



Get back to where we do belong

An employment skills guide for people with newly
acquired disabilities or health conditions

Get back to where we do belong

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New experiences and managing change

There are lots of things to think about if you acquire a health condition or disability – but many people have been through this kind of change and are enjoying successful careers.

INTRODUCTION

When you're diagnosed with a long term health condition, or have an accident, or your condition worsens, it feels life-changing. You may naturally focus on those parts of your life you seem set to lose. However millions of people's experiences show there are also things to be gained. You can have a highly fulfilling life – perhaps not the one you imagined, but a good life nonetheless.



In the beginning everyone from health professionals to family will understandably be thinking of your health. However you may also be thinking “What am I going to do now?” – worrying about your job and how to stay in work.

For many people, sorting out their employment position is their main concern; how to keep money coming in, maintain your work contacts and your work identity.

You may be worried about whether you can keep working or get back to work. You may need new skills – either to learn how to work with your new condition or disability and/or to find new opportunities.

You might also need guidance on what other people have found most helpful, on your legal rights, benefits you're entitled to or how to identify new career paths. This guide is designed to help through an overview of all these subjects. And it shows you where to get more in-depth advice and support if you need it.

If you've recently acquired a disability or long-term health condition, we suggest reading this guide in the order presented. Our experience is

that people generally find it helpful to explore ways of staying in the same or similar roles, even if you need some new skills, before making a decision to radically change career direction. Almost every kind of workplace can be made inclusive – through changes in working patterns, or support, or the physical layout. Knowing about the duty on employers to make workplace adjustments is really important – as is knowing what other people in your position have found works for them. It might work for you too.

For more information

Before you start, you may need to sort out other things such as health and social care, your accommodation or transport issues. Disability Rights UK has a publication called *Taking Charge*, which is a general guide to planning and managing your life if you have a disability or health condition. It includes information on ‘what you have a right to expect’ from services and provides advice on what to do if you don't get what you need. To order a copy visit

www.disabilityrightsuk.org/takingcharge

SKILLS TO GET YOU GOING

You may need to learn a specific skill immediately, like how to use assistive technology, or a skill connected with independent living like working with a PA/support worker or driving an adapted vehicle. You may need the independent living skill first, before you can concentrate on skills for specific job roles.

There are many charities that provide impairment specific training and/or general training in independent living. For example, your local Disabled People's Organisation (DPO) may offer independent living support and training from people with their own personal experience. A sight loss organisation may offer training in navigation and independent living. Motability, which provides adapted and other vehicles to disabled people, also provides assessments of need at their centres and up to five hours of charity-funded driver training:

W www.motability.co.uk/understanding-the-scheme/how-it-works

In some areas there are good and expanding local directories of community services that include details of charity and training and services. Specialist organisations in technology can also be helpful, for example Abilitynet. Abilitynet produce *My computer, my way*, a free interactive guide to the accessibility features available on standard computers, tablets or smartphones.

W www.abilitynet.org.uk/workplace/resources

Technology can often be part of the solution, whether you are dealing with a brain injury, a physical injury, anxiety or a hearing impairment: it's often a question of knowing everything that smartphones or tablets can do for you.

Using assistive technology usually requires some training. Software developers and technology distributors often offer short courses for the use of specific equipment or

software. Employers can often claim back the costs of these courses through the Access to Work programme which is covered in section 3.

It is worth exploring how new skills can help you adapt to your situation before making any hasty decisions to re-train for a different career.

PERSONAL STORIES

In this guide there are several personal stories of people writing about their own experiences of acquiring an impairment, the challenges they faced and how they tackled them. The stories provide a valuable insight into the ways you can stay in work or access education and skills to take your career in a different direction if you choose. As well as illustrating how to take advantage of the support on offer, the stories emphasise the importance of disabled people's own creativity, resilience and motivation.

"I think that this is a quite excellent document. It is very well written by people who really understand the experience and consequences of life-changing illness and the personal changes that must be made.

The document sets out concisely but comprehensively the policy, legal, administrative and practical backgrounds, with clear guidance on action. It does not skip over difficult questions, such as what's considered a reasonable workplace adjustment or who to tell about the problem. There is an excellent piece on coping strategies and developing resilience in the face of change. The personal stories are inspirational. This document should find its place on every employer's and manager's desk, or better, in their pocket."

Professor Dame Carol Black, Expert Adviser to the government on Health and Work, Chairman of the Nuffield Trust, Principal of Newnham College Cambridge

Helen White

IT Accessibility Manager and Mental Health Agenda Lead

I have a mental illness, borderline personality disorder, which I prefer to call 'emotional regulation disorder'. This first became apparent at the start of my career, then grew in impact quite severely as I went further into the world of work. The illness and impact has changed over the years. Whereas before I had long periods of crisis that stopped me from working at all, I've now been in a role at Barclays for five years, going from agency staff to a permanent role.



In the corporate world you're expected to present 'professionally' at all times. If you have an illness that affects your thoughts, feelings and behaviours, it's all you can do to operate 'normally', let alone 'professionally'. I often misinterpret feedback or others' behaviour and take things deeply personally when most people are able to tell that it's just 'playing the game'.

I had to learn how to manage my emotions in different ways and medical cover from my employer allowed me to do a course specifically to learn those skills.

The cognitive effects are progressive and with age the decline can become significant. I might have a brilliant idea, but it'll be underneath lots of unwanted and intrusive thoughts. I have to write everything down as I think of it in order to remember it when relevant later.

The difficulties have become really challenging as I progress in my career and the workload and expectations build. I used to be able to rely on my brain to do the basics automatically; remembering names, organising my time etc. Now I'm having to relearn how to do all of these things through training and adjustments.

Any level of stimuli around me in the office reduces my productivity massively as my brain struggles to focus, so I'm working from home more. I had coaching before interviewing for my promotion 12 months ago, because trying to recall examples of my skills to answer the usual sorts of interview questions is almost impossible. This was the first time the HR department had received this type of request and I'm glad to say that we were able to work together to make sure I could showcase myself properly.

“

My suggestions for others with a long-term health condition are to be as open as possible and give people practical tips on what you need them to do, as well as what not to do.

This is a work in progress. Neither my employer or I have all the answers but with the openness I've tried to create we're working things out together. I feel supported to achieve my goals.

What to expect from employers

Employers who support people who acquire a disability can retain the widest possible pool of talent. They also have legal responsibilities to do so. The best way to talk to employers is to propose solutions that show how a bit of flexibility or support can enable you to give of your best.

STAYING IN WORK

Health conditions become more common as we age. This means that if you acquire a disability or long-term health condition you may already have many years of service and expertise that your employer needs. You may have great knowledge of how the business works and its customers and suppliers. Therefore you're likely to be a valuable staff member whom your employer would prefer to keep. It's usually more costly for an employer to find and train a replacement than support you to stay at work, even if some retraining is needed.

Support for newly disabled employees

The impact of becoming disabled can vary widely. It's natural for you to experience a range of emotions and you may initially find it difficult to concentrate or work effectively. Employers may need to provide extra support if you're adjusting to a new diagnosis or if your health is starting to worsen.

All experiences are different and best practice includes talking to you directly to understand how your disability is affecting you and what you need at work. You may choose to have a confidential and supportive discussion with your line manager or HR manager. Employers could also ask if you would like anyone else involved in meetings such as a colleague, member of the disability employee network if there is one, trade union rep, family member or friend.

If you are or have been away from work because of your condition, initial support might include:

- Allowing time off for recovery, check-ups and treatment
- Pre-meetings to discuss the return and agree a 'back to work' plan
- Briefing sessions to get you up to speed
- Assistance with a phased return to work, whereby hours are gradually increased over a period of time
- A plan for the first week including what you want or don't want to talk to colleagues about.

Employers might also consider the following:

- Ensuring you have access to an Employee Assistance Programme (EAP) if they have one
- Providing disability equality training for all staff and additional training for line managers so that they are confident and effective in managing disabled employees and making workplace adjustments
- A buddying system where you can talk to someone about any issues you are having at work.

"Don't be afraid to ask, even if you're not sure whether what you're asking for is reasonable. It's also important to find networks of people who've been through similar things. If you're considering training to help you stay in work it would be a good idea to ask for face-to-face training on boosting confidence." **Helen White**

Many employers offer or fund training and they may be able to support your training financially and/or offer time off to train.

Some people will feel confident to proactively manage their situation. Others may need adjustments in order to support their return to work.



Telling people about your health condition or disability

Being open about having a disability or health condition can have many benefits – but it's your decision. If you've been holding on to a 'big secret' for a while, letting it go can be very liberating. We advise all employers to encourage openness at work because of the benefits to overall workforce well-being and productivity. Telling an employer can help reinforce positive open cultures for others. It enables you to ask for adjustments or changes to help you do your job.

There is a risk that others won't understand or will jump to conclusions or underestimate your potential. It may be useful to talk with others with similar experiences about whether to be open, when, who to, and how. For example, telling your employer that you have dyslexia which you manage using colour overlays and specialist software may be easier for them to understand than focusing on the severity of the difficulty.

If you have a mental health condition, you might explain how you are managing it and the workplace changes you need to work to your best (often simple things like a change in schedule, or different types of feedback). This approach enables the employer to know what to do and see that the situation is entirely manageable.

THE LEGAL CONTEXT

The Equality Act 2010 gives rights to employees who have a physical or mental health condition and find it difficult to carry out normal day-to-day activities. The effect must usually be 'long term' which means one which has lasted, or is expected to last, at least 12 months (or the rest of the person's life if shorter). People with cancer, HIV and multiple sclerosis are covered by the Equality Act from the date of diagnosis.

The Act covers all aspects of employment, including:

- Promotion and training
- Transfer and redeployment
- Career development and retention
- Dismissal and redundancy.

The Equality Act 2010 calls the changes and support to help disabled people do their jobs 'reasonable adjustments'. What is considered reasonable can depend on the resources and money available to effect a practical solution. Good practice for employers is simply to ask what you need to work to your best and then just offer it if readily achievable, rather than thinking legalistically.

EXAMPLES OF WORKPLACE ADJUSTMENTS

You may need adjustments in order to support you to stay in work, or return to work, or start in a new type of work. These can include:

- Doing things another way – such as allowing someone with social anxiety to have their own desk instead of hot-desking
- Allowing the use of a buddy or support worker
- Making physical changes – such as installing a ramp for a wheelchair user, an audio-visual fire alarm if you have a hearing loss or appropriate contrast in decor if you have a visual impairment
- Changing your equipment – such as providing a special keyboard if you have arthritis
- Providing a designated parking space if you have a mobility impairment and need to drive to work
- Improving ventilation in the workplace for people with health conditions e.g. if heat makes you feel especially tired or sick
- Re-siting your desk close to a toilet
- Time off for treatment and check-ups

Depending on the nature of your disability or health condition, you may also need changes to your working pattern or job role. The adjustments that might be needed include:

- Working flexible hours or part-time to accommodate disability-related needs
- Working from home
- Modifying the job description to take away minor parts of the role that cause particular difficulty
- Adjusting performance targets to take into account the effect of disability leave, sickness or fatigue on the employee
- Reducing work pressure and offering further support when such pressure cannot be avoided.

A further option might include arranging training or access to mentoring. The training may include the use of specialist equipment or software, as required by people with newly diagnosed sight loss. It's also possible for the training to be extended to work colleagues or those whose own cooperation is required for you to continue in post.



Most reasonable adjustments cost nothing or very little. One survey from ACAS showed that only 4% of adjustments cost money and even then the average is just £184 per disabled employee.

Using the experiences of disabled employees to develop an open and supportive culture can be beneficial to all staff. For example, allowing flexibility for employees to start and finish work later in the day might help someone who needs longer to get ready in the morning due to disability; and also might help someone who needs to drop their children off at school or nursery.

DECIDING WHAT IS REASONABLE

What's considered a reasonable adjustment always depends on individual circumstances. For example if you're living with cancer and having chemotherapy treatment, you might have less resistance to infection. In this case, it might be reasonable to allow you to commute to work outside of rush hour



When deciding whether or not an adjustment is reasonable an employer should consider the:

- Effectiveness of the adjustment in preventing the disadvantage
- Practicality of the adjustment
- Financial and other costs of the adjustment and the extent of any disruption caused
- Extent of the employer's financial or other resources
- Availability to the employer of financial or other assistance to help make an adjustment, for example through the Access to Work scheme and the support of Jobcentre Plus.

The duty to consider redeployment i.e. transferring you to fill an existing vacancy elsewhere, generally only kicks in after all other workplace adjustments have been

considered.

Employers cannot discriminate against you by using your disability or health condition as a reason to move you to an easier or lower-paid job or select you for redundancy. They may need to offer you an alternative role even if it is more senior, if you are no longer able to do the original role.

For further information

For further ideas about workplace adjustments, visit the *Employing People* section in the *Public and private sector guidance* area of the Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) website. Useful EHRC publications include *Your Rights to Equality at Work: Working Hours, Flexible Working and Time Off*

www.equalityhumanrights.com

The Business Disability Forum produces a line manager's guide to reasonable adjustments available from:

businessdisabilityforum.org.uk/advice-and-publications/publications/line-manager-guide-reasonable-adjustments

The Disability Rights UK factsheet F56 *Understanding the equality act: information for disabled students* explains in more detail how employers and education providers have to make reasonable adjustments, provide support and make things accessible.

www.disabilityrightsuk.org/understanding-equality-act-information-disabled-students

There is an agreed professional standard for conducting work based recovery or what is termed vocational rehabilitation support called PAS 150 produced by the UK Rehabilitation Council. It exists as guidance and is not enforceable.

MANAGING ABSENCES

Whilst some people may need time off, especially when they receive a new diagnosis, employers shouldn't assume that everyone living with a disability or health condition will have a high level of sickness absence.

You may need occasional medical appointments or set periods of time off, however you can usually make sure employers are notified of these absences in advance. This type of absence might be categorised as 'Disability Leave' or 'Employment Retention Leave' and could be considered as a reasonable adjustment.

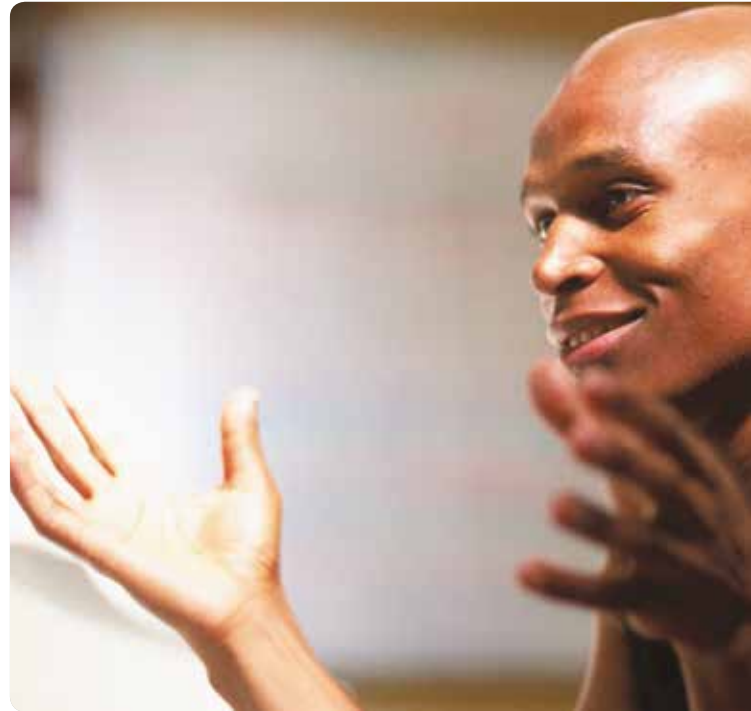
Disability Leave is not a legal term, however it can be a useful way of distinguishing between absence for a reason relating to a disability and general sickness absence. Employers should be understanding, for example by realising that employees living with a disability or health condition are much more likely to try to work if they know they can take a break or go home if necessary.

You should not be unjustifiably discriminated against for a reason arising from your disability in the attendance management process.

EMPLOYMENT SUPPORT SERVICES

You may need additional support to stay in work or to get back into work if you've lost your job. Employment support services are provided by a range of organisations in the public, private and voluntary sector. They can help you to get a job and sometimes continue support to keep you in work. You can find this support from several organisations, including Jobcentre Plus.

"I had help and support from a charity called Henshaw's Society for Blind People. They helped me on the road to employment with interview skills, writing my CV and other topics that built up the skills you need for work." **Bank cashier**



FIT FOR WORK

Fit for Work is free services to help employees stay in or return to work. It provides an occupational health assessment and general health and work advice to employees, employers and GPs in England and Wales.

Fit for Work is intended to complement (rather than replace) existing employer occupational health services. It will fill the gap in support that currently exists and will especially benefit those small employers who currently have limited in-house occupational health services.

There are main two elements to Fit for Work:

- 1 Work-related health advice via the website and telephone line.
 - T** 0800 032 6235
 - W** <http://fitforwork.org>
- 2 Referral to an occupational health professional for employees who have been off sick or who are likely to be off sick for four weeks or more.

A similar service operates in Scotland:

- W** www.fitforworkscotland.scot

ACCESS TO WORK

Access to Work is a government scheme run by Jobcentre Plus. It was described by the Sayce Review of disability employment programmes as “one of the best kept secrets in Government”.

The scheme can cover all the agreed costs for anyone starting a new job, traineeship, Supported Internship or apprenticeship. It will also cover a proportion of the costs if you become disabled whilst in work, so you can receive extra support to keep your job.



Access to Work can help in a number of ways, for example by paying towards:

- a support worker or job coach to help you in – or outside – the workplace
- a support service if you have a mental health condition and you're absent from work or finding it difficult to work
- adaptations to the equipment you use
- specific equipment
- fares to work if you can't use public transport – this can include taxis
- disability awareness training for your colleagues
- the cost of moving your equipment if you change location or job

If you've been employed for six weeks or more, the employer may have to help pay some of these costs. How much they pay depends on the size of the company – employers with fewer than 50 employees pay nothing. If you're self-employed, you can also get Access to Work without having to contribute to the costs.

There is no set amount for an Access to Work grant. How much you get depends on individual circumstances. From 1 October 2015, Access to Work grants are capped at £40,800 per year, but most awards are much smaller.

Access to Work doesn't have to be paid back and it won't affect any social security benefits you receive.

Follow these steps if you think you might be able to get help from Access to Work.

Step 1 – Contact Access to Work:

Operational Support Unit, Harrow Jobcentre Plus, Mail Handling Site A, Wolverhampton WV98 1JE

T 0345 268 8489;

Textphone 0345 608 8753

E atwosu.london@jobcentreplus.gsi.gov.uk

Step 2 – Print the Access to Work eligibility letter and take it to the employer:

W www.gov.uk/government/publications/access-to-work-eligibility-letter-for-employees-and-employers

Step 3 – When an Access to Work adviser contacts you and your employer, tell the adviser about the help and support required

For more information

To find out more about Access to Work:

W www.disabilityrightsuk.org/access-work

Careers information and advice

You may be thinking about your future career. There can be a big benefit in talking things through with others and reflecting on what you're learning about yourself and life in a broader sense. Without rushing into something which won't serve you well in the longer term, it's good to start thinking about your plans early. Research shows the longer you stay out of work the harder it can be to get back in.

REFLECTION

If you've recently developed a physical or mental health condition, just been given a life-changing diagnosis or your health is starting to worsen, there might be lots of changes going on in your life.

Sorting out your current employment position will naturally be a priority, making sure there is money coming in and that you maintain your work identity and contacts. At DR UK we strongly support the principle of employers retaining disabled employees and making sure all options are explored for people to stay in the same or similar roles. The duty on employers to make 'reasonable adjustments' is very important, as is an awareness of the ways that almost every kind of workplace can be made accessible.

It's also important to acknowledge that acquiring an impairment can change our ideas about work in all kinds of ways. Many people talk about gaining new skills and changing their career ambitions during this time.

"Because my sight issue forces me to read things more slowly, I notice errors or poor grammar more than anyone else does. I also only have to read a report once to get its full meaning. My peers tend to charge through them (as I used to when my sight was better) and then have to read them again as they fail to get the full message." **Banking professional**

There are four broad areas worth thinking about if you're considering changing career direction. Combining insights from each can help you make the best decision and support you to feel more focused and motivated.



Finding out about yourself

Early career ideas may have been based on hobbies or subjects studied at school or college. When thinking about a new career, it's useful to think about what you most want to do and also reflect on experiences of disability or any health challenges. For example, overcoming cancer may have given you greater resilience and determination, the ability to manage change and build relationships with people. Alternatively through having a personal budget you might have learned about managing money and planning and managing your own support.

Finding out about jobs and business opportunities

You may need information on available opportunities. This includes finding out about different types of work, pay and prospects, the skills needed and any education and training requirements.

The labour market is changing all the time. It's really useful to know where the biggest opportunities will be in your area of interest and your part of the country.

For more information

A good place to research job types is the National Careers Service A – Z of job profiles:

nationalcareersservice.direct.gov.uk/advice/planning/jobfamily/Pages/default.aspx

You can cross reference your ideas to research on the UK jobs market like Careers of the Future:

www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/388684/20267_UKCES_infographics_141210_v2.pdf

LMI for all is a database that provides 'Labour Market Intelligence' on the job opportunities that are likely in different parts of the country.

www.lmiforall.org.uk

Summaries of LMI for each Local Enterprise Partnership in England can be found at

www.gov.uk/government/publications/local-enterprise-summary-reports

Numerous surveys of employers and HR recruiters show that employers attach importance to the following skills: the ability to work collaboratively, adaptability, analytical thinking, communication skills, problem solving, decision making, global mindset, relevant work experience, leadership skills, self-motivation and numerical skills. You may want to think through how you meet these skills, bearing in mind that you may have learnt them both in and outside work.

There are a lot of opportunities for apprenticeships given a Government commitment to the creation of 3 million new apprenticeship opportunities by 2020. And apprenticeships are not only in technical skills: they can be in hospitality, or retail, or care or many other business areas

If you're under 25 it would be worth contacting your Local Authority to find out what support is available through their Local Offer.

The Local Offer should be up to date and comprehensive and the local authority has to provide an information and advice service to support young disabled people and their parents.

www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/346281/The_local_offer_for_SEND_support.pdf

No one should ever assume that acquiring a physical or mental health condition means certain careers are closed. A small number of occupations have 'fitness' requirements, but even these will usually be fine if you can work with any necessary workplace adjustments. Disability should not be a reason to restrict career choice and support should be available in the workplace.

Trying things out

The people and networks around you can help refine your ideas on which direction to take. Interacting with peer support networks, local support groups, other people with a similar impairment, occupational health advisers, social workers may all bring new perspectives.

If you choose to go back into education and training there'll be opportunities to work with other students and get feedback. Many courses build in the opportunity to develop some of the transferable skills mentioned above e.g. problem-solving, presenting, communication skills and teamwork. You can take this further by doing work experience: research shows that what employers value most is actual employment experience, so getting some experience under your belt can be crucial. Or you could do some volunteering to try out your ideas.


Getting careers advice


Professional careers advisers can provide individual advice and support to help you choose or change your career. They can help you reflect on your life experiences so far, clarify your aspirations, identify transferable skills and help you match to types of jobs that might be suitable for you. They can also help find courses and training schemes and help you develop an action plan to overcome any barriers you face.

The National Careers Service provides careers advice through its website, an email service and a telephone helpline. Adults aged 19 or over (or 18+ if on out-of-work benefits) can also get face-to-face advice.

National Careers Service

To contact the National Careers Service:


 0800 100 900

 nationalcareersservice.direct.gov.uk

Colleges and universities can also provide careers advice and guidance; when you apply, during your course and when you leave.

If you become disabled and need extra support any time up to age 25, you can request an assessment for an Education, Health and Care (EHC) plan from your local authority. The local authority must respond within six weeks to say if they're going to do an assessment leading to an EHC plan. You can appeal if they don't agree to carry out an assessment or issue a plan.

Further information on EHC plans and rights to appeal can be found at

 www.gov.uk/children-with-special-educational-needs/extra-SEN-help



Julian Hayes

Psychotherapist and Cognitive Behavioural Therapist

I left school at fifteen without any qualifications and worked as a builder. I never knew anyone who'd been to college, let alone university. At the age of 30 I was diagnosed with cancer and had to re-evaluate my life.



I couldn't carry on as a builder as the work was too physically demanding and I needed to find an alternative to support my family. I went to night school to study basic English and Maths, then Royal National College to study complementary therapies. This is where I was diagnosed with dyslexia. My first reaction was to cry, as I recalled my many years of academic struggle and ignorance regarding the impact dyslexia had on me and others.

Despite these difficulties, my new qualifications enabled me to provide complementary therapies to some of the most vulnerable people in society within mental health services in Essex. After six years working in this area, I completed a degree in psychotherapy. I worked in schools, cancer care, prisons and other areas.

A major factor in my success was the assistance I received from Disabled Students' Allowances (DSAs). DSAs covered the cost of a dyslexia specialist who came to my home. She was amazing.

I was also given a computer, software and training to help me deal with my assignments. This support highlighted my lack of educational understanding as a child. Although I had never viewed myself as having a disability and had been successful as a builder, it amazed me that I suddenly felt different, more valued and included in society, with additional options available to me. I realised I wasn't thick, just dyslexic!

One of the most difficult parts of my studies was the sheer volume of work – it was like trying to run a race with concrete boots on. The frustration was incredible and draining. I saw others appearing to float past me as I struggled to keep up. I looked after myself both physically and mentally, eating well, exercising regularly, being organised, preparing to the extreme and engaging in my own personal therapy.

I will never forget my days as a builder, they provided me with the determination and transferable skills to overcome adversity. My cancer experiences have attuned me to the concept of post traumatic growth, not disregarding the trauma of such experiences but finding a way through the pain and loss to a new version of myself

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Remember to ask for help and don't be put off if you don't get the right support straight away. Find the solutions – and remember to be kind to yourself!

Now I'm running my own successful private practice as a fully qualified and accredited BACP psychotherapist in Essex. In addition to this, I work as a psychological wellbeing advisor within the charity Help for Heroes. Both roles complement each other, informing my practice and awareness of the difficulties both military and civilian populations experience. I continue to study areas such as the compassionate mind and trauma.

SELF EMPLOYMENT

There are various reasons for choosing to become self-employed. You may have a great business idea or it might simply be the best way of arranging a job around your skills. You may also decide it's the best way of controlling your work environment and adjusting everything to suit your needs.

Setting up your own business can seem daunting and it is hard work but it can also be very rewarding and there are organisations that can offer help, guidance and financial support in the form of grants or loans.

Disability Employment Adviser

One useful point of contact if you're considering self-employment is the Disability Employment Adviser (DEA) at your local Jobcentre Plus office. They can help you decide whether self-employment is a viable option and help you find sources of funding and support. This can include Access to Work (see section 3).

New Enterprise Allowance

The New Enterprise Allowance is a Jobcentre Plus scheme. It can provide money and support to help you start your own business if you're getting certain benefits and have a viable business idea. The scheme can provide access to business mentoring, low cost Start Up loans and a weekly allowance payable over 26 weeks up to a total of £1,274. This can help you establish your business and cash flow.

Disabled Entrepreneurs Network

The Association of Disabled Professionals runs a website that aims to provide networking opportunities and share good practice for self-employed disabled people and those setting up their own businesses.

www.disabled-entrepreneurs.net

Prince's Trust

If you're aged 18-30 with a viable business idea, you may be able to get help from the Prince's Trust's Enterprise Programme.

The programme includes a four-day workshop to learn about the nuts and bolts of starting and running a business including business planning, marketing, sales, raising capital, budgeting and tax. It also includes flexible one-to-one support to get started. If your idea is approved by their Business Launch Group you'll get a range of free and discounted business services support for three years and access to additional start-up finance support.

Further information is available from

www.princes-trust.org.uk



CHOOSING A COURSE OF EDUCATION OR TRAINING

There is a wide range of courses to choose from. Obviously cost will be one factor although you need to think of it as a long-term investment and remember that loans are available in both further and higher education (see section 4).

Once you have an idea what subject or skill area you want to study, you can narrow it down by trying to find out how good the teaching is, what other students think of the course and if you stand a good chance of finding a job with decent prospects and pay when you finish.

The best way to find out what a college, university or training provider is like is to visit before you apply. Many of them will have Open Days when you can look around their facilities, meet course tutors and the Learning Support or Disability Advisers and ask questions. They may be able to arrange for you to speak to students on the course you're interested in as well as other disabled students.

There are also online tools. For example, you can search for apprenticeships for 16-19 year olds on

🌐 www.hotcourses.com

The Guardian produces a league table of universities and rates them for their job and earnings potential and levels of student satisfaction:

🌐 www.theguardian.com/education/ng-interactive/2015/may/25/university-league-tables-2016

The Department for Education produces league tables of colleges and schools including specialist schools and colleges. Comparative information on FE courses can be found at the subscription website:

🌐 www.unifrog.org

There are specialist residential colleges, often distinguished by their focus on independent living skills for particular impairments e.g. Doncaster College for people with hearing impairments. Details of their courses and curricula can be found at

🌐 www.natspec.org.uk/about-us



Access to education and training

Education and training can provide you with the chance to consolidate existing skills, gain new ones to stay in work, or even the opportunity for a fresh career start. Universities, colleges and training providers welcome people who return to learning later in life and can provide support to help overcome any disability-related barriers.

There is strong evidence that higher or work-related qualifications open up more career opportunities – and particularly for people living with long term health conditions or disability. The great things about higher and further education, including apprenticeships, include their variety, flexibility and a strong commitment by providers to supporting all students and trainees to fulfil their potential. Almost any kind of course can be made accessible and having a health condition or disability should not restrict your choices.

Don't be put off by people assuming you can't do something because of your impairment.

- Visually impaired students can take graphic design courses
- Deaf people can study music
- People with dyslexia can train to be teachers

It's understandable to have concerns about what returning to education or an apprenticeship will be like, especially if it's a while since you left school or you only recently acquired a long term health condition or disability.

Being clear about why you want to study or train can help overcome any barriers. Section 4 explains how to get advice from the National Careers Service. There are also some excellent websites listed at the back of this guide.

FURTHER EDUCATION

Further education (FE) is any kind of education after leaving school (sometimes many years or even decades later!) and below degree level.

There are many different qualifications including:

- **Entry Level and Level 1 Courses**
Foundation Learning, Entry Level qualifications and taster courses.
- **Basic Skills**
Skills for life, Functional Skills in English, Maths and ICT, Essential Skills, English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL).
- **Vocational/work-related courses**
National Vocational Qualifications (NVQs), BTEC Awards, Diplomas and Certificates, tech levels and apprenticeships.
- **Academic Courses**
GCSEs, AS and A levels, International Baccalaureate.
- **Access courses**
Access to Higher Education Diplomas provide a good grounding in the knowledge and study skills needed to succeed in higher education. These are equivalent to A levels, but for people who haven't studied for a while.

As well as qualifications, study programmes for young people can also include work experience such as Supported Internships, traineeships and progression to apprenticeships.

TRAINEESHIPS

Traineeships are designed to prepare you for paid employment by helping you to become 'work ready'. They include work preparation training, maths and English and work experience to help you move into a job or apprenticeship. You won't usually get paid on a traineeship but employers are encouraged to cover expenses such as transport (subject to benefit rules). Traineeships are available for 16 to 24 year olds in England, and for those up to 25 with an EHC plan. They run for up to six months.

APPRENTICESHIPS

Apprenticeships can be a great, direct route to getting a skilled career. They allow those aged 16 and over to receive practical training by working in a real paid job at the same time as studying.

As an apprentice you will:

- work alongside experienced staff
- gain skills needed for work
- study for a particular qualification
- earn a wage

An apprenticeship may be a good option if, as a result of acquiring a health condition or disability, you're moving into a different role. For example you may be changing from a manual job that's difficult to continue due to ill health, into a new job that requires new skills and abilities.

As an employee, you'll be working most of the time and so most of your training takes place 'on the job'. The rest takes place at a local college or training provider. You usually complete this 'off-the-job' training one day per week. It could also be done over a number of days in a block. The funding for training costs sometimes depends on your age.

"I received so much help, advice and support that I never knew was available". Dale Connell, apprentice landscaper, studying Level 2 diploma in Horticulture



Types of apprenticeships

There are three main levels of apprenticeship:

- Intermediate Level: equivalent to five GCSEs.
- Advanced Level: this is equivalent to two A Levels.
- Higher Apprenticeships: leading to NVQ Level 4 or above or a Foundation Degree

There are lots of opportunities, including for adults, given a Government commitment to the creation of 3 million new apprenticeship opportunities by 2020.

Almost all job areas have apprenticeship programmes including:

- Agriculture, Horticulture and Animal Care
- Arts, Media and Publishing
- Business Administration and La• Construction, Planning and the Built
- Environment
- Education and Training
- Engineering and Manufacturing
- Technologies
- Health, Public Services and Care
- Information and Communication
- Technology
- Leisure, Travel and Tourism
- Retail and Commercial Enterprise

For more information

You can read more about the different types of apprenticeships on the National Apprenticeship Service website at:

- www.apprenticeships.org.uk/types-of-Apprenticeships.aspx.

For more information please refer to our *Into Apprenticeships* guide:

- www.disabilityrightsuk.org/sites/default/files/pdf/IntoApprenticeships.pdf

NON-ACCREDITED/COMMUNITY LEARNING

There are thousands of local courses for adults. They cover all kinds of subjects, such as photography, introductory IT, cooking on a budget, health and well-being, learning another language or Family Learning, which helps you learn how best to support your children. These are often quite short courses. They don't usually lead to a formal qualification but are ideal for getting back into education after a break.

There is a long history of adult learners in FE. Colleges and training providers recognise that people who return to education later in life are usually highly motivated and bring valuable life experience. They won't necessarily expect you to meet their minimum entry requirements if you have work experience.

According to the Learning and Work Institute, one in five adults are currently learning and 38% have taken part in learning in the last three years.

Colleges, training centres, adult and community education centres and local voluntary organisations all run programmes and courses.

Funding in FE

It's important to think about how you will pay for the course. There are many sources of financial support, depending on your age, previous qualifications, type of course and personal circumstances. Certain groups of people may not have to pay fees.

From August 2016 tuition fee loans will be available to all learners aged 19 and above for qualifications at levels 3 and 4. Loans are also available for courses at levels 5 and 6 which provide a clear route to develop high-level technical and professional skills. For details, see our *Into Further Education* guide:

- www.disabilityrightsuk.org/sites/default/files/pdf/IntoFE-11Apr2016.pdf

Stuart Newton

Assistant Head Teacher and Director of Sixth Form

My decision to retrain as a teacher was driven by two events. During my previous career as a money broker in the City, I had volunteered to mentor the trainees and enjoyed the experience. Then I contracted a neurological illness which left me with limited mobility.



I decided to return to my studies and found myself informally teaching new undergraduates. At the same time I fell into a working pattern that fitted with disability – short sharp sessions of intense work permeated by regular rest periods during the day. Teaching seemed to fit many of the criteria I had set myself when looking for a change of career – mentally stimulating, interactive, rewarding and adaptable with regard to my disability.

The teacher-training route I took was a 1-year Postgraduate Certificate in Education (PGCE). As a wheelchair user, it was a particular challenge to find accessible schools nearby for my practical training. I arranged at least one placement myself to ensure that I wasn't disadvantaged. I also advised on equipment to enable me to teach – a PC with a mobile wireless projector

(I can't stand at a whiteboard for long) and a slimline wheelchair for getting around the classroom. These were paid for by the university and through my Disabled Students' Allowances.

On the whole, although I had to resolve many practical issues myself, everyone was very supportive. My personal tutor certainly did everything he could to help me. My school training experiences were very similar to those of my colleagues and my disability didn't interfere significantly with my training.

I got my first teaching position by writing directly to schools. I did this because my position was unusual: I can only work part time, am a wheelchair user and my specialist subjects, Economics and Politics, are not widely taught. I became Head of Lower Sixth and Head of Politics at my first choice school within three years and now I'm the Assistant Head Teacher.

While teaching has had its challenges, these have never come from the students, who've been very helpful and respectful of my disability. There have been some testing practical issues – the rest of my department being on the 2nd floor of a building with no lift, for example – but the school and my colleagues have been very supportive in finding practical solutions to overcome them.

“

Despite some of the practical difficulties I've dealt with along the way, and the tough days in the classroom which all teachers come up against, the rewards and pleasure I receive from teaching far outweigh any negative aspects of the job.

My lessons are timetabled in a limited amount of easily accessible classrooms, my IT equipment has been fine-tuned and I received assistance from the Access to Work scheme to help pay for a new wheelchair and my travelling expenses in and out of school.

HIGHER EDUCATION

For disabled people especially, achieving a higher education (HE) qualification means a much lower risk of unemployment. Although disabled people with lower qualifications are generally under-represented in the workplace, research from the Association of Graduate Careers Advisory Services (AGCAS) shows that you have radically improved job prospects if you progress with your education. At graduate level, disabled people achieve more similar levels of job success to non-disabled people; whereas for people with lower levels of qualifications, disabled people fare far worse.

If you're a mature applicant without the usual formal qualifications, most higher education institutions will consider other experience or qualifications gained through work or an Access to Higher Education Diploma.

Flexible study options in HE

If it's not practical for you to take a three-year full-time course, there are a range of flexible options. Many courses, including foundation degrees, can be taken part-time. Modular courses allow you to work at your own pace, stopping for a while if necessary or switching to part-time. Distance learning is another option.

The Open University (OU) is the largest distance learning institution in the UK. It has over 13,000 disabled students and offers more than 250 undergraduate and postgraduate courses and professional qualifications. A number of other colleges and universities also offer distance learning options.

Foundation degrees are employment-focused HE qualifications. They aim to equip you with the skills, knowledge and understanding needed in the workplace. Foundation degrees are designed and developed in partnership with employers and are taught by further education colleges and higher education institutions.

Part-time courses don't usually make a difference to the receipt of benefits such as Employment and Support Allowance (ESA), whereas full-time study usually affects eligibility. For more information on welfare benefits see Section 7.



Funding in HE

It's important to think about funding before enrolling on a course. Most people are aware that universities and colleges can charge up to £9,000 per year for full-time courses. However there is plenty of support available to lessen the cost and students don't need to pay for the course up front. Even more importantly, you only start paying back your loan when your salary reaches a certain level. Many students will never reach the point of having to pay back the full amount. On the other hand you need to accept that your student loan is something you'll be gradually paying towards for a long time, probably the majority of your working life.

“My research led me to believe that teaching would be a career in which I feel my disability and life experiences will actually act as a positive influence upon some of the young people in our society, which is not something many other occupations can offer.” **Stuart Newton**


In higher education you can apply for Disabled Students' Allowances (DSAs) towards extra disability-related course costs such as:

- Specialist equipment, assistive software, furniture or training
- Non-medical helpers, support workers, sign language interpreters and other help you may need (except where the university should cover under the Equality Act)
- Extra travel costs you have to pay because of your disability. This is not normally for everyday travel costs. For example, if you need a taxi while most other students use public transport, you will receive the difference between the two fares.
- General extra disability-related costs not covered by the other allowances

Research shows that disabled students who receive DSAs get better final grades than those who choose to go it alone, without asking for or accepting support.

Students starting full-time courses from August 2016, who are eligible for means-tested benefits, may also qualify for additional loan support towards their living costs.

We recommend referring to our Into Higher Education guide for detailed information:

 www.disabilityrightsuk.org/sites/default/files/IntoHE2016.pdf

GETTING SUPPORT ON THE COURSE

All universities and colleges, and most large training providers, have staff members responsible for supporting disabled students. They are usually called the Learning Support Adviser or Disability Coordinator. You should be able to have a confidential discussion with them about your individual needs.

Some providers will arrange a more formal needs assessment. This is a face-to-face meeting with someone who understands how to support disabled students, including those with health conditions.

Support can include many different things, for example:

- providing handouts in advance, on different colour paper or in a larger font
- support with field work or work experience arrangements
- specialist equipment, such as a voice-activated computer
- sign-language interpreters
- digital recorder for keeping notes
- extra tutorial help
- changing the height of desks
- extra time or alternative assessment methods for assignments and exams
- access to other support services such as counselling
- accessible accommodation on campus



Under the Equality Act 2010, colleges and training providers have to make adjustments for disabled students. This means that, as well as not discriminating against you in the application process, they're expected to provide support and make changes to help you learn.

For more information

Disability Rights UK has a series of careers guides with detailed information on applying for courses, funding and support. *Into Higher Education, Into Further Education* and *Into Apprenticeships* are available as free pdfs from our online shop.

[W https://crm.disabilityrightsuk.org](https://crm.disabilityrightsuk.org)

Our student helpline can answer individual questions about:

- how to apply for courses
- the pros and cons of being open about your impairment
- what financial support is available for students
- how to apply for DSAs
- the interaction between studying and welfare benefits

[T 0800 328 5050](tel:08003285050)

[E students@disabilityrightsuk.org](mailto:students@disabilityrightsuk.org)



WORK EXPERIENCE

Although many careers require formal study and training towards professional qualifications, don't overlook opportunities to gain new skills through work experience, casual work, internships, volunteering or other work experience programmes.

Work experience can also be a great way of gaining knowledge of a particular industry, strengthening your CV and providing you with a reference. Keeping up with the world of work can also really help your confidence.

There are many organisations looking for people to volunteer their time carrying out all manner of roles. There tends to be greater flexibility in working arrangements when volunteering. Opportunities can vary from a few hours a month to full time. Make sure you agree the time commitment before you start. Find out also what training the organisation will provide and if they will cover expenses such as travel or lunch. While there is less obligation for the organisation to support you, one of the great things about volunteering is that it's a partnership. You and the organisation work out what's best between you and you'll find most organisations are very supportive.

If you're out of work and claiming benefits, there are various Jobcentre Plus schemes that can improve your chances of finding work. These include volunteering opportunities through the Work Together programme and work trials. You may be able to get help from Jobcentre Plus for costs related to work experience such as travel and childcare.

Other places you can look for work experience, including voluntary work, are listed in the Resources section at the back.

When it comes to choosing a placement, think about how much time you can realistically give. It may also be helpful to make a short checklist of what could make the experience rewarding for you, for example:

- Meet people and have fun
- Build up your confidence
- Try out new career ideas
- Get skills to help you get back into paid work
- Work for a cause you feel passionately about
- Get a reference

PROFESSIONAL AND CAREER DEVELOPMENT LOANS

Professional and Career Development Loans are bank loans to pay for courses and training to help you develop your career and stay or get into work. You can borrow between £300 and £10,000.

Loans are usually offered at a reduced interest rate and the government pays the interest while you're studying. Loans have to start being repaid one month after leaving the course.

You should apply three months before starting your course to give the bank enough time to process your application.

More information can be obtained by calling the National Careers Service on 0800 100 900 or visiting

www.gov.uk/career-developmentloans/overview

CHARITABLE TRUSTS

If you have costs which can't be covered by funding from any other sources, you could try applying to a charitable trust such as the Snowdon Trust. Snowdon bursaries are made for one or two years and can be up to £2,500. The closing date for applications is 31 May but the panel also meets in October to consider late applications – funds permitting.

www.snowdontrust.org

For more information

Disability Rights UK produces a free factsheet called *Funding from charitable trusts*. You can find it on our website:

www.disabilityrightsuk.org



Coping strategies and resilience

Many disabled people develop resilient qualities as a result of living through major change.

WHAT IS RESILIENCE?

Resilience is the ability to overcome setbacks and use any learning offered by that experience.

A popular conversational term for resilience is ‘bouncebackability’, a term coined by the football manager Iain Dowie and meaning the ability to be successful after something bad has happened. Possibly everyone with an interest in sport yearns for this quality in their team but it is possible to foster the quality within individual minds, bodies and personalities too.

Many disabled people acquire resilience as a result of overcoming challenges in day-to-day life and living through major change. This can mean people bring particular skills and qualities to new training and employment opportunities – which can offer others huge benefits and learning.

Highly resilient people are able to bring out the best in other people.

Some people who have been through the life-changing experience of disability find they develop empathy with other people, can solve problems, resolve conflicts – and have a high tolerance of ambiguity. Organisations that are resilient can deal with change and ambiguity as well. The latter is particularly important. ‘It’s a difficult situation but what can I do about the bits that are within my control?’ can be a good question to ask, for individuals and for organisations.

Finding the silver lining in any cloud, however dark it may be, is a high level resilient quality.

Ultimately resilience is about moving to a new stability following a shock such as acquired disability. You may go through experiences of impact, chaos, adapting, equilibrium and transformation. The mental health consequences may be huge. However recent research into post-traumatic stress disorder has led to the recognition of post traumatic growth too.

THE BENEFITS OF RESILIENCE

Research into resilience in the workplace has shown its benefits. Resilient people are less likely to become mentally or physically unwell during adversity. Overall they experience more hope, optimism and positivity. Resilient people are better able to cope with job demands and get through tough times, such as job loss and economic hardship. They are also better able to learn new skills when their existing skill set becomes outdated. Additionally when competing for a job or promotion the more resilient person has a better chance of succeeding.

“In a weird way having a mental health problem actually helped me. It made me focused and dynamic. If I could cope with the voices in my head I could cope with anything.”
Media professional



Resilience is hugely important to people who acquire an impairment or health condition. The Recovery Movement (led by people living with mental health challenges) shows how you can grow through the process of loss – of the life you thought you would have – to a life of purpose and meaning for you. Gaining support from others is crucial to this process – we can gain resilience together (see next section on peer support).



WAYS TO DEVELOP RESILIENCE

There have been many studies of resilience and the consensus amongst researchers is that it's something that can be learnt.

You may find that taking care of your physical well-being helps. For example, the benefits of a healthy diet and taking part in regular physical activity are well known – and Disability Rights UK and EFDS have produced a guide to physical activity when you have a health condition or disability

www.efds.co.uk/assets/0001/0701/2518_BeingActiveReport_A4_FINAL.pdf

Psychological resilience can be developed too.

Research into 'Building Personal Resilience at Work' by the Ashridge Business School suggests that social relationships are vital for health and well-being. Keeping involved with

friends, family and community can therefore help enormously. It also suggests that an effective way of boosting your own resilience is to assist others – it always feels better to know you have something to offer, that you are not only on the receiving end of support, important as that is.

Other ideas include nurturing your self-confidence by honing your skills and increasing self-esteem by acts of self-praise such as maintaining lists of your own good qualities. Some people find it useful to teach themselves creative thinking and problem-solving techniques such as those developed by Edward de Bono.

Resilience can include the willingness to see failure as a step towards success, as with the falls we endured when learning to walk.

Sometimes going through tough life experiences like acquiring a major health condition tempts people to over-use drink or drugs. Peer support (see Section 6) and referring to a professional support organisation such as Alcoholics Anonymous may be helpful

Employers are beginning to recognise the benefits of resilient staff and some are even actively promoting resilience such as Transport for London (TfL) in their publication *Going with the Flow*. The TfL booklet may help with identifying your personal strengths and highlighting possible areas to develop. It also contains further suggestions and tools that can help strengthen resilience.

<https://tfl.gov.uk/cdn/static/cms/documents/health-going-with-the-flow-resilience-booklet.pdf>

“The challenges posed by my disability mean I’m adaptable and resourceful. I think my colleagues have learnt from working with me, and have positive attitudes to disability as a result.” Actress and lawyer

Peer support

Through experience people living with health conditions or disability become experts in the barriers which face them and how to tackle such barriers. Support from your peers can be crucial to a successful journey through change.

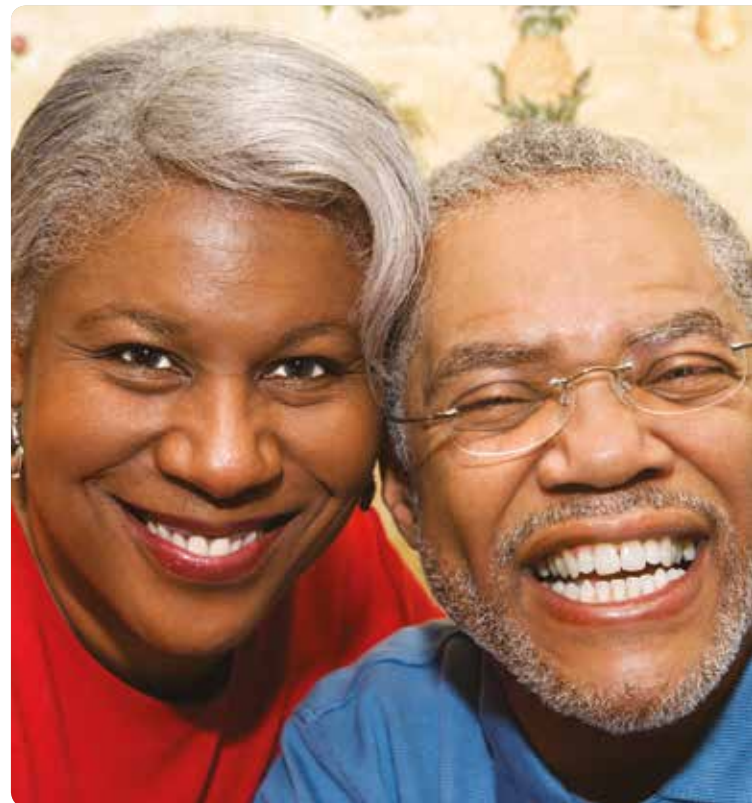
Health professionals can answer questions about your prognosis and rehabilitation and a range of agencies may be able to help with advice on housing and benefits. The voluntary sector can be supportive too, through providing access to professional advisers, helplines and support workers. A number of useful health charities are listed in the Resources section at the back of this guide.

However it's your peers that are often best placed to give you the insight and encouragement to see what a journey through change can be like. They can help to join up the different types of advice and provide tips on if/when to be open to an employer, what kind of adjustments might work, how re-training could be worth trying etc.

Peer support can exist at a number of levels. Most people have probably taken a friend to a medical appointment or meeting with a solicitor; someone who can think critically, free of the immediacy of the situation. This may just have been someone to take notes and help remember everything that was said, or someone who can understand what you're going through and empathise.

“I reached out and got support from a disability support network. If anyone wants to have a strong work focus to reach a recovery position from a mental health perspective, I would say take your time, do it at your own pace, take solid support where it is available, and don't give up.” **Civil Servant**

Peer support doesn't have to stop at the point of an important interview. Your peers can be helpful in many other ways too: helping you to see that you can have a valuable and valued life WITH a health condition; helping you decide what treatments to accept or reject and what support you need to pursue your own goals.



They can help you to find coping strategies or adaptations at work or in a learning situation, because they've been there and done it themselves. They can encourage you to maintain whatever regime you have selected, such as exercise, diet or alcohol intake (Alcoholics Anonymous), maintaining medication or dealing with its side effects (NHS expert patient programme).

Peer support can be organised through self-help groups between people living with specific conditions or impairments, or through local Disabled People's Organisations. Alternatively it can be funded or provided through other bodies such as the NHS or Open University. For example, some mental health services employ peer support workers, who share their life experiences and empathise with others going through similar challenges.

Peer support is based upon collaboration between people of equal power for common good. Car-sharing schemes, baby sitting circles or timebanking schemes are just three examples at a community level where people's ability to contribute time are valued equally. Everyone has potentially the same power to contribute or receive support.

People in the network or association may only have more status than any others by virtue of their greater experience or expertise but still have no more power than any other member. With peer support there is however

a conscious effort to connect that experience or expertise to those needing to benefit from it. Peer support doesn't simply have to be between two people but can exist as a network with many members too.

There can be powerful health benefits from these relationships. In Robert Putnam's book, *Bowling Alone* he describes a body of research which showed that social networks and community involvement have positive health consequences. He concludes that 'the more integrated we are with our community, the less likely we are to experience colds, heart attacks, strokes, cancer, depression, and premature death of all sorts.' Though focusing upon schools, he offers evidence for equally strong learning outcomes from social connection too. Finally Putnam argues for broad and deep connections such as can be found in monthly or more frequent attendance of meetings e.g. of book groups, study forums, evening classes – or whatever interests you.



Welfare benefits

This section is an overview of welfare benefits you might be able to claim. It includes ‘in work benefits’ such as Working Tax Credit or Universal Credit. There are also payments such as Personal Independence Payment (PIP) which do not depend on income or savings. For each benefit there is a link to a relevant DR UK factsheet with more detailed information.

EMPLOYMENT AND SUPPORT ALLOWANCE

Employment and Support Allowance (ESA) is for people whose ability to work is limited by ill health or disability. ESA has two parts, contributory ESA and income-related ESA.

Contributory ESA

You need to have paid enough national insurance contributions in certain tax years to be entitled to contributory ESA. Contributory ESA is a flat-rate benefit. It is not affected by any savings or other income, except for occupational or personal pensions. Unless you’re in the ‘support group’ (see below), payment of contributory ESA is limited to 12 months.

Income-related ESA

Income-related ESA is a means-tested benefit. This means your needs are compared with the money you have, such as income and savings. Income-related ESA can be paid on its own or as a top-up to contributory ESA. Income-related ESA can include amounts to help towards mortgage interest payments and some other housing costs. Income-related ESA is not time limited.

Who can get ESA?

ESA is usually not for people in employment, although some types of work are allowed as ‘permitted work’ (see above). ESA cannot be paid to anyone receiving income support, jobseeker’s allowance or statutory sick pay. To receive ESA, you must be assessed as having a limited capability for work. This is tested under the ‘work capability assessment’.



For more information

Disability Rights UK publishes factsheets that provide detailed information on the benefits summarised here.

- F31 Employment and Support Allowance
- F60 Personal Independence Payment
- F35 Permitted Work
- F9 Working Tax Credit
- F44 Housing Benefit
- F43 Help with Council Tax
- F55 Universal Credit
- F46 Jobseekers Allowance
- F29 Blue Badge Scheme

You can find them in the Advice and Information section of our website:

www.disabilityrightsuk.org/how-we-can-help/advice-and-information

The work capability assessment

An ‘assessment phase’ normally applies to a new ESA application. The assessment phase should last 13 weeks although it may be extended if there are delays. Until the assessment phase has been completed, ESA is paid at a reduced rate, the ‘basic allowance’.

During the assessment phase, you must undergo a ‘work capability assessment’. This is intended to find out whether you have a ‘limited capability for work’. If so, you can stay on ESA. The assessment is also used to establish whether you have a ‘limited capability for work-related activity’. This decides whether you are put in the ‘support group’ or the ‘work-related activity group’.

The support group

In the support group you don’t have to undertake work-related activities. You receive a higher rate of ESA than those in the work-related activity group.


If you get contributory ESA, it can be paid indefinitely, as long as you continue to satisfy all the conditions.

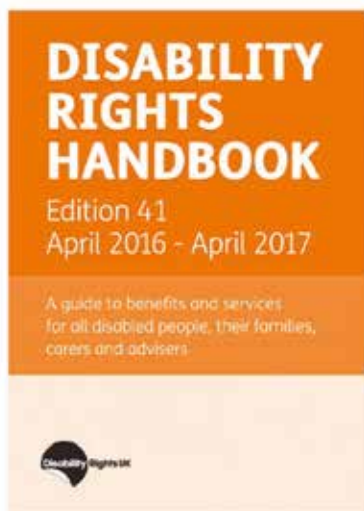
The work-related activity group

If it is decided that you don’t have a limited capability for work-related activity, you will be put in the work-related activity group of claimants and receive a lower rate of ESA.

Claimants have to adhere to work-related conditions to continue receiving the benefit in full. This involves attending a series of work-focused interviews and possibly taking part in ‘work-related activity’ such as making a CV, skills training or a community work placement. At each interview, a ‘work coach’ will discuss your work prospects, the steps you are willing to take to move into work and the support available to you.

Factsheet 31 can be found at:

 www.disabilityrightsuk.org/employment-and-support-allowance-overview



Published May each year

Benefits, tax credits and social care

If your life is affected by disability, welfare reform and changes to social security have made getting the support you need even more of a challenge.

Trusted by claimants and advisers for over 40 years

The Handbook provides in-depth information on the entire benefits system. Written in plain English, our user-friendly benefits guide is designed for both claimants and advisers. Updated every year, it has the answers you need to provide advice or claim what you’re entitled to.

Everything you need to know


- Benefits for people of all ages with an illness, injury or disability
- Benefits for carers, people looking for work or in retirement
- Personal Independence Payment: help with care or getting around
- Universal Credit: Who is eligible and how it’s worked out
- Challenging benefit decisions; how to appeal
- How care and support needs are met

You can buy our publications online at www.disabilityrightsuk.org

PERSONAL INDEPENDENCE PAYMENT

Personal Independence Payment (PIP) is designed to cover extra costs of disability. It is for people who need help taking part in everyday life or who find it difficult to get around. You can get PIP whether you're in work or not. It's tax free and not affected by earnings or any other income, savings or capital.

PIP is for you as an individual, not for your relative or carer, and it can be spent on anything you like. You can qualify for PIP even if you don't have someone helping you. What matters is the effect of your disability or health condition and the help you need. PIP can also act as a 'passport' for other types of help, such as the Motability Scheme.

 www.motability.co.uk

How PIP is made up

PIP has two components:

- a daily living component – for help participating in everyday life;
- a mobility component – for help with getting around.

You can receive either the daily living component or the mobility component on its own, or both components at the same time. Each component is paid at two different levels: a 'standard rate' and an 'enhanced rate'. The rate depends on whether your ability to carry out daily living or mobility activities is 'limited' or 'severely limited'. This is tested under the PIP assessment.

The PIP assessment

The PIP assessment aims to test your ability to participate in everyday life. It is points-related and based on your ability to perform 12 activities related to daily living and mobility. Your total number of points determines whether you're entitled to either or both components of PIP and which rates.




Ten daily living activities:

- Preparing food
- Taking nutrition
- Managing therapy or monitoring a health condition
- Washing and bathing
- Managing toilet needs or incontinence
- Dressing and undressing
- Communicating verbally
- Reading and understanding signs, symbols and words
- Engaging with other people face to face
- Making budgeting decisions

Two mobility activities:


- Planning and following journeys
- Moving around

Factsheet 50 can be found at:

 www.disabilityrightsuk.org/personal-independence-payment-pip

For more information

Disability Rights UK has a free guide to claiming Personal Independence Payment available on its website. It includes detailed information on the PIP assessment, how to claim, the points system and what you can do if you're not happy with the decision.

 www.disabilityrightsuk.org/personal-independence-payment-pip.



PERMITTED WORK

If you start paid work of 16 hours or more per week, you should seek advice about benefit entitlement from an advice agency. You could request a 'better-off' calculation to establish whether you will be financially better off in work and identify the in-work benefits and tax credits you should be applying for.

If you're getting ESA or certain other benefits because of incapacity for work, you are allowed to do some 'permitted work'. Permitted work can include paid employment or self-employment.

You don't need the permission of a doctor to do permitted work, but you should tell the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) if you're working.

You have a choice of three permitted work options, depending on your circumstances:

Permitted work lower limit

Under this option, you can earn up to £20 a week for an unlimited period.

Permitted work higher limit

You can earn up to £115.50 per week (April 2016 figure) after tax and national insurance deductions. The work must be for less than 16 hours a week. You can normally only do permitted work higher limit for up to 52 weeks. You may, however, do it without time limit if you are on ESA and have been placed in the 'support group'.

Supported permitted work

This is work where you are supervised by someone who is employed by a public or local authority or community or voluntary group which provides or finds work for people with disabilities. It can also be work which is part of a treatment programme under medical supervision.

Supported permitted work has no restriction on the hours you work and can be for an unlimited period. You cannot earn more than £115.50 per week after tax and national insurance deductions (April 2016 figure).

The DR UK factsheet F35 has information on other kinds of work that are allowed:

W www.disabilityrightsuk.org/work-people-living-disability-or-health-conditions

WORKING TAX CREDIT

Tax credits provide financial help to people on a low income. To get working tax credit, you must work for a certain number of hours. For example, you can receive tax credits if you work at least 16 hours a week and qualify for the 'disabled worker element' or you're getting certain disability benefits such as PIP.

Claims are also possible from single parents, couples with a child or qualifying young person (if one of you works at least 24 hours per week), and those aged 60 or over. Other ways to qualify are shown in factsheet F9, but otherwise you can only qualify for working tax credit if you're on a low income, aged 25 or over and working at least 30 hours a week.

Factsheet 9 can be found at:

W www.disabilityrightsuk.org/guide-tax-credits

HOUSING BENEFIT

Housing benefit is help with rent and some other housing costs. This does not include mortgage costs, which may be met instead by other benefits such as income-based JSA or income-related ESA. You can get Housing Benefit if you:

- are liable to pay rent on your normal home
- are on a low income
- do not have capital or savings above £16,000

There are some restrictions which mean the amount of housing benefit you get may be less than your actual rent. It can be complicated to work out the amount of Housing Benefit that you may be entitled to. We recommend that you get help and information from a local advice centre, such as a Citizens Advice Bureau.

Housing benefit can be claimed at the same time as claiming ESA or JSA.

Factsheet 44 can be found at:

www.disabilityrightsuk.org/housing-benefit

HELP WITH COUNCIL TAX

There are three types of help you can get with Council Tax, shown below. You can get help through all three schemes at the same time if you satisfy the conditions for each of them.

Council Tax Discount scheme

You can get a 25% discount off your bill if you are the only person living in your home or if all other occupiers are 'disregarded'. You can get a 50% discount off your bill if you and all the other occupiers are disregarded for council tax. Those who are disregarded include:

- people who are considered to be 'severely mentally impaired'
- certain types of carer
- people in hospital, a care home, or certain kinds of hostel
- anyone whose 'sole or main residence' is elsewhere
- young people, students, student nurses, youth trainees and apprentices.

For more information

For a full list of people who are disregarded for council tax, contact your local council or see the Disability Rights Handbook:

<https://crm.disabilityrightsuk.org>



Disability Reduction scheme

You can get a reduction on your bill if you or someone in your home is 'substantially and permanently disabled' and one of the following applies.

- You have a room (other than bathroom, kitchen or toilet) which is used to meet your needs e.g. for dialysis, treatment or storage of equipment
- You have a second bathroom or kitchen used to meet your needs or
- You have enough space in your home to use a wheelchair indoors.

If any of these apply, the bill is reduced to the next lowest band. If you are already in Band A, your bill will be reduced by one sixth.



Council Tax Reduction schemes

In England and Wales the local authority is required to have a Council Tax Reduction scheme in place. Each authority in England has a different scheme.

Rightsnet have an online resource showing all the support schemes in operation, available at:

- www.rightsnet.org.uk/toolkit/council_tax_support

Factsheet 43 can be found at:

- www.disabilityrightsuk.org/help-council-tax

UNIVERSAL CREDIT

Universal credit is a new means-tested benefit that will eventually replace other means-tested benefits such as income-related Employment and Support Allowance (ESA), income-based Jobseekers Allowance (JSA), Housing Benefit, working tax credit, income support and child tax credit. Other benefits such as PIP will remain largely unchanged by the new system.

Universal credit is being phased in over time and the current benefits will not disappear for some years.

Universal credit may involve an entitlement to a loan (called a 'budgeting advance'), free prescriptions and dental treatment, housing grants, free school meals and help with hospital fares.

The amount of universal credit depends on individual circumstances. It is worked out on a monthly basis by comparing financial needs with financial resources. Set amounts for different financial needs are added together to arrive at the 'maximum amount'. This is the figure the law says that person needs to live on each month. Amounts are then deducted for any earnings or other income you receive.

Factsheet 55 can be found at:

- www.disabilityrightsuk.org/universal-credit-uc

"I was worried I'd struggle to find gainful employment after my recovery but I've been really fortunate with my employer. After a bit of explanation and context from my doctor, they've given me flexibility in my working hours, allowed me to work from home when I need to and take leave for regular blood tests and hospital appointments." **Carrie Boyce, Outreach Executive at Royal Society of Chemistry**

JOBSEEKERS ALLOWANCE

Jobseeker's Allowance (JSA) is for people who are unemployed or working less than 16 hours per week and seeking work. There are two forms; contribution-based and income-based.

Contribution-based JSA

Contribution-based JSA is a personal flat-rate allowance. You may be able to claim it if you've paid enough national insurance contributions in the last two tax years.

Income-based JSA

Income-based JSA is means-tested and is based on income and savings. You may receive it if you have no income or a low income and no more than £16,000 in savings. You don't have to have paid national insurance contributions.

JSA involves signing a claimant commitment which includes details of your availability for work (including any restrictions imposed by your condition), the sort of work you're looking for, how you will look for work and what you will do to improve your job prospects.

Claimants are expected to take a number of steps each week. This can include applying for jobs, looking for vacancies, writing your CV and registering with employment agencies.

If you have a limited capacity for work because of ill health or disability that is expected to last more than 13 weeks you should claim ESA.

Factsheet 46 can be found at:

www.disabilityrightsuk.org/jobseekers-allowance-jsa



BLUE BADGE SCHEME

If you have problems with walking or other mobility problems you may be able to get a Blue Badge to enable you to park your car near shops and other places you want to visit.

Factsheet 29 can be found at:

www.disabilityrightsuk.org/blue-badge-scheme

Challenging a decision

Benefits decision can be challenged and Disability Rights UK has a list of appeals factsheets at

www.disabilityrightsuk.org/how-we-can-help/benefits-information/factsheets/appeals-factsheets

Resources

WEBSITES

Access to Higher Education

www.accesstohe.ac.uk

Information about the Access to Higher Education Diploma which prepares people without traditional qualifications for study at university.

Advice Guide

www.adviceguide.org.uk

Information from Citizens Advice on money issues, benefits, health, housing and legal advice.

Bright Knowledge

www.brightknowledge.org

Resource library with information about apprenticeships, health, money and careers.

Careers Wales

www.careerswales.com

Careers information and advice as well as contact details for local careers centres in Wales.

Do-it

www.do-it.org.uk

Volunteering website.

Equality and Human Rights Commission

www.equalityhumanrights.com

The EHRC website contains a range of publications on equality and human rights, including the Equality Act in employment and education and guidance on reasonable adjustments.

Fit for Work

www.fitforwork.org

Information and advice for GPs, employers and employees to help those who are in work and off work sick.

Fit for Work Scotland

www.fitforworkscotland.scot

Information and advice for GPs, employers and employees in Scotland to help those who are in work and off work sick.

Information Advice and Support Services

www.iassnetwork.org.uk/find-your-iass

Local Authorities have a duty to provide information, advice and support to disabled young people and their parents. Use this website to find local IAS services in England.

Money Advice Service

www.moneyadvice.org.uk

Free and impartial advice service to help people manage their money.

National Apprenticeship Service

www.apprenticeships.org.uk

Information on apprenticeships. Also features a database of vacancies, resources to help with applying for apprenticeships and online videos.

National Careers Service

nationalcareersservice.direct.gov.uk

Career planning, information and advice service for students in England. The website offers a range of information including a Skills health check, CV builder, over 800 job profiles, information on courses and sources of funding.

Not Going to Uni

www.notgoingtouni.co.uk

Online guide that offers advice on how to become an apprentice, as well as gap years' programmes and distance learning.

Prince's Trust

www.princes-trust.org.uk/need_help/courses/get_into.aspx

Get into programme for 16 to 25-year-olds to help you get work experience to move into a paid job.

Skills Development Scotland

www.skillsdevelopmentscotland.co.uk

Information on education opportunities, career planning, Individual Learning Accounts and finding a local careers centre in Scotland.

PUBLICATIONS

Disability discrimination: key points for the workplace

ACAS guide for senior managers, HR personnel, employees, trade union representatives and job applicants on how disability discrimination can occur and how it can be dealt with.

- W www.acas.org.uk/media/pdf/4/j/Disability-discrimination-key-points-for-the-workplace.pdf

Building Personal Resilience at Work

Researched by Rod Warner and Kurt April and published by Ashridge Business School 2012.

- W www.ashridge.org.uk/Media-Library/Ashridge/PDFs/Publications/BuildingPersonalResilienceAtWork.pdf

Disability Rights UK publications

Factsheets for disabled students covering the Equality Act, funding and adjustments for disabled students. Disability Rights UK also produces *Into Higher Education*, *Into Further Education*, *Into Apprenticeships* and *Doing Careers Differently*.

- W www.disabilityrightsuk.org/how-we-can-help/individuals/education

Going with the Flow: Remaining Resilient Through Change and Challenge

Originally designed as a resource for TfL employees to introduce resilient behaviours, help identify personal strengths and highlight areas to develop by providing suggestions and tools.

- W <https://tfl.gov.uk/cdn/static/cms/documents/health-going-with-the-flow-resilience-booklet.pdf>

Helping you meet the costs of learning and training: disabled students

Produced by the Scottish Government.

- W www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Education

I WILL find out about funding

Produced by the Welsh Government.

- W www.yourfuturechoiceaction.org.uk/english/funding.html

Line manager guide; Reasonable adjustments

Guide to help managers make reasonable adjustments for disabled people.

- W businessdisabilityforum.org.uk/advice-and-publications/publications/line-manager-guide-reasonable-adjustments

Mid-life Career Review

Materials created by NIACE and hosted by XtLearn to disseminate resources from the Mid-life Career Review project to careers guidance practitioners.

- W www.xtlearn.net/p/mlcr

Richard Review of Apprenticeships

Independent review considering what an apprenticeship should be and how they can meet the needs of the changing economy.

- W www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-richard-review-of-apprenticeships

Your Rights to Equality at Work: Working Hours, Flexible Working and Time Off

EHRC guide giving advice on your rights under equality law when you are at work.

- W www.equalityhumanrights.com/sites/default/files/publication_pdf/Your%20Rights%20working%20hours%20and%20flexible%20working.pdf

ORGANISATIONS

EDUCATION

Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS)

T 020 7215 5555

- W www.gov.uk/government/organisations/department-for-business-innovation-skills

Department for Education

Sanctuary Buildings, Great Smith Street, London SW1P 3PT

T 0370 000 2288

Textphone 18001 0370 000 2288

Student Support (UK) 0845 300 5090

- W www.education.gov.uk

Web contact form:

- W www.education.gov.uk/contactus/df

Education Funding Agency

53-55 Butts Road, Earlsdon Park, Coventry
CV1 3 BH

W www.gov.uk/government/organisations/education-funding-agency

Learning and Work Institute

21 De Montfort Street, Leicester LE1 7GE

T 0116 204 4200

E enquiries@learningandwork.org.uk

W www.learningandwork.org.uk

Independent policy and research organisation formed from the merger of NIACE and the Centre for Economic & Social Inclusion. Its work is dedicated to lifelong learning, full employment and inclusion.

Skills Funding Agency

Cheylesmore House, Quinton Road, Coventry
CV1 2WT

T 0845 377 5000

E info@skillsfundingagency.bis.gov.uk

W www.gov.uk/complainfurthereducationapprenticeship

Student Finance England

24+ Advanced Learning Loans, PO Box 302
Darlington DL1 9NQ

T 0845 240 2024

Phone line open Mon to Fri 8.00-20.00,
Sat and Sun 9.00-16.00

W www.gov.uk/advanced-learning-loans
Provides information and services to students who normally live in England. The government plans to extend learning loans to people aged 19 upwards.

UKCES

Renaissance House, Adwick Park, Wath upon
Dearne, South Yorkshire S63 5NB

T 01709 774800

E info@ukces.org.uk

W www.ukces.org.uk

The UK Commission for Employment and Skills (UKCES) is a publicly funded, industry led organisation providing strategic leadership on skills and employment issues in the UK.

Volunteering Matters

The Levy Centre, 18-24 Lower Clapton Road,
London, E5 0PD

T 020 3780 5870

E Email through the website at
volunteeringmatters.org.uk/contact-us

W volunteeringmatters.org.uk

Involves people in high quality volunteering and learning opportunities.

DISABILITY

Action on Hearing Loss

19-23 Featherstone Street, London EC1Y 8SL

T 0808 808 0123

Textphone 0808 808 9000

Phone line open Mon to Fri 9.00-17.00

SMS 0780 0000 360

E informationline@hearingloss.org.uk

W www.actiononhearingloss.org.uk

Campaigns and lobbies to raise awareness of hearing loss and tinnitus and provides support services for deaf and hard of hearing people.

Arthritis Care

Floor 4, Linen Court, 10 East Road, London N1 6AD

T 020 7380 6500

Helpline 0808 800 4050

E info@arthritiscare.org.uk

W www.arthritiscare.org.uk

Services include a confidential helpline, self-management and awareness training for people with arthritis and healthcare professionals, and local activity and support.

Capability Scotland

11 Ellersley Road, Edinburgh EH12 6HY

T 0131 337 9876

Textphone 0131 346 2529

E ascs@capability-scotland.org.uk

W www.capability-scotland.org.uk

Free advice and information on a range of disability issues including advice on cerebral palsy.

DIAL UK

- T** 0808 800 3333
- E** dialnetwork@scope.org.uk
- W** www.scope.org.uk/dial

A network of disability information and advice lines. They can give advice on issues such as welfare benefits, community care, equipment, independent living and transport.

Epilepsy Action

New Anstey House, Gate Way Drive, Yeadon, Leeds LS19 7XY

- T** 0808 800 5050
Phone lines open Mon to Thurs 9.00-16.30,
Fri 9.00-16.00
- E** helpline@epilepsy.org.uk
- W** www.epilepsy.org.uk

Offers a range of services including information and advice.

Equality Advisory Support Service

FREEPOST FPN4431

- T** 0808 800 0082
- E** Email through Contact Us form on website
- W** www.equalityadvisoryservice.com

The EASS provides information, advice and support on discrimination and human rights issues to individuals in England, Scotland and Wales.

Equality and Human Rights Commission (England)

Arndale House, Arndale Centre, Manchester M4 3AQ

- T** 0161 829 8100
- E** correspondence@equalityhumanrights.com
- W** www.equalityhumanrights.com

Equality and Human Rights Commission (Scotland)

151 West George Street, Glasgow G2 2JJ

- T** 0141 228 5910
- E** scotland@equalityhumanrights.com
- W** www.equalityhumanrights.com

Equality and Human Rights Commission (Wales)

Ground Floor, 1 Caspian Point, Caspian Way, Cardiff Bay CF10 4DQ

- T** 02920 447710
- E** wales@equalityhumanrights.com
- W** www.equalityhumanrights.com

Health and Social Care Alliance Scotland (the ALLIANCE)

Health and Social Care Alliance Scotland, Venlaw Building, 349 Bath Street, Glasgow G2 4AA

- T** 0141 404 0230
- E** smns@alliance-scotland.org.uk
- W** http://smns.alliance-scotland.org.uk

Third sector intermediary for health and social care organisations in Scotland. Their Self Management Network resources encourage both employers and employees to discuss openly how to create and maintain successful employment for people living with long term health impairments.

Lead Scotland

Princes House, 5 Shandwick Place, Edinburgh EH2 4RG

- T** 0131 228 9441
Information service 0800 999 2568
- E** info@lead.org.uk
- W** www.lead.org.uk

Enables disabled adults and carers to access inclusive learning opportunities. They also run an advice service for disabled students in Scotland.

Macmillan Cancer Support

Embankment, London, SE1 7UQ

- T** Support line 0808 808 0000
Open Mon to Fri 9.00-20.00
- W** www.macmillan.org.uk

Support and advice for people living with a cancer diagnosis. The information and support area of their website has an Organising section with practical information on work and finances.

Mind

15-19 Broadway, London E15 4BQ

- T** Mind infoline 0300 123 3393
Open Mon to Fri 9.00-18.00
- E** info@mind.org.uk
- W** www.mind.org.uk

Provides an information service and information booklets about mental health.

Motor Neurone Disease Association

PO Box 246, Northampton NN1 2PR

- T** 01604 250505
- E** enquiries@mndassociation.org
- W** www.mndassociation.org

National charity which focuses on MND care, research and campaigning.

Multiple Sclerosis Society

MS National Centre, 372 Edgware Road, London NW2 6ND

- T** Helpline 0808 800 8000
Open Mon to Fri 9.00-21.00
- E** helpline@mssociety.org.uk
- W** www.mssociety.org.uk

Information and support to anyone affected by MS from their network of over 350 local branches.

Neurological Alliance

Parkinson's UK, 125 Vauxhall Bridge Road, London SW1V 1EJ

- T** 020 7963 3994
- E** Contact Us page on website
- W** www.neural.org.uk

Collective voice for 80 organisations working to support people in England living with a neurological condition.

Rare Disease UK

Unit 4D, Leroy House, 436 Essex Road. London N1 3QP

- T** 020 7704 3141
- E** info@raredisease.org.uk
- W** www.raredisease.org.uk

National alliance for people with rare diseases.

RNIB

105 Judd Street, London WC1H 9NE

- T** 020 7388 1266
Helpline 0303 123 9999
Phone line open Mon to Fri 8.45-17.30
- E** helpline@rnib.org.uk
- W** www.rnib.org.uk

RNIB offers advice and specialist DSA assessments in study needs and access technology for blind and partially sighted learners.

RNIB Cymru

Jones Court, Womanby Street, Cardiff, CF10 1BR

- T** 029 2082 8500
- E** cymru@rnib.org.uk
- W** www.rnib.org.uk/wales

RNIB Northern Ireland

Victoria House, 15-17 Gloucester Street, Belfast BT1 4LS

- T** 028 9032 9373
- E** rnibni@rnib.org.uk
- W** www.rnib.org.uk/northernireland

RNIB Scotland

12-14 Hillside Crescent, Edinburgh EH7 5EA

- T** 0131 652 3140
- E** rnibscotland@rnib.org.uk
- W** www.rnib.org.uk/scotland

Scope

6 Market Road, London N7 9PW

- T** 0808 800 3333
Open Mon to Fri 9.00-17.00
- E** helpline@scope.org.uk
- W** www.scope.org.uk

Services for disabled children and adults, with a focus on people with cerebral palsy or those whose support needs are not met elsewhere.

Scottish Sensory Centre

Moray House, School of Education, University of Edinburgh, Holyrood Road, Edinburgh EH8 8AQ

- T** 0131 651 6501
- E** sscmail@ed.ac.uk
- W** www.ssc.education.ed.ac.uk

An information service and training organisation for those interested in the education of children and young people with sensory impairment.

ABOUT DISABILITY RIGHTS UK

Disability Rights UK is a charity. We work for a society in which everyone can participate equally.

We are disabled people leading change and we aim to be the largest national pan-disability organisation, led, run and controlled by disabled people.

Disability Rights UK has three main priorities:

- 1 Independent living – getting a life
- 2 Career opportunities – getting work, education and skills
- 3 Influencing public attitudes and behaviours – seeking a sea change in perceptions of disability and tackling hostility, bullying and hate crime.

Other publications

We are authors of *Disability Rights Handbook*, our annual guide to welfare benefits and services.

We also publish *Taking Charge*, a practical guide to living with a health condition or disability and a range of other guides and information, much of which is free to download from our website. These include *Into Apprenticeships*, *Into Higher Education*, and *Doing Careers Differently*.

Our factsheets for disabled students cover various topics including the Equality Act, funding from charitable trusts and postgraduate education.

Advice and information

Through our various helplines we provide information on benefits, tax credits and direct payments, including individual budgets, funding from social services in relation to care needs and advice on employing personal assistants.

Disabled Students Helpline

We provide free information and advice for disabled students, covering further and higher education, employment, apprenticeships and volunteering. Our helpline is open Tuesday and Thursday 11.00-13.00.

T 0800 328 5050

E students@disabilityrightsuk.org

W www.disabilityrightsuk.org

Policy and campaigns

Disability Rights UK is a campaigning organisation. This includes working to influence decision-makers on issues of access and support for disabled people taking apprenticeships or studying in further and higher education.

Membership

Join Disability Rights UK and help us strengthen the voice of disabled people. We are a membership organisation with over 1,300 members, including universities, colleges and individual students. You can sign up for membership on our website:

W www.disabilityrightsuk.org/membership/how-join

Get back to where we do belong

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London N1 6AH

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Email: students@disabilityrightsuk.org

www.disabilityrightsuk.org



For free information and advice for disabled students visit the Disability Rights UK website.