



Getting involved

Some of the options available to get involved in education, volunteering, employment opportunities and campaigning.



Time to get equal

scope

About cerebral palsy.
For disabled people achieving equality.

Further Education

Further education is any post-16 education that does not involve studying to degree level or higher, such as an NVQ or basic skills course.

Courses are undertaken at a range of institutions, including colleges and specialist colleges, some sixth forms and through distance learning. The place you study will depend on the course, availability and where is most appropriate for your needs.

Educational institutions now have a legal duty to provide reasonable adjustments and to ensure that disabled people are treated equally with non-disabled people.

Modern apprenticeships are a way young people aged 16-24 can get paid whilst working towards an NVQ. Modern apprentices learn on the job, building up knowledge and skills, gaining qualifications and earning money all at the same time. There are two levels of Modern Apprenticeship: Foundation and Advanced. Both of them lead to National Vocational Qualifications, key skills qualifications and Technical Certificates.

The Skill website has an interactive guide to help identify suitable universities and colleges (details at the end of this information sheet). Each institution has also been given the opportunity to produce a statement of the support they provide for disabled students. These statements are written by colleges and provide an indication of the services and support they offer.

Skill has produced two factsheets on further education looking at applying to further education and funding sources. These can be downloaded from www.skill.org.uk

Higher and Postgraduate Education

Higher education refers to any course that leads to a qualification higher than an A-level.

If you are studying or plan to study a Higher Education course (for example BSc, BA, DipHE, HND, HNC), as a disabled student, you may be entitled to a Disabled Students' Allowance (DSA) from your Local Education Authority. The allowance is payable to students who may have disability-related costs whilst studying. It is available to both full and part-time students, and for undergraduate and postgraduate study. It is not means-tested. You can apply for the DSA any time before starting your course or at any point during your course.

The allowance can help you get equipment or personal help to assist you with your studies. The Department for Education and Skills produces a useful guide to the DSA called 'Bridging the Gap'. It is available by telephoning 0800 731 9133.

'Into Higher Education', Skill's guide for disabled people considering applying for higher education courses at university or college, provides detailed information on moving into higher education. The guide includes:

- a practical question and answer section covering the support available for disabled students in higher education, when and where to apply, how to choose the right course and the funding available
- a list of useful publications and advice agencies
- statements written by all institutions providing higher education courses about their provision for disabled students together with their contact details.

Volunteering

There are plenty of opportunities to volunteer, with everything from helping an elderly neighbour go shopping through to providing accounting support to a local charity.

The main organisation for information on volunteering is the National Centre for Volunteering. It offers an array of services designed to help and support everyone who works with volunteers and volunteers themselves.

Timebank, a government-funded initiative, is a national volunteering campaign raising the awareness of giving time through voluntary work, inspiring a whole new generation of volunteers. Potential volunteers can fill in an online form to identify their skills and find matching opportunities.

If you are on disability benefits, not DLA, you may need permission from your local benefits office to take up volunteering opportunities. Check this out before you start.

Skill, the national bureau for disabled students, has produced a guide for disabled adults who are interested in volunteering. Skill also produces a guide that looks at effective ways of involving disabled people in volunteering, including a list of the most common questions about disabled volunteers.

Work experience

Work experience is an opportunity to gain practical experience in the workplace, allowing you to see what a job entails, see if you enjoy it and, potentially, lead you into a full-time position. New skills are also often gained during work experience placements, which can be beneficial in strengthening your curriculum vitae. Work experience may be paid or unpaid and can last anything from a single day to several months.

You can take on work placements whilst looking for permanent employment, or as an integral part of a college or higher education course. The Disability Discrimination Act generally only applies to paid work experience, but part 3 (Goods and Services) and part 4 (Education) may be relevant to unpaid work experience.

The Skill publication, Into Work Experience, provides detailed advice on the above and on how to go about finding a placement.

Employment

Paid employment serves an important function in life, providing an income, social interaction and the opportunity to develop personal skills. If you are looking for work and feel you would benefit from some additional support, there are a number of schemes available to help.

The starting place for job seeking should be Jobcentre Plus. Alongside general advisers who are there to support all job seekers, there are also Disability Employment Advisers (DEAs), who are specialists in supporting disabled people at different stages of employment.

DEAs can provide a range of support, advice and information including:

- Employment Assessment, which can help you find out how your impairment or health condition affects the type of work you want to do
- referral to a period of Work Preparation
- job seeking advice and support
- advice and information on keeping your job
- information on the Job Introduction Scheme
- information on WORKSTEP
- details of the New Deal for Disabled People (see over)

Work Preparation

Work Preparation is an individually-tailored programme designed to help people with health conditions or an impairment return to work following a long period of sickness or unemployment. It can also help people who are at risk of losing their job because of their disability by helping them to overcome difficulties that are affecting their work.

Work Preparation aims to help you overcome obstacles that are preventing you from finding suitable employment. It may last for a few days or weeks depending on your specific needs and you can attend part-time or full-time.

Job Introduction Scheme

The Job Introduction Scheme can help you if you are looking for work, or are about to start a job and have an impairment that may affect the kind of work you will do.

It's not always easy to be sure if a particular job or work environment will suit you because of your impairment. The Job Introduction Scheme can help with these concerns by paying a weekly grant to your employer for the first few weeks that you are employed to help towards your wages or other employment costs, for example additional training.

WORKSTEP

WORKSTEP provides job support to disabled people who face more complex barriers to getting and keeping a job, but who can work effectively with the right support. It enables eligible disabled people to realise their full potential to work, giving them, whenever possible, the opportunity to progress into open employment. The programme also offers practical assistance to employers.

WORKSTEP can be used in almost any type of job. It provides support to you and your employer that is tailored to your individual needs.

New Deal for Disabled People

If you get disability or health-related benefits but want to work, then the voluntary New Deal for Disabled People could help you.

You can join the programme if you receive one or more of a range of benefits, including Incapacity Benefit, Severe Disablement Allowance and Disability Living Allowance. Your Jobcentre Plus can advise on other benefits which qualify you for the New Deal scheme.

New Deal for Disabled People is delivered through a network of Job Brokers who have been chosen by Jobcentre Plus because of their experience of working with people with health conditions or impairments. Your Job Broker will support you in identifying what kind of work you would like to do; give advice on the local labour market; and assist in preparing for and finding work.

To find the Job Brokers in your area, visit their website at www.jobbrokersearch.gov.uk



Access to Work

The Access to Work programme is run by JobcentrePlus and provides financial assistance towards the extra costs of employing a disabled person. It is available to unemployed, employed and self-employed people and can apply to any job, full-time or part-time, permanent or temporary.

The type of support available covers a wide range, from a communicator at a job interview, a support worker for someone who needs practical help getting to or at work, special equipment through to vehicle adaptations.

Working Tax Credit

Working Tax Credit is for people who are employed or self-employed (either on their own or in a partnership), who:

- usually work 16 hours or more a week,
- are paid for that work, and
- expect to work for at least four weeks

and who are:

- aged 16 or over and responsible for at least one child, or
- aged 16 or over and disabled, or
- aged 25 or over and usually work at least 30 hours a week

More information is available from www.inlandrevenue.gov.uk

Campaigning

Campaigning can be done by anyone, on their own or as part of a larger group. Campaigning can be difficult and often takes a lot of hard work and dedication, but the results often improve the lives of large numbers of people.

Campaigning can include:

- Lobbying politicians to bring about long-term legislative change
- Working with the media to gain publicity for your cause and to attract wider support
- Organising marches and demonstrations
- Sending leaflets, postcards and flyers to bring your message to a wider audience
- Organising conferences, meetings, seminars to bring together like-minded people

Scope has a national network of campaigners and produces a 'Guide to Effective Campaigning'. The Scope Campaigns Department runs a number of national and local campaigns that you may be interested in getting involved in. For more information about these initiatives telephone the Scope Campaigns Department on 020 7619 7245.

Engage

Engage is a network of disabled people who hold, or are interested in holding, appointed or elected, public or political office and is co-ordinated by Scope.

The Engage Network aims to highlight and challenge under-representation of disabled people in public life and encourage disabled people to participate in the decision-making process at all levels. More information, and the opportunity to join the network, can be found at www.scope.org.uk/engage/

Further information and support

British Council of Disabled People

www.bcodp.org.uk

Email: general@bcodp.org.uk

Telephone: **01332 295551**

Minicom: **01332 295581**

The British Council of Disabled People was set up by disabled people in 1981 to promote our full equality and participation within society. We are an umbrella organisation that represents some 130 organisations run and controlled by disabled people.

Department for Education and Skills

www.dfes.gov.uk

Public enquiries: **0870 000 2288**

Department for Work and Pensions

www.dwp.gov.uk

Telephone: **020 7712 2171**

The Department for Work and Pensions is responsible for the Government's welfare reform agenda. Its aim is to promote opportunity and independence for all.

Disability

www.disability.gov.uk

Telephone: **0800 882200**

Textphone service: **0800 243355**

This is managed by the Disability Unit in the Department for Work and Pensions. You can find out about your rights as a disabled person, and to learn more about the legislation that exists to help establish fully comprehensive and enforceable civil rights for disabled people in the UK.

Inland Revenue

www.inlandrevenue.gov.uk

Job Broker

www.jobbrokersearch.gov.uk

This website allows users to identify their nearest job brokers.

JobcentrePlus

www.jobcentreplus.gov.uk

In some areas JobcentrePlus offices are already offering fully integrated work and benefit services. It will take several years to integrate the entire local office network of Jobcentres and social security offices. During this time, services will continue to be provided in local social security offices and Jobcentres, which will be part of the JobcentrePlus network. JobcentrePlus will be introduced everywhere by 2006.

National Centre for Volunteering

www.volunteering.org.uk

Email: volunteering@thecentre.org.uk

Tel: **020 7520 8900**

New Deal for Disabled People

www.newdeal.gov.uk

Helpline: **0800 137 177**

Textphone: **0800 435 550**

Modern Apprenticeships

www.apprenticeships.org.uk

Telephone: **08000 150 600**

The modern apprenticeship scheme is for 16-24-year-olds. Factsheets are available on their website covering each modern apprentice course.

**Skill: National Bureau for Students
with Disabilities**

www.skill.org.uk

Telephone: **020 7450 0620**

Skill is a national charity promoting opportunities for disabled young people and adults in post-16 education, training and employment across the UK.

TheSite.org

www.thesite.org

TheSite.org aims to offer the best guide to life for young adults, aged 16-25. Information and impartial advice is available on everything from volunteering to career advice.

Timebank

www.timebank.org.uk

Timebank links volunteers with volunteering opportunities.

Please note any mention of a product or web link does not constitute a recommendation by Scope. For further information about cerebral palsy and Scope services:

[Call 0808 800 3333](tel:08088003333)

[Email: cphelpline@scope.org.uk](mailto:cphelpline@scope.org.uk)

[Or log on to www.scope.org.uk](http://www.scope.org.uk)

This information can be made available in other formats if required, eg large print or tape.

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