Employment Support Programmes

Help to Prepare for, Find and Stay in Work

A practical guide to common support routes, how to ask about local availability and ways to plan a manageable next step.

Employment support can meet different needs

Support may help you explore a work goal, prepare for applications, find a suitable role or deal with barriers once you are employed. Some services focus on careers advice; others offer supported employment, health and employment coordination, workplace adjustments or practical funding.

A quick map of possible routes

ROUTE	WHAT IT MAY HELP WITH	WHAT TO CHECK
Jobcentre Plus	Work goals, job search, skills and signposting.	Ask your work coach what local support or specialist advice is available.
National Careers Service	Careers guidance, CVs, applications, interviews and training choices.	Check the current service options and how to book advice.
Connect to Work	Voluntary supported employment to find sustainable work or help retain a job, where locally delivered.	Ask about delivery area, eligibility and suitability.
WorkWell	Local health and employment support, including return-to-work planning and links to support.	As of October 2026, pilot areas continue; England-wide rollout is scheduled for November 2026.
Access to Work	Practical support for eligible people to start or stay in work, including some equipment, support or travel costs.	Check eligibility, application timing and how it works alongside employer adjustments.

These routes are not interchangeable. You may need careers advice, employment support, health support, workplace adjustments or more than one. Ask who can help coordinate the next step.

Location matters

Connect to Work is delivered locally in England and Wales. WorkWell is an England programme. Access to Work has a separate service in Northern Ireland. Availability, eligibility and referral routes vary, so check current local and official information before relying on a particular service.

You can start by describing what you want help with: “I want to explore work, but I need help working out which roles and support might suit me.”

Preparing for work and finding a role

Preparation does not need to mean doing everything at once. A useful plan begins with the kind of work and working conditions that may suit you. You can review and adapt it as your circumstances change.

Start with your preferences and strengths

- What work interests you, and what tasks or settings would you prefer to avoid?
- What skills have you developed through paid work, study, volunteering, caring, community roles or personal projects?
- What hours, location, travel arrangements, communication style and sensory environment could work for you?
- What kind of help would make planning, applications, interviews or travel more manageable?

A manageable job-search sequence

- Choose one realistic task for this week, such as reviewing a CV, exploring a course or speaking to an adviser.
- Read the vacancy and separate essential criteria from desirable experience.
- Tailor your CV or application to the role. Use clear examples from different parts of your life where they demonstrate relevant skills.
- Ask early about interview arrangements or adjustments if you need them.
- Record the contact, agreed action and follow-up date. Ask for written information if that makes it easier to remember.

Questions to ask a careers or employment adviser

- What support is available in my area, and how do I access it?
- Can you help me explore suitable work, training, job matching and applications?
- Can support continue after I start work, and for how long?
- How will my preferences and access needs shape the plan?
- Is the programme voluntary, and what eligibility or suitability rules apply?

Local support check

Service or adviser: _____

Who can refer me? _____ When can I contact them? _____

For Connect to Work, local delivery and participant eligibility rules apply. Ask the delivery body or work coach to confirm current availability and whether it fits your circumstances.

Support to stay in work

If work becomes difficult, it can help to identify the specific barrier and discuss possible changes early. Support may come from your employer, a specialist service or a combination of routes.

Employer adjustments and Access to Work

EMPLOYER REASONABLE ADJUSTMENTS	ACCESS TO WORK
The employer must consider reasonable adjustments where disability places a worker or applicant at a substantial disadvantage. Changes may relate to recruitment, tasks, hours, equipment, communication or the workplace.	For eligible people, Access to Work may help fund practical support such as specialist equipment, a support worker, travel assistance or communication support. It does not pay for reasonable adjustments that are the employer's responsibility.

Possible adjustments to discuss

- Written instructions, agendas, priorities or follow-up notes.
- A predictable schedule, adjusted start times, planned breaks or a phased return.
- Changes to the physical or sensory environment, location, equipment or software.
- A different way to complete a task or take part in a recruitment process.
- A named contact, regular check-ins, job coaching or a clear review date.

A conversation structure

Barrier: What part of work is difficult? Impact: How does it affect the task or wellbeing? Possible change: What might reduce the barrier? Review: When will you check whether the change is helping?

WorkWell status at the time of writing

As of October 2026, WorkWell remains available in pilot areas while wider delivery is prepared. The government has scheduled delivery to begin in non-pilot areas across England from November 2026. Confirm whether a service is available in your area and how to contact it. This timing may change.

If you are not sure where to begin, you could say: "I want to stay in work, and I would like help identifying what is making things harder and what support might be available."

My employment support plan

Use this page to prepare for a conversation with a work coach, careers adviser, provider or employer. You can complete only the sections that feel useful.

What I want help with first

☐ Preparing for work ☐ Finding a role ☐ Starting a job ☐ Staying in work ☐ Training

My current goal or question:

_____

_____

What helps me work well?

Think about hours, communication, tasks, travel, environment and support.

_____

_____

_____

Routes I want to ask about

☐ Jobcentre Plus / Disability Employment Adviser ☐ National Careers Service

☐ Connect to Work / local supported employment ☐ WorkWell

☐ Access to Work ☐ Employer adjustments ☐ Another local service

My next small action

Action: _____

Who can help? _____ By when? _____

Questions I want answered

_____

_____

Official information

GOV.UK · Access to Work: https://www.gov.uk/access-to-work

GOV.UK · Connect to Work: https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/connect-to-work

GOV.UK · WorkWell guidance: https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/workwell/workwell-prospectus-guidance-for-local-system-partnerships

National Careers Service: https://nationalcareers.service.gov.uk/careers-advice

GOV.UK · Reasonable adjustments: https://www.gov.uk/reasonable-adjustments-for-disabled-workers

General information only. Services, eligibility and local delivery can change. Check current official guidance.