisions.

**34\_** Providing support is vital - but so too is knowing when to step back and leave a candidate to tackle something alone.

**35\_** Active promotion will raise awareness and encourage people to get involved. Have a dedicated landing page on your website and share successes through internal channels.

# 7.

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