

On the right path

How do you turn a positive mental attitude into real-life success? That's the question faced by many people who want to work, but are just looking for that first break

Thousands of people have achieved their goals and found employment thanks to a combination of their own determination and the national Pathways to Work initiative run by Jobcentre Plus.

Pathways provides extra support and opportunities to help people with health problems and disabilities get jobs and stay in them, enabling families to put a bit of extra money in their pockets and make their lives a bit easier.

Designed to help people on incapacity benefits into work, Pathways to Work includes:

- 6 mandatory work-focused interviews with a specialist Incapacity Benefit Personal Adviser
- a programme to help you cope with your health condition at work



Right path

The latest research found that Pathways to Work significantly increased the probability of finding a job. After Pathways to Work support, people's chances of finding a job after an initial incapacity benefits enquiry rose around 8 per cent to 35 per cent.

- a Return to Work Credit of £40 per week for a year if you earn less than £15,000 per year
- in-work support such as coaching and mentoring when you first return to work.

One person who has already benefited is Daniel Brookes, who overcame a rare skin condition to find a new job and a new sense of purpose.

While undergoing treatment for a tumour, Daniel was unable to work. He considered going into training to update his skills so that he could open up career options in the future, but last December he felt he had recovered enough to get back into work straight away. He registered on the Pathways to Work programme and worked with Jobcentre Plus and Seetec (an employment and training services provider) to help prepare him for a return to work.

Support can include: one-to-one sessions to match people to, and search for, jobs; help with letter writing and CV preparation;

Employment support

From October, new customers who would normally have received Incapacity Benefit and Income Support will be considered for Employment and Support Allowance (ESA). ESA has been designed to help people with a health condition or disability to

achieve their full potential and gain independence from benefits. It will focus on your abilities – on what you can do rather than what you cannot – and will support your return to work.

For more on ESA, visit www.dwp.gov.uk/welfare-reform/incapacity

and practice on interview and telephone techniques.

Through sheer determination and hard work, Daniel has now found work at Asda in Birmingham. After a Work Trial

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which let him try out the job before having to commit to giving up benefits and going full time, he successfully

demonstrated that he was the right person for the job. 'I did have a few knock-backs along the way,' says Daniel, 'like not getting responses to applications, but I stayed positive. I found Seetec's support brilliant. Everyone is helpful and friendly and I'm delighted to be back in work.'

More information

For more on Pathways to Work and Work Trials, visit www.jobcentreplus.gov.uk

REAL LIFE

New directions

When Sharon joined WorkDirections' Pathways to Work programme in late 2007, she had been out of work for 18 years, having left her job as a machinist to raise her family and care for her partner who had sustained a brain injury.

Despite her own back injury – for which she was getting Incapacity Benefit – Sharon was keen to get back to work.

Her Pathways to Work adviser put her in touch with WorkDirections, a leading Pathways to Work provider. Sharon was worried about how her extended break from work might look to employers, but her adviser reassured her that her roles as a parent and carer gave her a range of skills that are valued in the workplace, such as communication, time management and effective negotiation skills.

During her time on the

Pathways to Work programme, Sharon received help to produce a CV and went through a series of mock interviews. Her confidence grew and she was offered an interview with Sky Broadcasting.

Less than 3 months after she signed up with WorkDirections, Sharon has now completed her first month in Sky's call centre, and is confident that she's found the right job to suit her needs.