

# Work, volunteering, and mental illness

This factsheet explains your options for finding work or volunteering opportunities. These things can be important for your mental health. This information is for people who are 18 or over and affected by mental illness in England. It is also for their loved ones and carers and anyone interested in this subject.

## *Key points:*

- You could try different types of work, like voluntary, supported, part-time or full-time.
- Work can affect your benefits. This depends on whether you get paid and the number of hours you work.
- Various organisations offer help and support with finding work.
- If you tell an employer that you have a disability, it is illegal for them to treat you badly because of this.
- You may be eligible to ask your employer to make 'reasonable adjustments' to help you under the Equality Act 2010.
- You have rights to make flexible working requests and have unpaid carers leave.

## **This factsheet covers:**

1. What types of work could I try?
2. Will working affect my welfare benefits?
3. What support is available to help me find work?
4. Should I tell an employer about my mental illness?
5. What are 'reasonable adjustments' and my other rights?
6. Sample reasonable adjustments letter

## 1. What types of work could I try?

There are several options you can try such as:

- volunteering,
- part-time work,
- full-time work,
- self-employment,
- apprenticeships, and
- employment projects.

We look at these options in more detail below.

### **Volunteering**

Voluntary work is a good starting point for getting into work.

The following are things to consider about voluntary work:

- You do not get paid but you might get paid expenses.
- It can allow you to try out different roles and get a feel for what you are interested in.
- It can improve your chances of getting a paid job.
- It can be a good option if you have been out of work for a long time, or if you have a severe mental illness.

You can search for voluntary work by using the websites in the [Useful contacts](#) section at the end of this factsheet.

### **Part-time work**

If you work part-time:

- you work but do not work full-time, so you might work for say 10, 16 or 20 hours a week,
- you can ease yourself into work more slowly than you could in a full-time job,
- you will usually have to pay for lunch and travel out of the money you earn, and
- you can have the time to do other things during the day, such as:
  - going to therapy appointments,
  - doing some extra training, or
  - looking after your children.

## Full-time work

Full-time work usually means working at least 35 hours a week.

If you want to work full-time after a period of illness, think about the following things:

- What made you unwell before.
- Ways of reducing stress if that was a problem before.
- If you need a change of job or role.
- Any reasonable adjustments you want to ask your employer about – see section 5 of this factsheet for more information.
- How work affects other areas of your life. This might be looking after your children or having time to do things you enjoy. This is known as 'work – life balance'.

## Self-employment

If you are self-employed:

- you work for yourself,
- you might have your own business,
- you don't work for an employer who pays you a salary,
- you can decide how, where and when you do your work,
- you have to arrange paying your own tax,
- sick pay rules are different if you work for an employer, and
- your income might not be guaranteed in the same way as working for an employer.

You can set up a business in several ways, including as a:

- sole trader,
- partnership, or
- company.

You will have to think about how you will register, run the business and deal with any debts.

There are organisations that can give you information about self-employment like:

- **Business Support** - provides free advice about setting up and running a business, and
- **Business Debtline** - gives advice about dealing with business debts.

You can find contact details for these organisations in the Useful Contacts section at the end of this factsheet.

You can also find out more information about being self-employed by clicking here: [www.gov.uk/working-for-yourself](http://www.gov.uk/working-for-yourself).

### **Apprenticeships**

You might know the type of job that you want to do. But you might not yet have the experience, skills, or qualifications to do the job.

An apprenticeship may be a good option for you.<sup>1</sup>

An apprenticeship will give you the opportunity to:

- learn on the job,
- get qualifications, and
- earn a small wage.

You can get an apprenticeship in a wide range of roles. The roles include agriculture, horticulture, health, public services, and leisure.<sup>2</sup>

You can contact the **National Apprenticeship Service** for more information. Their details are in the Useful contacts section at the end of this factsheet.

You can find out more information about apprenticeships by clicking this link: [www.gov.uk/apprenticeships-guide](http://www.gov.uk/apprenticeships-guide)

You can find apprenticeships by clicking this link: [www.gov.uk/apply-apprenticeship](http://www.gov.uk/apply-apprenticeship)

### **Employment projects**

There are employment projects in some parts of the country. Some of these projects offer jobs to people with disabilities.

You may get ongoing support from a caseworker.

To find out if any employment projects are available in your area, you can contact:

- your care co-ordinator, if you have one,
- a Disability Employment Adviser at your local Job Centre Plus, and
- the organisations:
  - **Maximus**,

- **The Shaw Trust**,
- **Steps to Employment**, and
- **The Richmond Fellowship**

Their details are in the Useful contacts section at the end of this factsheet.

## 2. Will working affect my welfare benefits?

Whether working affects your welfare benefits can depend on:

- what benefits you are claiming,
- whether you are volunteering or doing paid work,
- how many hours a week you are working, and
- how much you are earning.

You should think carefully about whether you would be better off going back to work or staying on benefits. You can ask a benefits advice organisation to do a 'better off calculation' for you.

But you might decide to work, even if you are less better off as there are other benefits. Such as if it has a positive effect on your mental health.

You can get advice about how work will affect your benefits.

You can get advice from your local **Citizens Advice** office. You can find their contact details in the Useful contacts section at the end of this factsheet.

You can also search for local benefits advisers by using the following websites:

**Turn 2 Us:** <http://advicefinder.turn2us.org.uk>

**Advice UK:** <https://www.adviceuk.org/products-services/advicefinder/>

[Employment and Support Allowance \(ESA\)](#)

You can do some work and still get ESA. This is known as permitted work. Permitted work usually means you:<sup>3</sup>

- work less than 16 hours, and
- earn up to £183.50 a week.

## Personal Independence Payment (PIP)

PIP is not means tested. This means that it is not affected by your income, capital or savings. So, any money you earn by working will not affect the amount you get under PIP.

If you work, you can still get PIP as long as you meet the PIP criteria.

You can find more information about:

**Employment and support allowance** at: [Employment & Support Allowance : Mental Health & Money Advice \(mentalhealthandmoneyadvice.org\)](http://Employment & Support Allowance : Mental Health & Money Advice (mentalhealthandmoneyadvice.org)) and

**Personal Independence Payment** at: [PIP mental health guide : Mental Health & Money Advice \(mentalhealthandmoneyadvice.org\)](http://PIP mental health guide : Mental Health & Money Advice (mentalhealthandmoneyadvice.org))

## **3. What support is available to help me find work?**

There are lots of schemes, programmes, organisations, and training providers that can help you into work such as:

- Mental Health UK – Into work
- Individual Placement and Support
- employment support through NHS talking therapy services
- national schemes
- local charities,
- national charities such as Shaw Trust, Maximus, Steps to Employment and the Richmond Fellowship,
- Bipolar UK Employment service,
- local authority schemes,
- help from social services,
- careers advisers, and
- support from friends and family.

You may have to be claiming benefits to use some of these services.

There are national charities and careers advice services you can contact. Their details can be found in the Useful contacts section at the end of this factsheet.

Different services offer different sorts of help. This may include:

- help with developing skills, abilities, and experience,
- identifying suitable job opportunities,

- help with writing a CV,
- help with interview techniques,
- providing information about local job opportunities, and
- supporting you in work.

### **Mental Health UK – Into work**

This programme:

- Has holistic, award-winning services in some parts of the country that can support you in your journey on finding, and staying in, work, and
- Has an online hub that can support you to reach your employment potential. It includes tool on:
  - finding out about you,
  - finding and applying for jobs,
  - preparing for interviews,
  - Understanding selection decisions and staying resilient,
  - your first day in work, and
  - In-work support.

**Webpage:** <https://mentalhealth-uk.org/into-work>

Not all the following options will be available where you live.

### **National schemes**

Jobcentre Plus, part of the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP), offers national schemes to help people access work.

- [Access to Work](#)
- [The Work and Health Programme](#)
- [Intensive Personalised Employment Support](#)
- [WorkWell Service](#)

There is more detailed information about these schemes below.

### **Access to work**

Access to Work can help if you have a physical or mental health condition or issue.<sup>4</sup>

Through Access to Work you can apply for:

- Support with managing your mental health at work. You do not need to have a diagnosed mental health condition to apply for mental health support.
- Money to help you pay for practical support with your work. This is called an Access to Work grant.
- Money to pay for communication support at job interviews.

Any money you are awarded will not affect your benefits. You will also not need to pay this money back.

### Am I eligible to apply?

To be eligible to apply for access to work you must:

- Have a physical or mental issue that means you need to support to do your job, or
- Have a physical or mental issue that means you need support to get to and from work, and
- Be 16 or over, and
- Be in a paid position, including self-employment, work trial or apprenticeship or
- Be about to start a paid position or return to a paid position.

### What support can I get?

What help you'll get depends on your needs. It can include things like:

- a support worker or job coach to help you in your workplace
- a communication support worker to help you at job interview
- a tailored plan to help you get or stay in work
- one-to-one sessions with a mental health professional
- help with travel to and from work
- help to identify reasonable adjustments

See Section 5 of this factsheet for more information about 'reasonable adjustments.'

### How do I apply?

For mental health support you can apply for support from the following organisations directly. You do not need to tell your employer:

- **Able futures**
- **Maximus**

Their contact details can be found in the Useful contacts section of this factsheet.

For an access to work grant you can:

- Apply online. [www.gov.uk/access-to-work/apply](http://www.gov.uk/access-to-work/apply), or
- Apply by phone.

The Access to work contact details can be found in the Useful contact section at the end of this factsheet.

### **Work and health programme<sup>5</sup>**

The Work and health programme helps you find and keep a job if you're out of work.

It is voluntary unless you've been out of work and claiming unemployment benefits for 24 months.

The Work and health programme replaced schemes called the Work programme and Work choice. You can no longer join these old schemes. But if you are already on them you can stay on them.<sup>6</sup>

### Am I eligible to apply?

You could be eligible if you live in England or Wales and you are:

- disabled – as defined by the Equality Act 2010. Please see section 5 of this factsheet for more about this.
- out of work and have claimed unemployment benefits for 24 months
- a carer or former carer
- homeless
- a former member of the armed forces or an armed forces reservist
- the partner of a current or former member of the armed forces
- a care leaver
- a young person in a gang
- a refugee
- a victim of domestic violence
- dependent, or have been dependent, on drugs or alcohol and it is preventing you from getting work
- an ex-offender and you've completed a custodial or community sentence
- an offender serving a community sentence

You do not have to be getting benefits to apply.

### What support can I get?

You'll get personal support to help you:

- identify your employment needs
- match your skills to work that's available
- put you in touch with employers
- find long-term employment
- get training to help you find work
- manage health problems to reduce their impact on work

### How do I apply?

Ask your work coach if you are eligible.

If you don't have a work coach, you can go to your local Jobcentre Plus and ask to speak to a work coach.

### **Intensive personalised employment support<sup>7</sup>**

Intensive personalised employment support is one-to-one support and training to help you into work if you have a disability or health condition.

### Am I eligible to apply?

To apply you must:

- have a disability<sup>6</sup> or health condition that affects the work you can do
- be unemployed
- be between school leaving age and state pension age
- be a UK resident living in England or Wales

### What support can I get?

You'll get a dedicated support worker to help you:

- identify what work you're able to do
- match your skills to work that's available
- get training to help you find work
- build a personal support network
- manage work around your specific disability or health condition
- support you during your first 6 months of work

You'll usually get Intensive Personalised Employment Support for 15 months. You can get an additional 6 months of on-the-job support if you find employment.

### How do I apply?

Ask your work coach at the job centre plus to see if you're eligible.

If you don't have a work coach, go to your local Jobcentre Plus and ask to speak to a work coach about Intensive Personalised Employment Support.

You can find your local Jobcentre Plus by searching here: <https://find-your-nearest-jobcentre.dwp.gov.uk/search.php>

### **WorkWell service<sup>7</sup>**

The WorkWell service is to support people with disabilities or mental health conditions to have the opportunity to access:

- an early-intervention work and health assessment service,
- a single point of access into services that are available locally.

### What support will I get?

The WorkWell work and health coach will provide:

- an initial assessment of barriers to employment,
- return-to-work and staying in work planning,
- the employer can be contacted to share the work plan and provide advice,
- advice on workplace adjustments,
- personalised work and health support with ongoing support.

### Can I get this service?

The service will be available to anyone with a disability or health condition who:

- needs support to remain in work
- needs support managing a condition in order to return to work from sickness absence; or
- needs support to start work

### How do I apply?

There is not yet a WorkWell service in all areas of England.

You can be referred through your GP, primary care teams, or social prescribing link workers.

You may be referred by the following:

- GPs, and Primary care services
- self-referral
- employers in the area
- Jobcentre Plus (JCP)
- Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) services
- local authorities
- social workers
- link workers including social prescribers
- other health related services in the area.

### **Individual placement and support<sup>8,9</sup>**

Individual placement and support (IPS) is a specialist employment service for people receiving support from a secondary mental health service.

IPS works on 8 principles:

1. getting you into competitive employment
2. open to all those who want to work
3. finding jobs in line with your preferences
4. it works quickly
5. making employment part of your recovery
6. employment specialists develop relationships with employers based upon your work preferences
7. providing ongoing, individualised support for you and your employer
8. benefits counselling included.

### Can I get this service?

NHS secondary mental health services generally support people with severe or complex mental health symptoms and conditions. They can help people who live with a range of conditions. But common ones are schizophrenia and other psychosis conditions, bipolar disorder and personality disorders.

### What support can I get?

You will get an employment specialist who can help you:

- identify setbacks and worries at work

- get correct information about benefits to avoid you being financially worse off, or anxious.
- make contact with employers and offer support when meeting them
- identify what work you want to do
- identify your skills
- write or update your CV
- find vacancies, help you apply or apply on your behalf
- help to prepare for interviews
- support you to stay in work once you have started

#### How do I apply?

There is not yet an IPS in every area of England.

You can look online for direct contact details, contact our service, or ask your care coordinator, consultant, or key worker if there is an IPS where you live.

You can find more information about **NHS mental health teams** at [www.rethink.org](http://www.rethink.org). Or call our General Enquiries team on 0121 522 7007 and ask them to send you a copy of our factsheet.

#### **Employment support through NHS talking therapy services<sup>10</sup>**

You can access employment support through your local NHS talking therapy services in some areas.

The service brings therapists and employment advisors together. This is to support you stay in work, return to work or find employment tailored to you.

Government funding will make employment support nationally available through NHS talking therapy services over the next few years.

#### Can I get this service?

NHS talking therapy services support people with mild to moderate mental health symptoms and conditions such as stress, anxiety or depression.

#### How do I apply?

You can self-refer to your local NHS talking therapies service. Or ask your GP for a referral.

You can find more information about '**Talking therapies**' at [www.rethink.org](http://www.rethink.org). Or call our General Enquiries team on 0121 522 7007 and ask them to send you a copy of our factsheet.

## 4. Should I tell an employer about my mental illness?

It is usually up to you to decide whether to tell an employer about your mental illness.

### **Before you are offered a job**

The Equality Act says that an employer can't ask you questions about your health before they offer you a job.<sup>11</sup> This is to stop discrimination because of your health.

An employer can ask you questions if they need to find out:<sup>12</sup>

- if you need any reasonable adjustments for the interview,
- if you will be able to do something that is part of the job,
- personal information to track who is applying for jobs with them - this helps with their equality and diversity policies,
- if you could be part of an employer's scheme that favours disabled people, or
- if you have a disability that you need for the job. For example, an employer with a project for deaf people may want a deaf person to run it.

You do not have to answer health questions before you are offered a job. Unless you have a specific type of job where you have to tell the employer.

You could try to find out why the employer is asking these questions. This may help you decide whether or not to answer them.

Once an employer offers you a job, they can ask you health-related questions.

You may be given a 'conditional' offer of a job. This means that getting the job depends on certain things. An employer might say your job offer is conditional on satisfactory references and health or disability checks.

An employer can then ask questions about your health. If at this stage your job offer is withdrawn, you may be able to make a claim of disability discrimination - see '**Unfair treatment**' below.

### **Reasonable adjustments**

It may be helpful to tell an employer about your mental illness so they can make 'reasonable adjustments'.<sup>13</sup> This might help you during the interview and recruitment process or if you get the job.

Your employer does not have to make reasonable adjustments unless they know, or should know, about your illness.

Please see section 5 of this factsheet for more information on reasonable adjustments.

### Guaranteed interview

Some employers guarantee an interview to disabled people who meet the minimum criteria for the role.

The employer might be part of the **Disability Confident** scheme. These employers encourage applications from disabled people.

If the employer of job advertisement has this symbol it means they are part of the Disability Confident scheme:



### Telling your employer

If you tell your employer, think about the strengths and skills you use to cope with and overcome your mental illness.

Your experience of mental illness may have given you useful skills, such as:

- problem solving,
- resilience,
- the ability to work with and relate to different sorts of people,
- determination,
- setting goals, and
- creativity.

If you choose to tell an employer during the application process, you can tell them:

- on the application form,
- on a covering letter,
- at the interview stage, or
- using the Health Adjustment Passport

### The Health Adjustment Passport

The Health Adjustment Passport (HAP) is a document that can help if you have a disability or health condition.

The HAP can be used to:

- identify what support and changes you may need,
- help you apply for support from Access to Work, and
- help you talk to employers about adjustments and in work support

You can find more information on the passport using this link:  
[www.gov.uk/government/publications/health-adjustment-passport](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/health-adjustment-passport)

### Gaps in your CV

When you fill in an application form or write a CV you usually have to include an employment history.

You might have gaps in your employment history. These gaps might be periods where you couldn't work because of your mental illness.

The following are things to think about when telling an employer.

- It is best to be honest. If you aren't and the employer finds out later it could lead to problems for you. Honesty is a good quality that employers value.
- You do not have to go into everything in detail.
- You might have been employed for a long time and held different positions. You can put your more recent positions only on your CV. This might cover up any gaps from years ago.
- You can sometimes tell the employer the years but not the months that you were employed. This might mean you don't have to explain a gap.
- Employers will generally be used to job applicants having gaps in their employment. It is how you deal with it that could make the difference.
- Think about the positives from your break in employment. Instead of just saying you were too ill to work you could say things like:
  - "To get myself well enough to start working again I ......."
  - "I used the following skills and strengths to overcome the challenges I faced ......."
  - "I learn the following things....."

If you are offered an interview, you will probably be asked about gaps in your employment.

You can plan what you are going to say. It is your chance to impress the employer with:

- how you dealt with the situation,
- what skills you used, and
- what you learnt.

### **Jobs where you must tell the employer**

In some jobs you must tell the employer about your health. This is because of regulations that apply to these professions.

These jobs include:

- teachers,
- nurses and doctors, and
- the armed forces.

If you don't tell the employer, you could face disciplinary action later.

**The National Education Union** has published the following advice and information. It explains what checks employers can do on teachers about their health and physical capacity to the job. And what information you must tell them:

<https://neu.org.uk/advice/your-rights-work/data-protection/health-enquiries-and-applicants-work>

### **Unfair treatment**

Telling an employer that you have a mental illness could lead to unfair treatment when applying for a job.

You may be protected by discrimination law. But it may be hard to prove that the employer treated you badly because of your mental illness. Rather than a fair reason such as lack of experience.

If you think you have been discriminated against because of your mental illness you can get advice from **The Equality Advisory and Support Service (EASS)**. Their details are in the Useful contacts section at the end of this factsheet.

## 5. What are 'reasonable adjustments' and my other rights?

### What are reasonable adjustments?

Under the Equality Act 2010 employers must take certain actions to help people with disabilities.<sup>14</sup> This includes many people with a mental illness.

Under the Act employers have a duty to change their procedures and practices. They must do this to remove the barriers people face because of a disability.

Disabled people can ask employers to change their procedures and practices, as long as it is reasonable. The Act calls this the duty to make 'reasonable adjustments.'

The Equality Act defines a disability as being:<sup>15</sup>

- a physical or mental impairment,
- long term – has lasted at least 12 months or likely to last 12 months, and
- has a substantial adverse effect on your ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.

You can ask for reasonable adjustments during the recruitment process. So, you might ask for a reasonable adjustment to make it easier for you to go to an interview. You can also ask them if you get the job.

Reasonable adjustments for employees with a mental health condition include:

- offering flexible working patterns, including changes to start and finish times and adaptable break times,
- changing your working environment, for example providing a quiet place to work,
- working with you to create an action plan to help you manage your condition, and
- allowing you leave to attend appointments connected to your mental health.

Have a look at the 'WorkRights' platform found in the useful contacts section at the end of this factsheet. This platform helps you to work out if you are eligible for reasonable adjustments at work.

You can find more information about **Discrimination and mental health – The Equality Act 2010** at [www.rethink.org](http://www.rethink.org). Or call our General Enquiries team on 0121 522 7007 and ask them to send you a copy of our factsheet.

### Can I ask for flexible working?<sup>8</sup>

You have a legal right to make 2 flexible working requests in any 12-month period.

Your employers must give you an answer on your request within 2 months.

If they reject your request, they must talk to you about this. They must try and agree with you what type of arrangement is possible.

Employers must manage requests in a reasonable manner. They can only reject a request for one of 8 business reasons as set out in the law.

See the following from **Mental Health UK** for more information. Including more information on flexible working: <https://mentalhealth-uk.org/blog/a-day-one-right-to-flexible-working-is-coming-heres-what-you-need-to-know>

### **What is unpaid carer's leave?**

Unpaid carer's leave is when you take time off to care for a loved one without getting paid by your employer.

You have a right to unpaid carer's leave.

You can get more advice and information here: [www.rethink.org/advice-and-information/carers-hub/unpaid-carer-s-leave-your-rights](http://www.rethink.org/advice-and-information/carers-hub/unpaid-carer-s-leave-your-rights)

## **Useful Contacts**

### **Advice – Benefits, employment and discrimination**

#### **Citizens Advice**

Offers free, confidential impartial and independent advice. They have expertise in dealing with benefits and work issues. You can find your local office on their website:

**Phone:** 0800 144 8848

**Webchat:** [www.citizensadvice.org.uk/about-us/contact-us/web-chat-service/](http://www.citizensadvice.org.uk/about-us/contact-us/web-chat-service/)

**Website:** [www.citizensadvice.org.uk/](http://www.citizensadvice.org.uk/)

#### **ACAS Helpline**

You can call the ACAS helpline if you have a workplace problem you want to get advice on. They can help talk through your options.

**Phone:** 0300 123 1100

**Website:** [www.acas.org.uk](http://www.acas.org.uk)

### **Mental Health at Work**

Whether you work with 10 people, 10,000 people or just yourself, paying attention to mental health in the workplace has never been more important. Mental Health at Work can help you find the information and resources you need.

**Email:** [mentalhealthatwork@mind.org.uk](mailto:mentalhealthatwork@mind.org.uk)

**Website:** [www.mentalhealthatwork.org.uk/toolkit/](http://www.mentalhealthatwork.org.uk/toolkit/)

### **The Disability Law Service**

Provides information on all matters surrounding disability which includes work and discrimination. They may help you challenge decisions which discriminate against you as a disabled person.

**Phone:** 0207 791 9800

**Address:** Disability Law Service, The Foundry, 17 Oval Way, London SE11 5RR

**Email:** [advice@dls.org.uk](mailto:advice@dls.org.uk)

**Website:** [www.dls.org.uk](http://www.dls.org.uk)

### **WorkRights (platform is provided by the Disability Law Service charity)**

A free automated legal advice platform. It will ask you a number of questions to see if you are eligible for reasonable adjustments. At the end you will be provided with a letter which you can send to your employer to get support at work. They provide free legal advice and representation to disabled people and their carers.

**Phone:** 0207 791 9800

**Address:** The Foundry, 17 Oval Way, London, SE11 5RR

**Email:** [advice@dls.org.uk](mailto:advice@dls.org.uk)

**Website:** [www.dls.org.uk/workrights](http://www.dls.org.uk/workrights)

### **Equality Advisory and Support Service (EASS)**

An organisation that gives practical advice and information about the Equality Act 2010 and discrimination.

**Phone:** 0808 800 0082

**Address:** FREEPOST EASS Helpline FPN6521

**Email:** via website

**Website:** [www.equalityadvisoryservice.com](http://www.equalityadvisoryservice.com)

### **Bipolar UK – Employment Support Service**

Support, advice and resources if you have bipolar and you are finding it hard either to get work, or to do your work when you're there. There are charges for some of their services. Includes a booklet "An employee's guide to bipolar and employment", which you can download for free.

**Phone:** 0333 323 3880

**Address:** Bipolar UK, 11 Belgrave Road, London, SW1V 1RB

**Email:** [employmentsupport@bipolaruk.org](mailto:employmentsupport@bipolaruk.org)

**Website:** [www.bipolaruk.org/support-for-employees](http://www.bipolaruk.org/support-for-employees)

### **Government funded support**

#### **Access to Work**

Government funding provided to pay for practical support if you have an illness.

**Phone:** 0800 121 7479

**Textphone:** 0800 121 7579

**Website:** [www.gov.uk/access-to-work/overview](http://www.gov.uk/access-to-work/overview)

### **Maximus - Access to Work Mental Health Support Service**

They provide up to 9 months of support to people who are in paid employment or a paid apprenticeship, included those who are self employed. And have a mental health condition or issue.

**Phone:** 0300 456 8114

**Email:** [a2wmhss@remploy.co.uk](mailto:a2wmhss@remploy.co.uk)

**Website:** <https://atw.maximusuk.co.uk/>

### **Able Futures - Access to Work Mental Health Support Service**

They give you regular time to speak with a mental health specialist about issues that are affecting you at work or on an apprenticeship.

**Phone:** 0800 321 3137

**Email:** [hello@able-futures.co.uk](mailto:hello@able-futures.co.uk)

**Website:** <https://able-futures.co.uk/individuals>

## **Shaw Trust**

A national charity which supports disabled and disadvantaged people to prepare for work, find jobs and live more independently.

They run the Intensive Personalised Employment Support Work programme and the Work and Health Programme in some areas of the country.

**Phone:** 0300 303 3111

**Email:** [support@shaw-trust.org.uk](mailto:support@shaw-trust.org.uk)

**Website:** [www.shaw-trust.org.uk](http://www.shaw-trust.org.uk)

## Charities

### **Rethink Mental Illness**

We have employment services in a few areas of the country.

**Website:** <https://www.rethink.org/help-in-your-area/services/employment-and-training/>

### **Richmond Fellowship**

Offers a wide range of housing, care, employment and community support services for people with mental health problems throughout the country.

**Phone:** 020 7697 3300

**Address:** Richmond Fellowship 80 Holloway Road London N7 8JG

**Website:** [www.richmondfellowship.org.uk](http://www.richmondfellowship.org.uk)

## Careers advice

### **National Careers Service**

Provides information, advice and guidance to help you make decisions on learning, training and work opportunities.

**Phone:** 0800 100 900

**Email:** via website

**Website:** [www.nationalcareersservice.direct.gov.uk](http://www.nationalcareersservice.direct.gov.uk)

## **Self-employment**

### **Business Support Helpline**

This government service provides free business advice and support online and through local advisers.

**Phone:** 0800 998 1098

**Email:** [enquiries@businesssupportservice.co.uk](mailto:enquiries@businesssupportservice.co.uk)

**Website:** [www.gov.uk/business-support-helpline](http://www.gov.uk/business-support-helpline)

### **Business Debtline**

A charity that provides free debt advice to small businesses over the telephone. They also have a website with useful factsheets and sample letters.

**Phone:** 0800 197 6026

**Webchat:** via website

**Website:** [www.businessdebtline.org](http://www.businessdebtline.org)

## **Volunteering**

### **Volunteering Matters**

Includes a volunteering position search facility.

**Phone:** 020 3780 5870

**Email:** [info@volunteeringmatters.co.uk](mailto:info@volunteeringmatters.co.uk)

**Website:** [www.volunteeringmatters.org.uk](http://www.volunteeringmatters.org.uk)

### **NCVO**

An independent charity and membership organisation, committed to supporting, enabling and celebrating volunteering in all its diversity. They have an England wide network of volunteer centres. You can find a centre close to you on their website.

**Phone:** [020 7713 6161](tel:02077136161)

**Email:** [ncvo@ncvo.org.uk](mailto:ncvo@ncvo.org.uk)

**Address:** [Society Building, 8 All Saints Street, London, N1 9RL](http://Society Building, 8 All Saints Street, London, N1 9RL)

**Website:** [www.ncvo.org.uk](http://www.ncvo.org.uk)

## Do-it

A national database of volunteering opportunities in the UK.

**Website:** <https://doit.life/>

## Apprenticeships

### **National Apprenticeship Service**

Responsible for apprenticeships in England. There is comprehensive information about apprenticeships in England on their website.

**Website:** [www.apprenticeships.org.uk](http://www.apprenticeships.org.uk)

## Support for employers

### **Mindful Employer Scheme**

A national initiative supporting employers to take a positive approach towards mental health at work.

**Phone:** 0113 305 5800

**Email:** [mindfulemployer@leedsmind.org.uk](mailto:mindfulemployer@leedsmind.org.uk)

**Website:** <https://mindfulemployertensteps.co.uk>

## Sample Letter

### Sample letter for reasonable adjustments to access work

**[JOB CENTRE]**

**Private and Confidential**

Manager  
[Job Centre]  
[Address]

[Your name]  
[Your address]  
[Day] [Month] [Year]

Dear Madam/Sir,

#### **Request for reasonable adjustments**

I am writing to ask you to make a reasonable adjustment for me under the Equality Act 2010 because of my mental health problems. These problems make it very difficult for me to [get to the Job Centre for interviews.]

[Explain the mental health problem you have and why it means you are having difficulties using the Job Centre. An example is given below. Include proof if you can, as you can be asked to provide evidence.]

I have experienced long-term depression and find it difficult to get up in the mornings. The medication I take makes me feel quite unwell in the early morning. I also have problems with remembering dates and times. I find it difficult to open letters. I attach a copy of a letter from my GP, which confirms this.

[Explain what changes you want. An example is given below]

Because of this, I am not able to get to any appointments if they are arranged before 12 noon. So, I would be grateful if you could arrange my appointments after 12 noon. Please could you also email me the date and time of the appointment to make sure I get the information. My email address is [your email address].

I am advised that the Equality Act 2010 applies to Job Centres as they provide services and public functions. Under the Equality Act you have a duty to make reasonable adjustments for disabled people. This is when their disability makes it difficult for them to access your services compared with someone who does not have a disability.

I hope you can confirm that you can agree to make these changes so that I can use your services.

Thank you.

Regards  
[Your full name]

## Did this help?

We would love to know if this information helped you or if you found any issues with this page. You can email us at [feedback@rethink.org](mailto:feedback@rethink.org)

## References

<sup>1</sup> Gov.uk. *Become an apprentice*. [Become an apprentice: How apprenticeships work - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/become-an-apprentice-how-apprenticeships-work) (accessed 24<sup>th</sup> April 2024)

<sup>2</sup> Gov.uk. *Apprenticeship training courses*. <https://findapprenticeshiptraining.apprenticeships.education.gov.uk/courses> (accessed 8th May 2024)

<sup>3</sup> Gov.uk. *Permitted Work*. [Permitted work factsheet - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/permited-work-factsheet) (accessed 23<sup>rd</sup> January 2024)

<sup>4</sup> Gov.uk. *Access to Work*. [1. Overview Access to Work: get support if you have a disability or health condition: What Access to Work is - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/access-to-work-overview) (accessed 23<sup>rd</sup> January 2024)

<sup>5</sup> Gov.uk. *Work and health programme*. [https://www.gov.uk/work-health-programme](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/work-and-health-programme). (accessed 30.01.2024)

<sup>6</sup> Gov.uk. *Help with moving from benefits to work*. [2. Job search programmes. Help with moving from benefits to work: Overview - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/help-with-moving-from-benefits-to-work-overview) (accessed 30.01.2024)

<sup>7</sup> Gov.uk. *Intensive Personalised Employment* [Intensive Personalised Employment Support provider guidance - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/intensive-personalised-employment-support-provider-guidance) (accessed 30.01.2024)

<sup>8</sup> The Equality Act 2010 (Amendment) Regulations 2023 <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2023/1425/contents/made> (accessed 23.01.2024)

<sup>9</sup> WorkWell Service [WorkWell prospectus: guidance for Local System Partnerships - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/workwell-prospectus-guidance-for-local-system-partnerships) (accessed 30.01.2024)

<sup>10</sup> NHS. *Individual Placement and Support (IPS) for people with severe mental illness* [NHS England » Individual Placement and Support \(IPS\) for people with severe mental illness](https://www.england.nhs.uk/ips/) (accessed 23.01.2024)

<sup>11</sup> IPS Grow. *Information for Clients*. <https://ipsgrow.org.uk/about/information-for-clients> (accessed 23.01.2024)

<sup>12</sup> Gov.uk. *£122 million employment boost for people receiving mental health support*. <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/122-million-employment-boost-for-people-receiving-mental-health-support> (accessed 23.01.2024)

<sup>13</sup> s60 (1). Equality Act 2010, C15

<sup>14</sup> s60 (6). Equality Act 2010, C15 <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2010/15/section/6> (accessed 30.01.2024)

<sup>15</sup> s6. Equality Act 2010, C15 <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2010/15/section/6> (accessed 30.01.2024)

<sup>16</sup> Mental Health UK. *A day one right to flexible working is coming, here's what you need to know*. See 'What is changing and how can workplaces prepare for the change?' <https://mentalhealth-uk.org/blog/a-day-one-right-to-flexible-working-is-coming-heres-what-you-need-to-know> (accessed 26 April 2024)

© Rethink Mental Illness 2025

**Last updated:** October 2023

**Next update:** October 2026

Subject to any changes

**Version:** 12

This factsheet is available in large print.

### Rethink Mental Illness Advice and Information Service

Phone: 0808 801 0525

Monday to Friday 9:30am – 4pm  
excluding bank holidays.

**Webchat service available**

### Did this help?

We'd love to know if this information helped you or if you found any issues with it. Drop us a line at:  
[feedback@rethink.org](mailto:feedback@rethink.org)

### Or write to us at:

Rethink Mental Illness Advice and Information Service,  
28 Albert Embankment, London, SE1 7GR.



We are the charity for people severely affected by mental illness, no matter what they're going through.

For further information on Rethink Mental Illness  
Phone: **0121 522 7007**  
Email: [info@rethink.org](mailto:info@rethink.org)



### Need more help?

Go to [www.rethink.org](http://www.rethink.org) for information on Mental health conditions and symptoms, treatment and support, physical health and wellbeing, ethnic minorities and mental health, LGBT+ mental health, mental health laws and rights, work, studying, and mental health, police, courts, and prison, and advice for carers.

### Do not have access to the web?

Call us on 0121 522 7007. We are open Monday to Friday, 9am to 5pm, excluding bank holidays, and we will send you the information you need in the post.

### Do you have accessibility tools for this information?

You can find this information on our website at [www.rethink.org](http://www.rethink.org). There is an accessibility function on this webpage called **Recite**. On the desktop site, click on the icon in the top right-hand corner next to 'Donate.' On the mobile site, scroll right and click on the 'Turn on accessibility' icon.

### Can you help us to keep going?

We can only help people because of donations from people like you. If you can donate, please go to [rethink.org/donate](http://rethink.org/donate) or call 0121 522 7007 to make a gift.

### We are very grateful for all our donors' generous support.



Patient Information Forum

[rethink.org](http://rethink.org)

