

Case study



Creating the empowerment passport

Mandy Whalley

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About Mandy

Mandy Whalley is an occupational therapist who works on the Wirral. Her diverse career has been a journey through many settings.

Mandy's passion for neurodiversity comes from her professional and personal life supporting her son with autism, ADHD and dyslexia.

Her journey has been driven by wanting to understand people's needs and find person centred solutions to their goals. This led to the creation of her empowerment passport.

About the innovation

People with learning disabilities face barriers finding and keeping jobs. Often, there is a lack of understanding about what people can achieve with the right support (Mencap 2020).

The empowerment passport started out as a paper-based tool for her son's employer. It helped them understand his needs and make reasonable adjustments in the workplace.

Mandy soon realised the potential of this innovation for people with any long-term condition.

Mandy has developed the passport into an online resource which works in two ways.

1. an inbuilt questionnaire allows people to think about and describe their needs
2. building on this, people can create a resource which includes the adjustments they need to reach their potential.

The empowerment passport provides people with disabilities the tools to advocate for themselves. Its' resources educate employers, challenge attitudes and build workplace capacity to support people to achieve.

Find out more at: [Empowerment Passport – Introducing your new friend for life!](#)

Impact

- Currently 205 online empowerment passports are in use in the UK. Mandy has had interest from OTs in Australia and New Zealand as well as academics at Stanford University in the USA. She is exploring international copyright and trademarking.
- Mandy is now working with private occupational health services, independent OT services, paediatric OT services, a sixth form college, vocational rehabilitation services and community interest companies.
- Most recently, Health Education England has undertaken a trial focusing on the use of the passport with 80 health care students transitioning into NHS jobs. The London School of Economics are completing a cost savings as part of this trial.
- Mandy has collected feedback from a range of users about how the tool has enabled them to effectively articulate their needs. David said 'I enjoyed the more personalised approach. I like that I don't have to explain myself every time I go somewhere new as it's boring and embarrassing – now I can just send this'.

- In addition, an employer, Johan, who used the passport said, 'I was more confident at making small, bespoke no-cost adjustments for the individual, accommodating their unique characteristics. This helped my employee fulfil their potential as well as being valued for their hard work within the business'.
- For her incredible work, Mandy has been shortlisted for two awards:
 1. the 'Work for Tomorrow' award, which is an international competition focused on innovative ways of supporting an ageing workforce
 2. the 'Celebrating Neurodiversity awards' which recognises people who go above and beyond to promote accessibility and inclusion.

Feeling inspired to pilot your own innovation?

Share your ideas with the **RCOT Innovation Hub** who can offer support along your journey and share learning more widely.

References

Mencap (2020) Employment vision statement, accessed online
<https://www.mencap.org.uk/about-us/what-we-think/employment-what-we-think>