



Employment

Employment is often a challenging area for disabled people who strive for social inclusion and a decent standard of living. For the disabled person there are several different routes to take in order to get and stay in employment. This factsheet will try to cover as many of them as possible. It has been divided into the following sections:

- **Government** - there are a number of government schemes that help disabled people find and retain jobs.
- **The Law** - what the law says about employment and disabilities.
- **Self-employment** - more and more disabled people chose self-employment from their home as a way to get an income.
- **Agencies & Organisations** - a wide variety of charities, organisations and commercial companies offer support and guidance in the search for the right job.

Government

When looking for employment one of the first places to go is your local Jobcentre Plus, where you will find:

Disability Service Teams (DST)

Disability Service Teams are part of the Employment Service. They address the particular needs of the disabled job seeker. The DST consists of Disability Employment Advisers and offers information on specialist programmes for disabled people, referral to training, and where appropriate, referral to employment rehabilitation and work preparation. DST also provide information to employers on the practical and financial help available, including adaptations to premises and special aids for the employee.

Disability Employment Advisors (DEA)

DEA's are part of the Disability Service Teams. They offer a comprehensive local service to help a disabled person obtain work. They give advice and support, assess the individual's abilities and create a plan of action. They can advise on the latest and most appropriate schemes available and possible financial assistance. They also give advice on getting equipment to

help you in your job and help your employer adapt premises if necessary.

New Deal

The New Deal is part of the government's Welfare To Work initiative. After a period of unemployment of up to two years the deal is compulsory for those people on jobseekers allowance, but this does **not** include disabled people. A disabled person can choose to join the scheme, if having made a successful claim for Job Seekers Allowance (JSA), but once you have joined the scheme it is not possible to opt out.

Once referred to the scheme, the applicant enters a 'gateway' period of up to 4 months, where a personal advisor will help them look for a job. If, at the end of this period, they have not found a job there are four options:

- Full time education and training
- Subsidised work with an employer
- Work in the voluntary sector
- Work with an environmental task force

If the applicant does not accept one of the options presented to them, the JSA can be sanctioned, unless they have good cause. If your disability prevents you from taking one of the options, that is considered as a good cause and your JSA would not be sanctioned. It would be expected that you choose another option in its place.

Disabled people may find it difficult to meet the conditions of being available for/actively seeking work, as well as finding a suitable option at the end of the 'gateway' period. They may also risk losing benefits if they do not comply, so advice should be sought before joining the New Deal Scheme.

Work Trials

Work Trials are part of an initiative to help people into work who are over 25 and have been unemployed for over six months into work. They are coordinated by Jobcentre Plus where an information pack can be obtained. Work Trials mean that you work for an employer who has a vacancy on a trial basis for up to

Access to Work

This scheme is designed to help provide extra equipment or support needed to enable you to do your job if you have a disability.

The type of support that may be supplied include a reader if you are visually impaired, additional costs of travelling to and from work and even another person present at work to assist you.

All approved costs of a person supporting a disabled person at the workplace will be paid through Access to Work.

You or your employer can either get the full cost or part of the cost of equipment depending on how long you have been working.

The scheme is accessed through your DEA.

Jobcentre Plus

From April 2002 a government plan will gradually introduce the Jobcentre Plus all over the UK.

This will replace the Employment Services, which ran jobcentres, and those parts of the Benefits Agency which helped people of working age with benefits through social securities offices.

The idea behind this is to make it easier both for the individual and the local authorities to find the right balance between support in finding or maintaining employment and benefits.

The change will happen gradually and in some areas you will still have to go to your local jobcentre.
www.jobcentreplus.gov.uk

3 weeks; at the end of the trial an interview is guaranteed. Work Trials give the jobseeker an opportunity to try out the job, and the employer doesn't need to rely solely on an interview to decide whether a person is suitable for the job. The Jobcentre Plus will make sure you continue receiving benefits while on the trial and you will also receive some travel expenses and lunch money.

Job Introduction Scheme

This scheme is open to disabled people looking for employment who have concerns about their ability to do the job because of their disability. The scheme helps with these concerns by paying a weekly grant (£75) to the employer which can be used towards wages or extra training. The trial period may be from 6 to 13 weeks and the scheme only applies to jobs expected to last more than 6 months.

Supported Employment/WORKSTEP

Supported employment helps arrange paid employment to people who need some sort of support at work. The Jobcentre Plus or agency will try to match the disabled person with a job that suits their abilities and will provide a support worker to help them as long as is necessary. The aim is to provide long term employment for disabled people and to assist with work experience, rehabilitation, and possible progression to open employment.

The scheme is accessed through the Jobcentre Plus. They may refer you to another organisation (see 'Agencies and Organisations') that provides the supported employment.

Self-Employment

For a lot of people, self employment sounds daunting, but as a disabled person it is definitely worth considering.

First of all, the hours you work can be wholly organised to suit your level of energy. Second, if the company is run from your own home you don't have to worry about accessibility.

Of course, being self-employed, may mean that you have less social contact and building the network that will make your business a success can be hard work.

You don't have to do it all yourself, though. There is one organisation, called Northern Pinetree Trust, that specifically provides advice and help in getting your own business started:

Northern Pinetree Trust provides enterprise opportunities for people with disabilities or long term illnesses. The Trust's main clients are people who wish to consider self-employment. An experienced Business Counsellor works one-to-one with clients in their own home to develop a business idea. A business plan and financial appraisal are produced and assistance is given in sourcing funds for business start-up or special equipment needs, as well as advice on how to avoid benefit problems during the transition to self-employment.

*Pinetree Centre, Durham Road, Birtley,
Chester-Le-Street, Durham, DH3 2TD, Tel: 0191 492 2800*

The Law

In this section we will look at what rights you have under the law. It has been divided into two parts, one dealing with employment and discrimination law, and the other with benefits.

Getting a Job

According to the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA), when you are applying for a job an employer must not discriminate against you because of your disability:

- When deciding who should be offered the job. This includes the job description, the application form, the short-listing process, interviewing and final selection. For example, this can mean providing application forms in alternative formats, and making reasonable adjustments to the interviewing process.
- In making reasonable adjustments to the workplace or working arrangements so that a person with a disability can do the job.
- In the terms specified in your employment contract

Advisor Discretion Fund

If you are signed up for a New Deal programme you can ask for help from the Advisor Discretion Fund.

New Deal advisors can make awards of up to £300 to provide anything that will help someone obtain a job, or, if a job is offered, to accept the offer.

Reasonable Adjustments

These can be:

- providing accessible IT equipment
- making a workstation accessible for a wheelchair user
- providing training
- providing an interpreter or
- relocating part of the job to another employee.

Remember the physical adjustments can often be financed through 'Access to Work'.

There are a few organisations that may be able to help if you are having problems with attitudes at work:

Public Concern at Work
Suite 306, 16
Baldwins Gardens,
London, EC1N 7RT
Tel: **020 7404 6609**

ACAS
Provide information
and advice to
improve employer -
employee relations
Tel: **08457 474747**
Textphone:
08456 061600

Citizens Advice
Bureau
Provides
information on
Employment
Tribunals please
visit:
www.adviceguide.org.uk
Tel: **020 7833 2181**

Disability
Employment
Advisory
Committee (DEAC)
Tel: **0114 2677 242**

Dismissal

If you are employed and have a disability or become disabled, but your disability does not prevent you from doing the main part of your job, your employer cannot dismiss you or make you redundant on the grounds of your disability. Instead the employer is required to make 'reasonable adjustments' if these are needed.

Harassment

The law does not directly make it unlawful for someone to harass you because you have a disability. But if you face harassment or abuse at work, this could count as discrimination if employees who did not have a disability are not treated in the same way.

What to do about discrimination

If you feel you have been discriminated against you can take your case to:

- An employment tribunal
- The Disability Rights Commission

You can also get legal advice from:

- Your Trade Union
- Your local Citizens Advice Bureau
- Your local Law Centre
- A solicitor or advisor displaying the Community Legal Service logo.

Benefits

If you are on some form of benefit there are rules about how many hours you are permitted to work and earn while retaining your benefits.

You are allowed to:

- Work and earn no more than £20 a week at any time for as long as you are on benefit.
- Work for less than 16 hours a week, on average, and earn no more than £66 a week for no more than 26 weeks.
- Extend this for a further 26 weeks provided it is done in agreement with your DEA.
- Do *supported* work and earn no more than £66 a week for as long as they are on benefit.

If you wish to do work on a voluntary basis or sit on an appeal tribunal this might be allowed without affecting your benefits.

Always consult with your DEA before taking on any work that might affect your benefits.

Agencies and Organisations

There are a number of both commercial and charitable enterprises that help disabled people get into employment:

Association for Supported Employment

Provide an information, advisory and development service to members and to people with disabilities.

BASE Secretariat

01452 783596

www.afse.org.uk

Churchill Minty & Friend

Consultants on career development amongst many other activities.

Unit 4G, The Leathermarket, Weston Street, London, SE1 3ER

020 7403 4345

www.churchillmintyandfriend.com

Disabled Access To Technology Association

Provide training in various computer skills. Also provide personal development training and job search skills.

Neville House, Neville Road, Bradford, BD4 8TU

01274 370019

info@databradsford.org

www.databradsford.org

Employment Opportunities

A national network of regional centres offering practical help with training and advice on job searches, CV's, application forms and interviews.

53 New Broad Street, London EC2M 1SL

020 7448 5420

info@eopps.org

www.opportunities.org.uk

Disability Rights Commission

This is an organisation set up by the government to promote equal opportunities for people with disabilities and the provision of good practice in the way people with disabilities are treated.

It also offers legal advice and support, and a conciliation service to deal with disputes between people with disabilities and employers or service providers.

They only deal with disputes that are covered under the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) (see TDF's factsheet on the DDA).

Tel: 08457 622 633
Minicom: 08457 622 644

www.drc-gb.org

Enham Trust

Provides learning opportunities with individual vocational and occupational programmes.
Enham Alamein, Andover, Hampshire
SP11 6JS
01264 345 800
info@enham.org.uk
www.enham.org.uk

Leadership Recruitment

A graduate development programme providing career opportunities for people with disabilities; run by Scope, a group of key national employers and Training Enterprise Councils.
6 Market Road, Islington,
London N7 9PW
020 7619 7299
graduates@scope.org.uk
www.scope.org.uk/graduates

Leonard Chesire Workability

Creating employment and training opportunities for disabled people by giving IT training and support through the interview process.
30 Millbank, London SW1P 4QD
0845 671 7173
innovation@lc-uk.org
www.leonard-cheshire.org

Remploy Limited

Help disabled people gain employment. They have a limited number of supported jobs at their factories.
Stonecourt, Siskin Drive, Coventry,
West Midlands CV3 4FJ
0800 138 7656
Minicom: 024 7651 5869
info@remploy.co.uk
www.remploy.co.uk

SHARE Community

Training and rehabilitation centre for people with disabilities.
64 Altenburg Gardens,
London SW11 1JL
020 7924 2949
info@sharecommunity.org.uk
www.sharecommunity.org.uk

Shaw Trust

Support and training for people with disabilities in employment.
Fox Talbot House, Greenways
Business Park, Malmesbury Road,
Chippenham, Wiltshire SN15 1BN
0800 085 1001 or 01225 716300
Minicom: 0845 769 7288
www.shaw-trust.org.uk

Work Directions

Covering London, Nottingham and Birmingham they provide job-hunting advice and support when in employment.
There are different contact details for each area covered so please look on their website.
www.workdirections.co.uk

Contact the organisations separately to find out if they can help you achieve your goal and get the job you desire.

The Disability Foundation
RNOH, Brockley Hill
Stanmore, Middlesex,
HA7 4LP
Tel: 020 8954 7373
Fax: 020 8954 7414
Minicom: 020 8954 7413
info@tdf.org.uk
www.tdf.org.uk

