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Businesses to unlock potential of young people with learning disabilities

Representatives from almost 50 major businesses and organisations to discuss getting more young people with special educational needs into meaningful paid employment.

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On Thursday 4th June, delegates from companies such as Royal Mail, Big Lottery Fund and Ernst & Young will hear about National Grid's 'EmployAbility – Let's Work Together' programme at a conference in Warwick. EmployAbility takes students with learning disabilities and places them in internships that expose them to a business environment.

Representatives and interns from National Grid will describe their experience of setting up the EmployAbility programme, and discuss the benefits of helping disabled people into work.

Currently just seven per cent of people with learning disabilities are in paid work. They find themselves locked out by a possible lack of qualifications or because they don't have the communication skills to succeed in a job interview.

Welcoming the programme, Minister for Disabled People, Justin Tomlinson MP, said:

"The latest figures show another significant increase in the number of disabled people in employment and it's clear we're moving in the right direction.

"The EmployAbility Programme is an excellent example of how a business can build a strong and talented workforce while giving opportunities to young disabled people.

"By encouraging others to set up their own schemes we can continue to break down career barriers for disabled people and support them to fulfil their potential."

Mark Pickles, EmployAbility Co-founder, National Grid, said:

"We're delighted that so many businesses are joining us to hear about how they too can benefit from giving disabled people a chance in their workplaces.

"We'd encourage all businesses to sign up and run schemes like EmployAbility. Colleagues with disabilities add real value and, with many having often overcome significant barriers in their personal life, demonstrate perseverance and a strong ability to manage challenges in the business environment."

Taurai Horton, who graduated from the National Grid EmployAbility scheme and will be speaking at the event on Thursday, said:

"Through the EmployAbility scheme I realised I could achieve much more than I ever imagined.

"If it wasn't for people believing in me, I would never have had the chance to prove myself. Now I'm playing an important role in the Sustainability & Climate Change team at National Grid."

Contact for media information only

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Notes for editors

1) To find out more, see our EmployAbility website at <http://employability.letsworktogether.com/579-2/employability-story>

2) Read Head of Gas Distribution Emma Fitzgerald's article on the EmployAbility programme at <http://www.nationalgridconnecting.com/inspirational-interns/>

3) We will be tweeting during Thursday 4th June from [@nationalgriduk](https://twitter.com/nationalgriduk) using the hashtag #EmployAbility

4) To request an interview with a National Grid spokesperson, please call Mark Malbas in the National Grid Corporate Media Relations team on 01926 655291 or 07771 342178.

Notes to Editors:

National Grid is pivotal to the energy systems in the UK and the north eastern United States. We aim to serve customers well and efficiently, supporting the communities in which we operate and making possible the energy systems of the future.

National Grid in the UK:

- We own and operate the electricity transmission network in England and Wales, with day-to-day responsibility for balancing supply and demand. We also operate, but do not own, the Scottish networks. Our networks comprise approximately 7,200 kilometres (4,474 miles) of overhead line, 1,500 kilometres (932 miles) of underground cable and 342 substations.
- We own and operate the gas National Transmission System in Great Britain, with day-to-day responsibility for balancing supply and demand. Our network comprises approximately 7,660 kilometres (4,760 miles) of high-pressure pipe and 618 above-ground installations.
- As Great Britain's System Operator (SO) we make sure gas and electricity is transported safely and efficiently from where it is produced to where it is consumed. From April 2019, Electricity System Operator (ESO) is a new standalone business within National Grid, legally separate from all other parts of the National Grid Group. This will provide the right environment to deliver a balanced and impartial ESO that can realise real benefits for consumers as we transition to a more decentralised, decarbonised electricity system.
- Other UK activities mainly relate to businesses operating in competitive markets outside of our core regulated businesses, including interconnectors, gas metering activities and a liquefied natural gas (LNG) importation terminal – all of which are now part of National Grid Ventures. National Grid Property is responsible for the management, clean-up and disposal of surplus sites in the UK. Most of these are former gas works.

Find out more about the energy challenge and how National Grid is helping find solutions to some of the challenges we face at <https://www.nationalgrid.com/group/news>

National Grid undertakes no obligation to update any of the information contained in this release, which speaks only as at the date of this release, unless required by law or regulation.

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