

Information

Help for disabled people from Jobcentre Plus

- You may photocopy this information booklet
 - You may quote from this information booklet if you acknowledge the source
 - Skill information booklets are available in standard print, large print, Braille, tape and disk formats
 - Every effort has been made to ensure accuracy. However, Skill cannot guarantee factual content
-

Skill: National Bureau for Students with Disabilities

Chief Executive: Barbara Waters

Chapter House, 18-20 Crucifix Lane, London SE1 3JW

Email: skill@skill.org.uk

Website: www.skill.org.uk

Tel: 020 7450 0620

Fax: 020 7450 0650

Information service:

Tuesday 11.30am-1.30pm

Thursday 1.30pm-3.30pm

Tel: 0800 328 5050

Textphone: 0800 068 2422

Email: info@skill.org.uk

Skill is a company limited by guarantee (2397897) and a registered Charity (801971)



Help for disabled people from Jobcentre Plus

Contents	Page
1 Introduction	1
2 Disability service	2
3 Jobcentre schemes	3
4 The law	13
5 Other information	14
6 Useful contacts	14
7 Useful leaflets/publications	16

1 Introduction

Since April 2002, the Employment Service merged with the Benefits Agency and is now known as The Jobcentre Plus Network. The Jobcentre Plus Network offers the same support and advice as the Employment Service.

In addition:

- A jobcentre or employment service is now known as Jobcentre Plus.
- A Disability Service Team is now known as a Disability Services and Financial Services Team.
- Any working age benefits are administered by the jobcentre, but benefits are not covered in this booklet (Skill has separate booklets on these issues).

The Jobcentre Plus is part of the Government Department for Work and Pensions. The service runs jobcentres and related schemes around Great Britain for people looking for work. To find the jobcentre in your local area, look in the telephone directory or on the Jobcentre Plus website (see section 6 for contact details).

You can telephone Jobseekers Direct, who can help you find full-time or part-time job. They can send application forms and arrange interviews for you. Tel: 0845 606 0234. Text: 0845 605 5255. Monday to Friday 9am to 6pm, Saturday 9am to 1.00pm. If you have access to the internet, you can look at the Jobcentre Plus website at: www.jobcentreplus.gov.uk. For help and information on CVs, application forms or interviews, go to the Job Kit page. Jobcentre job adverts are also displayed on the worktrain website at www.worktrain.gov.uk.

As a disabled person you can use all the usual facilities that are available to any person looking for a job, eg jobcentres, client advisers etc. However, if you need specialised help because you are disabled, it should be available to you through the services detailed in this booklet.

For further information about agencies and other organisations that offer information and advice to disabled people seeking employment, please refer to Skill information booklets: Careers and work for disabled people and Using recruitment agencies as a disabled jobseeker; also, read Skill information booklet Looking for work: disclosing disability, which discusses whether and how to inform a potential employer about your disability.

2 Disability Service

Disability Services and Financial Services Team (DSFST)

DSFST provide an advice and assessment service for disabled people and employers. There are around 70 Disability Services Teams based in jobcentre offices around the country. They should be able to offer help and support to meet your individual needs, for example, they may do an assessment of your employment prospects, look at retraining possibilities if you have

recently become disabled, or help you to find work.

Disability Employment Adviser (DEA) – how they can help

The Disability Employment Adviser is a member of the Disability Services and Financial Services Team and should be your main point of contact. The DEA should be able to help you draw up an action plan for finding or retaining work. They can tell you about suitable jobs, further assessments and provision for ongoing support for people with disabilities.

Disability Employment Advisers work closely with you and your employers to help you carry out your job efficiently and with support. DEAs can help you find solutions to practical difficulties, ergonomics and accessibility of premises.

Disability Employment Advisers can make referrals to Work Preparation schemes, to an occupational psychologist for an Employment Assessment and to jobcentre schemes designed for disabled people.

Graduates/undergraduates

If you are a disabled graduate (or are about to graduate), you may find that the Disability Services and Financial Services Service Teams and DEAs do not have much experience of working with people who have your qualifications. However, you are still entitled to get general help and advice from them. You may wish to make use of their knowledge of general disability employment issues, along with the specialist graduate knowledge of the careers service in your college or university.

3 Jobcentre Plus schemes

For information about whether you are eligible for help through any of the following schemes, contact your jobcentre adviser or your Disability Employment Adviser.

Access to Work (AtW)

Access to Work provides practical help to disabled employees. AtW has been created to be a flexible scheme equipping disabled people to overcome barriers in the workplace, by meeting some of the extra employment costs that arise from a disability. It can pay for many aspects of support ranging from the extra cost of getting to and from work to special aids and equipment, and adaptations to premises.

Examples of help available through Access to Work:

- a communicator/interpreter for a job interview, if you are deaf or hard of hearing or have communication difficulties
- a support worker if you need practical help, either at work or getting to work, such as a reader for somebody with a visual impairment; communicator for a deaf or hard of hearing person (including an interpreter for work interviews); a specialist job coach for a person with a learning difficulty; or a helper for personal care needs at work
- equipment (or alterations to existing equipment) to suit your particular needs
- alterations to premises or a working environment to make it more accessible
- help towards taxi fares or other transport costs if you cannot use public transport to get to work, including help with adaptations to a car.

Who can get help through Access to Work?

Help from AtW is available to you if you are disabled and either about to start a job or already in work. It does not matter if you are at present employed, unemployed, changing jobs or self-employed. See below for more information about self-employment. You can be in or about to start any kind of work, part-time, full-time, temporary or permanent.

Registration as disabled and Quota Designated Employment was abolished when the employment provisions in the Disability

Discrimination Act 1995 came into force in December 1996. This means that you no longer need to be registered as disabled for employment purposes.

These changes also mean that you do not have to be registered as disabled to get help through AtW. You will have to show that your disability or medical condition creates additional employment costs in your job and is likely to last 12 months or longer.

How much help is available through Access to Work?

If you apply for AtW within 6 weeks of starting your job, including changing to a new job, AtW will meet all of your approved costs.

If you have been in work for more than 6 weeks Access to Work will not meet all of the costs of adaptations to premises or aids and equipment. In such cases, AtW will pay 80% of the approved costs above a threshold of £300 and below £10,000, and 100% of the cost above £10,000, in a 3 year period. In addition, employers are expected to contribute at least 50% of the costs of adapting premises. However, AtW will meet all approved costs for a support worker and for travelling to work. It also meets all the approved costs for self employed people.

If you change jobs and still need help, it may be possible to take any equipment already provided under AtW to your new job, although technically the equipment is owned by the employer. Speak to the AtW Business Adviser at the Access to Work Business Centre or your Disability Employment Adviser (DEA) about what to do. Whatever happens, you will still be entitled to make an application in respect of your new job.

How do I apply for AtW?

Your main point of contact is the AtW Business Adviser. They will be able to take your application by telephone but may need to visit you at your work place in order to carry out an assessment of your needs. They will arrange for the support to be provided through AtW.

Your employer will be expected to order and pay for any equipment and support that you need, and then claim the cost from Access to Work.

Graduates/undergraduates

If you are a graduate or are about to graduate, you can get help through Access to Work in the same way as any disabled person. If you need communication help for a job interview before your graduation, you should be able to access this service, despite the fact that you are still studying. Contact the AtW Business Centre or the DEA at your local jobcentre about this. If you have any problems getting the help you need, you can ask the local Disability Services and Financial Services Service Team manager to check out the situation.

Employers and Access to Work

When you are applying for jobs, remember that Access to Work may be available to you. You should mention it to your potential employer, either at the application stage or in your interview. The jobcentre has an AtW information leaflet for employers and also has publications on employing disabled people.

Disability Symbol

The Disability Symbol is a Jobcentre Plus scheme through which employers can show that they are prepared to make certain positive commitments towards employing disabled people. The five commitments are in recruitment, retaining employees who become disabled, consulting disabled employees, developing greater awareness of disability and reviewing progress. The jobcentre publishes leaflets about the symbol and the commitments that employers need to make in order to display it. You will see the symbol (two ticks and the wording 'positive about disabled people') displayed on job adverts and application forms.

Job Introduction Scheme (JIS)

If you have secured a job but you or your employer are unsure of how you will deal with the job or the work environment, the Job Introduction Scheme can give you some time to adjust, to see what your capabilities are in the job and help you decide if you will continue. During the first 6 weeks of employment, the JIS provides a weekly grant for employment costs and the Disability Employment Adviser can help with any difficulties or issues faced by you and your employer.

New Deal

You are able to join the New Deal if you have been unemployed and claiming Jobseeker's Allowance (JSA) for over six months. If you are disabled, you don't have to have been unemployed for six months to gain access to the New Deal. New Deal personal advisers in the jobcentre should be aware of the additional needs of people with disabilities and make use of the flexibility of the initial 'Gateway' stage to provide appropriate programmes. Here are some features of the New Deal for jobseekers with disabilities:

- specialist advice and support
- 'taster' options of work lasting for a trial period without any threat to benefit entitlement
- possibility of having part-time hours once on a New Deal option
- guaranteed training opportunities once on a New Deal scheme
- if you are forced to give up the scheme due to disability, this should be seen as 'good cause' and you should be able to retain your benefits until a more appropriate placement can be found
- development of mentoring schemes.

The four New Deal options for 18-24 year olds

You enter the New Deal through the 'Gateway', where you will be allocated an adviser, who will spend 1-4 months providing individual support, advice and guidance. At the end of this period, you will be offered one of four options:

1 Employment: A job with a private sector employer for 6 months. This will give you a wage over the 'class 1' national insurance lower limit and you will no longer be able to claim JSA. The employer has to provide in-house or external training for you. You may be able to claim Housing Benefit, Council Tax Benefit and Working Families' Tax Credit, like others in low paid work.

2 Voluntary Sector: If you work for a voluntary organisation they will have the same training obligations as private employers. However, you will continue to receive your benefits and receive a grant for work-related expenses like travel.

3 Environmental Task Force: You may be offered a place on an Environmental Task Force helping to meet government targets for energy conservation. You should get a similar deal to employees in the voluntary sector scheme and training will be available as part of the placement.

4 Full-time education and training: If you have no qualifications above NVQ level 2, you could qualify for full-time study on an approved course for up to 12 months. You will be able to continue to collect benefit and you'll receive an access grant for books and fares. The Social Security Amendment (New Deal) Regulations 1997 states that young people involved in this option will not be treated as being in 'relevant education'.

Benefit entitlement for New Deal participants

Top up payments and childcare expenses given to participants who continue to receive benefits will be disregarded as income or capital for benefits including Jobseeker's Allowance, Housing Benefit and Council Tax Benefit.

If you are on JSA, you cannot opt out of the New Deal. If you refuse all the options that you are offered without 'good cause', your benefits will stop. This is initially for two weeks for the first refusal and four weeks for each subsequent refusal.

Similar sanctions will be imposed on people who leave schemes early. However, if you are forced to leave a scheme because of your disability, this will be seen as a 'good cause' and you will retain your benefits until a more appropriate placement can be found.

If you return to JSA after completing an option, you will continue to get support from your personal adviser and from a range of programmes and initiatives specifically aimed at creating employment opportunities for disabled people.

New Deal for Disabled People – The Personal Adviser Service

This scheme is to help people who have a long term illness or disability and who are on incapacity benefits but want to return to work. Personal advisers give advice and practical support to help you choose the right type of work, get into work and retain your job.

Those on the New Deal for Disabled People have access to a network of Job Brokers drawn from the private, public and voluntary sectors. Job Brokers operate throughout England, Scotland and Wales. They help employers to fill vacancies by matching suitable applicants and developing the skills of people with disabilities to meet the needs of employers.

Other New Deals

New Deals are also available for over 25's, lone parents and over 50's.

See your DEA or Employment Service Adviser who will be able to give you details of how the New Deal will operate in your area.

Programme centres

This programme is aimed at people who are considered to be 'job ready'. It includes different modules that aim to help jobseekers look for work. Your jobcentre Adviser would advise you on which modules are appropriate for you. As part of the scheme, you will have access to a resource centre, where you can use telephones, computers, stamps and other office equipment. Contact your jobcentre Adviser to see whether you are eligible for help from this scheme.

Work Based Learning for Adults (WBLA)

WBLA aims to get people, predominantly the long term unemployed, into jobs through a mix of occupational training, improving employability and/or work experience. The training is tailored to the needs of each individual who joins the programme.

WBLA is usually only available to clients who are 25 or over. However, a disabled person aged 18 to 24 may be eligible for the provision, provided that they are not claiming Jobseeker's Allowance. To be eligible for provision, most participants must have been unemployed for 26 weeks for SJFT, BET and SEP (see below) and 12 months for LOT. They must also be in receipt of a qualifying benefit. However, as a disabled person, you may be able to enter the programme at an earlier stage.

During the time spent on WBLA, you receive any benefits you are entitled to, plus an additional £10 training allowance. Additional travel and childcare expenses may also be available.

WBLA comprises the following:

Short Job Focused Training (SJFT)

SJFT helps you to acquire and/or update work-related skills to enable you to get a job.

Longer Occupational Training (LOT)

LOT helps you acquire new skills or update existing ones through tailored work-focused training to help you find work. LOT lasts for a maximum of 52 weeks.

Basic Employability Training (BET)

BET is particularly focused on people who need assistance in overcoming severe basic skills needs and English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) difficulties. BET lasts for a maximum of 26 weeks.

Self Employment Provision (SEP)

SEP offers you the opportunity to move into unsupported self-employment. SEP also offers support to those participants who decide during their time on the provision that they would rather seek employment with an employer than be self-employed. SEP provides participants with access to good quality advice and support, and also, where appropriate, the opportunity to undertake a period of test trading. This allows participants to experience the realities of self-employment while continuing to receive help and support from the provider.

Jobcentre allowances

When you are on a Work Based Learning for Adults programme you will receive a jobcentre allowance. The jobcentre allowance will be the same amount of money as your previous benefit plus an additional premium of £10 for each week of participation. If you were not getting benefit, you may have an underlying contributory or income-based entitlement which will be paid as a jobcentre allowance during the programme. If your previous benefit has been suspended or disallowed, depending on the reason why, this may have an effect on your jobcentre allowance. Jobcentre allowances are not taxable and do not count towards your taxable allowance. You will automatically be credited with National Insurance contributions during the period on the programme.

Work preparation

This programme aims to help people with a disability return to work after a long period of sickness or unemployment. It can achieve this by helping you to identify suitable work, providing work experience opportunities, improving your skills and building your confidence. The programme usually lasts 6 weeks but can be extended to 13 weeks or more. Following this, you may be able to go into further education, training or work, depending on your individual situation. You would normally be able to follow the programme locally, either at the premises of a programme provider or a local workplace. Sometimes work preparation can be held at a residential centre.

Work trial

This involves undertaking work on a trial basis. It is aimed at people who are aged 25 years or over and have been unemployed for 6 months or more. You carry out a placement for 15 working days. You would still get any benefits that you are receiving such as Jobseeker's Allowance. You would also be paid travel expenses of up to £10 per day and meal expenses of up to £1.50 per day.

WORKSTEP

If you have a disability that makes it difficult for you to find or keep a job, WORKSTEP may be able to help you.

WORKSTEP provides support to you and your employer that fits your individual needs and helps you develop and improve your skills. It offers a variety of different job opportunities with a wide range of organisations from small high street shops to national companies. Some supported employees are also employed in supported factories and businesses.

The jobcentre works in partnership with local authorities, voluntary bodies and Remploy Ltd (see Useful contacts section) to operate WORKSTEP.

4 The law

The Disability Discrimination Act 1995 established new employment rights for disabled people. The Act aims to prohibit discrimination against disabled people when they are in or seeking employment. Under the Act employers are required to take reasonable steps to remove physical barriers or adjust their practices to make it possible for disabled people to work for them.

The Act states what is meant by unlawful discrimination in employment situations. Discrimination occurs when:

- a disabled person is treated less favourably than someone else; and
- the treatment is given for a reason relating to the person's disability; and
- that reason would not apply to a non-disabled person; and
- the treatment cannot be justified.

Employers must not discriminate against a disabled person: in the recruitment, selection and retention of employees; in the work conditions; in promotion and transfers; in training and development; in the dismissal process. They must also make reasonable adjustments to their premises or employment arrangements if these substantially disadvantage a disabled employee, or prospective employee, compared to a non-disabled employee.

If a disabled person feels that they have been unfairly treated they may be able to take legal proceedings. Complaints against employers can be presented at an industrial tribunal. For further information see Skill information booklets [The Disability Discrimination Act](#) and [Making a complaint](#).

5 Other information

The Jobseeker's Charter

This sets out the standards you can expect when dealing with the jobcentre. It includes information on what service you can expect, standards of service and your responsibilities. It explains how to go about making a complaint. This can be made through a leaflet available at jobcentres or via e-mail through the Jobcentre Plus website.

The jobcentre will not display a vacancy if they think the employer is trying to discriminate unlawfully on grounds of race, sex or disability. Employers are also encouraged not to put an upper or lower age limit on vacancies.

For further information about the steps to take if you are not satisfied with the service you are receiving, see Skill information booklet [Making a complaint](#).

6 Useful contacts

Department for Work and Pensions

Disability Unit, Department for Work and Pensions, Level 6, Adelphi, 1-11 John Adam Street, London WC2N 6HT
Jobcentre Plus and the Benefit's Agency fall under this government department.

Website for disability services:

www.jobcentreplus.gov.uk/cms.asp?Page=/Home/Customers/HelpForDisabledPeople

Government disability website

www.disability.gov.uk

Jobcentre Plus

Website: www.jobcentreplus.gov.uk

Jobseeker Direct

Tel: 0845 606 0234 Textphone: 0845 605 5255

New Deal

Helpline: 0800 163 339 Fax: 020 7211 4341

Website: www.newdeal.gov.uk

New Deal for Disabled People

Helpline: 0800 137 177 Text: 0800 435 550

Website: www.newdeal.gov.uk/nddp

Remploy Interwork (part of Remploy Ltd.)

Spencer House, Britannia Road, Banbury, Oxfordshire OX16 8DP

Tel: 01295 275 333 Textphone: 01295 274 948

Fax: 01295 268 004

Email: interwork@remploy.co.uk

Employing disabled people through the WORKSTEP scheme.

Remploy Ltd.

Stonecourt, Siskin Drive, Middlemarch Business Park, Coventry CV3 4FJ

Tel: 024 7651 5800 Fax: 024 7651 5860

Website: www.remploy.co.uk

Factories employing disabled people through the WORKSTEP scheme.

Worktrain

This is an internet based job bank at www.worktrain.gov.uk. It includes information on vacancies advertised by the jobcentre. Specific details of job vacancies can then be obtained from the Jobseeker Direct telephone helpline or individual jobcentres.

7 Useful leaflets/publications

There are a range of Jobcentre Plus leaflets available. Contact your local jobcentre for copies:

Access to Work. Information for disabled people.

Access to Work. Information for employers of disabled people.

Make it Work. Video for hearing-impaired people in British Sign Language with subtitles and voice-over about Jobcentre services and practical support. Information on the standards of service you can expect to receive when dealing with the jobcentre are available on tape. Also available in leaflet format.

Becoming a Disability Symbol User. Information for employers.

Employing Disabled People. How the jobcentre can help.

Employing Disabled People. Sources of information and advice.

Job Introduction Scheme. Information leaflet.

Help to Work through WORKSTEP. Further information on the scheme.

Jobcentre Services: Advice, Training, Learning and Work. Details of help available from jobcentres.

The Disability Symbol: what it means for you.

The above leaflets can be made available in Braille, large print or tape, as well as in Welsh and several other languages. If your local office does not have copies, they should be able to order them for you.

Directory of Supported Employment opportunities. Details of supported workshops and organisations that run supported employment schemes around the UK. Includes sections on social security benefits and local and national disability organisations. Price £25. Available from the Disability Information Services (DISS), Harrowlands, Harrowlands Park, Dorking, Surrey RH4 2RA

Tel: 01306 875 156

E-mail: leonie.riddett@diss.org.uk

Skill information booklets

Skill produces a range of information booklets covering disability issues in post-16 education and employment. The following are particularly relevant to the issues covered in this information booklet:

- Disability Discrimination Act 1995
- Making a complaint
- Careers and work for disabled people
- Looking for work: disclosing disability
- Using recruitment agencies as a disabled jobseeker

Please contact Skill's Information Service for further details. As a disabled student or jobseeker, you can obtain 5 information booklets free of charge. There is a charge of £2.50 per booklet for professionals. You can also access all of these at Skill's website: www.skill.org.uk in the Information section, under Information sheets.

Skill publications

Get that job. Internet based publication available free on Skill's website: www.skill.org.uk/getthatjob.htm

February 2002

Partially updated April 2003