

MUSIC

*Title* In the last two years Leicester City Council have employed 17 people with learning difficulties.

This is Shamina’s story.

*Shamima* I come in for work around quarter to nine, and I sign in. Then I  
*Essat* check the calendar, I check my emails, then I just type in drafts, minutes, and if a, a meeting needs booking I will book that. If emails need send I will send that, and then (inaudible).

*Woman* Do you remember you set up the relationships meetings?

*Shamima* Yeah, for you (inaudible).

*Yasmin* Shamina prior to coming to work at the council, left college with  
*Surti* really not a lot of prospects. She’d been told that there was nothing really that she could progress onto.

*Yasmin* I need to – Carol?

*Yasmin* Shamima sat at home for two, three years. She was getting very  
*Surti* depressed. She wasn’t happy.

*Shamima* I'd stuck with benefit and I was bored, I was this close to being  
*Essat* depressed every single day.

*Yasmin* Shamima then linked up with a local group called Ansar. Ansar  
*Surti* had been set up to specifically bridge that kind of gap for people  
who weren't accessing any services but were still in need of  
some support in the community.

*Woman* How are you? Are you alright?

*Shamima* Yeah, I'm fine.

*Rehana* Ansar is a place that people with learning disabilities can access.

*Sidat* It's somewhere that they identify as being their own. They're able  
to come along and talk about their concerns, any issues they  
have, their dreams, what they want to do. We have a project  
where we support people into employment, especially people with  
learning disabilities because we know it's harder for them.

*Rehana* What other work would you like to do?

*Shamima* Office work.

*Rehana* Office work? Okay. So we need to right that down.

*Shamima* Rehana, like, made me feel comfortable with my learning difficulties and my disability.

*Rehana* As time went on we built up her confidence. We talked about

*Sidat* what she wanted to do in the future, and one of the things that she said was she’d love to have a paid job.

MUSIC

*Trish* As a learning disability service we were going out to businesses

*Branson* and encouraging them to employ learning disabled people, and then on a reflective moment, talking to colleagues, I thought we don’t do it at the council ourselves. We should be doing something about it.

*Yasmin* We looked at the budget and we set aside some of it to ring fence

*Surti* some jobs for people with learning disabilities, and then there’s the battle of convincing HR.

*Trish* It took me 18 months before we could get an advert out.

*Branson* Because we have such bureaucratic systems, an application form

that’s five, six pages long, lots of questions, job descriptions and person specs; human resources, when they realised why we wanted to do it and why we needed to do it, as a council, they worked with us and they said yes, we can make this happen.

*Shamima* One day I went to Ansar and just me and Rohana in the office,  
*Essat* and she’d had this email from the council saying that they’re employing people who’ve got learning difficulties.

*Rehana* I had a conversation I remember, with Shamima talking about the  
*Sidat* jobs, and after that she said no, I don’t think I could do this. She didn’t believe that she could do this job, so it took a lot of work with her, talking to her, explaining to her, and then it was going for the interview, she was quite nervous, and she asked me to come with her. But when she got there, she didn’t need me. She was fantastic.

*Trish* Instead of it being a question and answer interview, what we did  
*Branson* was a hands-on interview, so they could demonstrate to us that they could do the job.

*Shamima* Got a busy day today?

*Woman* Yeah, I’m quite busy. What about you?

*Shamima* Meeting, one, around 11.

*Shamima* My social skills are better now, and I just like, be myself, I don’t

*Essat* have to hide my disability and I’m not scared any more of like meeting new people.

*Yasmin* Shamima’s spoken at conferences about her job, to people within

*Surti* her community, and the message that sends to, to not only other women but other disabled people, other carers, is so powerful.

*Trish* We feel very confident now that we can go out to businesses and

*Branson* approach them and encourage them to employ people with learning disabilities, because have some real knowledge and experience, which we lacked, initially.

*Shamima* Before I had to ask someone to shop for me, but now I can treat

*Essat* my family, like for dinner or buy them something nice for them. Like treat myself, like clothes, books.

*Rehana* Hard to reach communities like the ME community it’s, it’s about

*Sidat* us reaching out to them. It’s about us having an understanding of

their backgrounds, their cultures, the way people live, the way people think, and that’s the most important thing.

*Ebrahim* From behalf of mum and dad, I can honestly say that now she’s started this job it’s helped her immensely. Her confidence levels have definitely risen, she’s much more open, like before she used to like shy away from many things like weddings and family occasions, but now she’s definitely, it’s definitely brought her out of her shell.

*Shamima* Now I’m helping my parents a lot, because in the past my family supported me a lot, and now it’s my turn to support them.

*Titles* Shamina now works 16 hours per week. Shamina has travelled independently for the first time to share her story. Leicester City Council plan to employ people with learning difficulties across all departments.

With thanks to all those involved in the making of this film.

MUSIC

*END*