

“Give us the chance to shine.” New resource to help more blind young people into work backed by Ministers

Friday 27 June, 2014

The Royal London Society for Blind People, a leading charity for blind and partially sighted young people has launched a dual purpose resource pack this week. The pack 'Let's Work it Out' aims to make businesses feel confident about employing people with a sight condition and coaches young people to feel more equipped about job hunting. The launch event was held on Thursday June 26th at the House of Commons.

Speaking at the event were Rt. Hon. Michael Fallon MP, Minister for Business and DWP Minister, Hon Nick Hurd MP, Minister for Civil Society and Kate Green, Chair of the All Party Parliamentary Group on Poverty. Guests also heard from members of the RLSB Youth Forum and Paul Smyth, Head of IT Accessibility at Barclays Bank, who is partially sighted.

Research shows that nine out of 10 employers rate blind people as either 'difficult' or 'impossible' to employ. It's estimated that 90% of those who lose their sight in youth won't work for more than six months in their lives.

The idea for the employment pack came from the RLSB Youth Forum Manifesto and **Joy Addo, Chair of the Youth Forum said,**

"I am excited about the possible impact that this pack will have on both my peers and future employers. I hope people take a lot from the case studies and the guidance. I want this pack to encourage young people to feel empowered, seek employment and have the confidence to take on roles that they truly desire, without the fears the come with dealing with a disability."

RLSB will be sending 500 employment packs, which was created in consultation with businesses and the RLSB Youth Forum, to organisations across the country to underline the wide variety of roles blind people can take on, as well as the government funding available for support in work.

Elaine Draper, Director, Accessibility & Inclusion at Barclays who also attended the event went on to say,

"As a business, we rely on a work force that truly represents and reflects our customers and clients. We benefit hugely from a diverse work force, as more often than not, it's people who have a disability that are the most determined, committed and hungry to succeed. A disability should never prevent someone from having a successful career, which is why we urge all businesses to get on board and offer work opportunities to blind young people."

Mike Penning, the Minister for Disabled People has endorsed the initiative:

"Vision impaired people have huge potential but amongst employers there is often a lack of awareness of the technology and support available for them. I hope that RLSB's pack is a practical move towards changing perceptions of their ability."

Businesses at the event pledged their support to employ more blind young people.

Let's work is out is available to download from rlsb.org.uk/letsworkitout

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