

Finding a job

jobcentreplus

Part of the Department for Work and Pensions



This leaflet is only a guide and does not cover every circumstance. We have done our best to make sure that the information in this leaflet is correct as of August 2011.

It is possible that some of the information is oversimplified, or may become inaccurate over time, for example because of changes to the law.

Contents

Getting work	5
Types of work	6
To look for work	7
How do I apply for a job?	8
About CVs	9
Filling in forms	10
Getting ready for your interview	11
At the interview	12
If you need an interpreter	12
Stay safe when you go to an interview	13
Self-employment	15
Working in Europe	16
How Jobcentre Plus can help	17
Work trials	17
Learning and training	18
Why learn and train?	18
learndirect	19
UK online centres	19
Employability skills	20
Connexions/Careers Service	20
Work and childcare	21

If you have a disability or health condition	22
Can I work or do training if I am getting Disability Living Allowance?	22
Can I use an interpreter to make myself understood at an interview?	22
Should I say I am disabled when I apply for a job?	23
What is the disability symbol?	24
Help when you're in work	25
Tax credits	25
Housing Benefit and Council Tax Benefit	25
Your working rights	26
National Minimum Wage.	26
National Insurance	27
Find out more.	27

Getting work

You have lots of options when you're ready to get work or change your working pattern.

If you haven't worked for a while, you might want to spend some time getting used to being back in a work environment. Or, you might want to find training to help you get the right job.

Getting back to work, changing jobs or starting work for the first time are good ways of meeting new people, making new friends, improving your skills or learning new ones, and increasing your income.

Types of work

There are lots of options when it comes to finding work. As well as working full-time you could consider the following.

- Part-time work. You could work a certain number of hours or days each week to fit in with other things you do.
- Job-sharing. Sometimes, 2 people can share one full-time job, so you both work part-time hours.
- Term-time working. You could be off during the school holidays.
- Voluntary work. You could do unpaid work to learn more about a particular job and learn new skills. This could then help you get a paid job.
- Flexible work or 'flexitime'. This might mean choosing the times when you start and finish work, or working longer hours on some days so you can take more time off.
- Self-employment. You may be able to work for yourself.
- Agency work. You could work for a set length of time in a full-time or part-time job. This might be to cover for someone while they are away from work. This is also called 'temping'.
- Holiday working. You could get a job during the holidays if, for example, you are studying at college.

To look for work

If you are looking for work, you can search our list of jobs online at www.direct.gov.uk/jobsearch

Or you can call us on 0845 606 0234 (textphone 0845 605 5255) to find out what jobs are available.

Or you can use the touchscreen Jobpoints in our offices.

There are also other ways of looking for work.

- Your local paper will regularly have a jobs section.
- You can search for jobs on lots of different websites.
- Write to or call a company you would like to work for to see if they have any jobs available and send them your CV (see page 9). You could also look at their website.
- Go to an event where local businesses will be looking for people to work for them. Take your CV when you go. You can find out about jobs events in your local paper or on our website.

- Ask people you know – they may know of available jobs at their workplace or may have heard that a company is looking to employ someone, or know someone who is looking for some help.

How do I apply for a job?

There are many ways to apply for a job and each employer decides how they want you to apply. This includes:

- filling in an application form
- sending a CV
- writing a letter
- applying online
- speaking to the employer on the phone, and
- going to the employer's place of work.

Many employers will ask you to fill in an application form, send them a CV or ask you to write to them, so you should be prepared to spend time making sure you do these things as well as you can. Remember, these give the employer their first and most important impression of you.

About CVs

A CV is short list of facts about you and your work history, skills and experience. It is important to have a good CV when you are looking for work and it is worth spending time getting it right so it sells you to an employer.

Ideally, your CV should:

- be neat – typed if possible and to the best standard you can achieve in content and layout
- be short – 2 sides of a sheet of A4 paper is normally enough
- be positive – it should focus on your achievements and strengths, and
- make a good impression. This means presenting the facts about yourself clearly and positively.

There is no set way to write a CV and there are many places which offer help on writing a CV, filling in an application form and doing well at an interview. You could get help from:

- the internet
- books, and
- your Jobcentre Plus adviser.

Filling in forms

Follow these simple rules for filling in forms.

- You may be asked about your ‘personal history’. Prepare a CV.
- Always follow the instructions (for example, whether you have to write in capitals or fill in the form in black ink only).
- Fill in the application form in pencil first, or write your answers on a separate sheet of paper. Check your spelling.
- Fill in every section of the form you need to.
- Don’t write more than you need to.
- Talk about yourself. Say how you've spent your time while you have been out of work. Include any voluntary work or courses you have taken.
- Do your research. Find out a bit about the company and make sure your answers fit the job you're going for.
- Be honest – don’t make anything up.

Getting ready for your interview

- Think about what you should wear for your interview. It may be fine to wear casual clothes but they should be smart and tidy.
- Work out how to get to your interview beforehand and how long it will take you to get there. If necessary, ask the employer for directions, bus routes or details of where you can park your car.
- If you are unemployed and getting a qualifying benefit and need to travel a long way to an interview, you may be able to claim back your costs through Jobcentre Plus. Ask an adviser about this before you travel.
- Find out a bit about the company – what they do, who their clients are, and think about how you could fit your skills to match the job.
- Think about the points you want to make. Write them in a list that's large enough to read easily so that you can refer to it during the interview.
- Remember the papers you might need to take with you, such as your CV, birth certificate, qualifications or exam certificates and references.
- Think about any questions they might ask you and prepare possible answers.

At the interview

Give yourself plenty of time to get there. Arrive 5 or 10 minutes early so you're not flustered when the interviewer calls you in.

At the interview you may meet more than one person. You may be asked why you want the job and what skills you have that are suited to the job. Your Jobcentre Plus adviser can give you an idea of what your interview will be like and what you can do to prepare for it.

You should always dress smartly for your interview. Make sure you turn up on time and that you know a bit about the job and the person or company you would be working for.

If you need an interpreter

If you have trouble speaking or hearing, you could get someone to interpret for you in an interview. We can arrange this as part of our Access to Work programme. Ask your Jobcentre Plus adviser to tell you more.

- Take a deep breath before you go in to steady your nerves.
- Smile when you enter the room and make lots of eye contact with the interviewer and try not to fidget.
- Take a moment to think about your answers – employers don't mind a short silence.
- Speak clearly and don't waffle.

- Sell yourself. Be positive and don't worry about referring to your list if you need to.
- The interviewer may ask if you have any questions at the end of the interview. If they have covered what you planned to ask, tell them 'You've covered all I need to know, thank you.'
- Before you leave, thank the employer for their time.

Stay safe when you go to an interview

Most job interviews go to plan. However, it's always your responsibility to protect your safety. You should remember these few simple commonsense rules when going to interviews.

- Find out as much as you can about the company or the person the interview is with.
- Sort out how you will get to the interview and back.
- Tell a friend or relative where you are going and what time you expect to be back.
- For jobs that offer accommodation with them, always check out the accommodation before accepting the job. If possible, don't go alone to view the accommodation, even if this means a friend or family member has to wait outside for you.

- If the interview takes place outside normal working hours, try to arrange for someone to meet you there afterwards.
- Make sure the interview is at the company's place of work or in a suitable public place.
- Don't allow the interview to take place in your own home.
- Never give an employer your personal financial details until you actually get a firm job offer.
- Don't talk about personal matters that have nothing to do with the job.
- Don't agree to continue an interview over drinks or a meal, even if it seems to be going very well.
- Don't accept a lift home from the person interviewing you.

If you have any concerns (for example, you think that the company is offering too much money for that particular type of work), or you are not sure about the company, ask a Jobcentre Plus adviser for advice.

Self-employment

Becoming self-employed can help you make a living by working for yourself, if you have the right business idea and want to succeed.

Contact:

- England – www.businesslink.gov.uk
- Wales – www.business-support-wales.gov.uk
- Scotland – www.bgateway.com

for ideas of where to go to for help, from planning a business and getting the money to start it, to making sure you have enough to live on while you get it going.



www.eures-jobs.com

Working in Europe

You could consider working in another part of Europe.

Jobcentre Plus is part of a network of public employment services called European Employment Services (EURES). You can use the website www.eures-jobs.com to:

- look for jobs (some of the vacancies will be marked with a blue flag which means that the employer is particularly interested in recruiting workers from other European countries)
- register your CV and match your details to available jobs
- find information about each of the EU countries to help you make informed decisions about living and working in another country, and
- get information about education and training opportunities throughout Europe, with links to higher education institutions and details of courses.

How Jobcentre Plus can help

We provide a wide range of advice and support to help you get a job.

You may need to have been claiming benefit for a certain length of time before you can use some of our services. This is so we can help people return to work who may find it more difficult to get a job.

However, you may be able to get help sooner if you:

- have a health condition or a disability
- need help with reading or writing, or
- have just come out of prison.

Work trials

A work trial gives you the chance to try out a job. You'll carry on getting your benefits while you're on a work trial – it is a way of finding out if a job is right for you.

At the end of your work trial, you may be offered the job. If you are and you take it you may still be able to get some benefits and tax credits.

Learning and training

Why learn or train?

If it's been a while since your last job, you have been in the same type of work for some time, or you are starting a career, it is worth thinking about doing some training or taking a course. Learning or training can help you:

- build on the skills you've already got
- get new skills, and
- get qualifications that employers are looking for.

All these could increase the range of jobs you can apply for. We can help you decide what sort of training is best for you, and tell you about help with course fees, transport costs or the cost of looking after your children while you're training.

You can find out more about learning and training:

- through learndirect
- from a Jobcentre Plus adviser, or
- at your local college.

learndirect

The learndirect advice service is a telephone helpline that can give you advice about everything to do with learning.

It doesn't matter what you want to learn about, for example, computers, local history or business, or if you want to learn to read or write better – learndirect can help you find out more.

The learndirect advice service is for all adults in England and Wales. If you live in Scotland, learndirect scotland provides these services. See page 34 for more details.

UK online centres

UK online centres have computers you can learn how to use, or you can use them to get access to the internet. The staff are friendly and offer support – many people who visit the centres have never used a computer or the internet before. You can work at your own pace and people will be there to help you.

There are over 6000 UK online centres to give you as much help as you need to get started. You can find them in all sorts of places, like community centres, churches, schools and libraries, and some are even mobile. Currently, there are only UK online centres in England.

UK online centres are for everyone but are mainly for people who are quite new to using computers or the internet. To find out more see page 34.

Employability skills

An employability skills programme can help you if you need to improve your reading, or number skills – or if English is not your first language. You will improve your work skills and may get a recognised qualification that can improve your chance of finding a job. Ask an adviser to tell you more.

Visit www.direct.gov.uk for more information.

Connexions/Careers Service

Connexions provides young people with a wide range of advice, from information on careers, to information on relationships, benefits and personal development opportunities. Further information including contact details for your nearest Connexions is available on the Connexions Direct website www.connexions-direct.com

If you live in Scotland, visit the Careers Scotland website www.careers-scotland.org.uk

If you live in Wales, visit the Careers Wales website www.careerswales.com (www.gyrfacymru.com)

Work and childcare

If you are starting work or training and you have children, you may need to think about who will look after them. Even if your work or training is during school hours, you might still need to think about school holidays and what would happen if your children are sick.

There are lots of options for childcare. To find out more visit

www.direct.gov.uk/childcare

If you have a disability or health condition

If you are disabled or have a health condition, there is a lot of help and support available to help you find and keep a job.

You may be getting Employment and Support Allowance or other benefits. If not, you should ask an adviser about any benefits you can get while you are looking for work.

You can also find out what will happen to your benefit once you start work. Once you are in work, you may be able to get Working Tax Credit.

Can I work or do training if I am getting Disability Living Allowance?

Disability Living Allowance is a benefit that can be paid whether you are in or out of work or training, providing your care or mobility needs meet the required entitlement conditions.

Can I use an interpreter to make myself understood at an interview?

If you are disabled and you have trouble speaking or hearing, you could get someone to interpret for you in an interview. This is part of our Access to Work programme. Ask your adviser to tell you more.

Should I say I am disabled when I apply for a job?

You must always mention your disability if it might risk your own, or other people's, health and safety.

An employer is allowed to ask you about health and disability when you apply for a job. But this is only one of many things they will ask before deciding to offer an interview or job.

If the employer does not ask you about your health or disability, it is up to you whether you tell them.

If you are asked about health or disability, try to:

- answer in an honest way
- say how your disability might affect you at work
- say if it would have no effect on you at work
- talk about your abilities, and
- say why you think you are the right person for the job.

If you sign a declaration saying that you do not have a disability when in fact you do, this may affect your job at a later date.

It is worth remembering that if an employer does not know you are disabled, they cannot do anything to help you succeed in your job.



What is the disability symbol?

The disability symbol is awarded by Jobcentre Plus to employers. The symbol is circular, usually green, with 2 ticks and with the words 'positive about disabled people'.

Jobcentre Plus decides whether an employer, who applies for it, can use the disability symbol. Employers who are awarded this symbol can then show it on job adverts and forms, like application forms. This makes it clear that they have agreed to work positively with disabled people and help them stay in work.

Help when you're in work

Tax credits

If you find a job and you earn a low income, you may be able to get tax credits. This may mean that you get extra money.

You could get either of the following.

- Working Tax Credit – which is for people on a low income. It can include help with some childcare costs if you have children. The amount you get depends on a number of things, such as your yearly income and the number of hours you work.
- Child Tax Credit for people who look after a child or young person. Getting Child Tax Credit and how much you get depends on a number of things, such as your household income and the number of children you have at home and their ages. See page 36 for details of how to contact the tax credits helpline.

Housing Benefit and Council Tax Benefit

Housing Benefit is to help people on a low income pay some, or all, of their rent.

Council Tax Benefit is to help people on a low income pay some, or all, of their Council Tax.

If you are on a low income you may be entitled to these benefits even if you are working. Your local council deals with claims for both of these benefits. Contact your local council for more information.

Your working rights

Everybody should be treated fairly at work. The law gives you certain rights at work. These include the right to:

- a National Minimum Wage
- ask for more flexible working hours
- maternity leave and Statutory Maternity Pay
- paternity leave and Statutory Paternity Pay
- adoption leave and Statutory Adoption Pay
- Statutory Sick Pay, and
- unpaid leave to care for a young or disabled child.

Visit www.direct.gov.uk for more information.

National Minimum Wage

The National Minimum Wage is set by the government to guarantee a minimum hourly wage. It is reviewed every year.

If you do paid work, you should be paid at least the National Minimum Wage.

There are different levels of National Minimum Wage depending on how old you are.

Visit www.direct.gov.uk for information on current rates.

National Insurance

You pay National Insurance so that you can get certain benefits when you need them – and so that you can get a State Pension. The amount of National Insurance you pay depends on the kind of work you do and how much you earn.

If you are in work and you earn enough, your National Insurance payments will come straight out of your salary – you do not have to do anything. See page 36 for contact details to make general enquiries about National Insurance.

Find out more

This section includes contact details for a range of people who can help you. You can also look in your phone book or search online for help available locally.

To find out how to contact Jobcentre Plus visit www.direct.gov.uk or see our entry in the phone book.

To look for work

If you're looking for work, you can search jobs online at www.direct.gov.uk/jobsearch

Or call Jobcentre Plus on **0845 606 0234** (textphone **0845 605 5255**) to find out what jobs are available.

Monday to Friday 8am to 6pm, Saturday 9am to 1pm.

If you want to work in another European country

For more advice about working in Europe contact the International Jobsearch Advice Team.

Phone: 0113 307 8090

(Monday to Thursday, 9am to 5pm and Friday, 9am to 4.30pm)

EURES

website: www.eures-jobs.com

Training and education

You can find the contact details for your local college in your phone book.

learndirect

If you live in England or Wales

Phone: 0800 101 901 (this includes a textphone service and lines are open 7am to 11pm, 7 days a week)

Website: www.learndirect.co.uk

If you live in Scotland

Phone: 0808 100 9000

Website: www.learndirectscotland.com

UK online centres

Phone: 0800 77 1234 (8am to 10pm 7 days a week)

Website: www.ukonlinecentres.com

Apprenticeships

If you live in England

Phone: 08000 150 600

Website: www.apprenticeships.org.uk

If you live in Scotland

Phone: 0845 607 8787

Website: www.scottish-enterprise.com/modernapprenticeships

If you live in Wales

Phone: 0800 100 900

Website: www.elwa.ac.uk

Connexions / Careers Service

If you live in England

Phone: 080 80 13 2 19

Website: www.connexions-direct.com

If you live in Scotland

Phone: 0845 850 2502

Website: www.careers-scotland.org.uk

If you live in Wales

Phone: 0800 100 900

Website: www.careerswales.com
(www.gyrfacymru.com)

Pay and benefits

National Minimum Wage

Phone: **0845 6000 678**

(8am to 6pm Monday to Friday)

Website: www.direct.gov.uk

National Insurance

For general enquiries about National Insurance

Phone: **0845 302 1479**

Textphone: **0845 915 3296**

Website: www.hmrc.gov.uk

Or visit

www.direct.gov.uk/nationalinsurance

Tax credits

Tax credits helpline: **0845 300 3900**

Textphone: **0845 300 3909**

The lines are open from 8am to 8pm.

Website: www.hmrc.gov.uk/taxcredits

Call charges

Charges were correct as of the date on the back of this leaflet.

Calls to **0800** numbers are free from BT land lines but you may have to pay if you use another phone company, a mobile phone, or if you are calling from abroad.

Calls to **0845** numbers from BT land lines should cost no more than 8p a minute with a 13p call set-up charge. You may have to pay more if you use another phone company, a mobile phone, or if you are calling from abroad.

Calls from mobile phones can cost up to 40p per minute, so check the cost of calls with your service provider.

Textphones

Our textphone numbers are for people who cannot speak or hear clearly. If you don't have a textphone, you could check if your local library or citizens advice bureau has one. Textphones don't receive text messages from mobile phones.

Directgov provides information from UK government departments on all sorts of topics. To find out more about help getting back to work, visit www.direct.gov.uk/jobseekers

Jobcentre Plus is committed to applying the principles of equal opportunities in its programmes and services.

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