Accessing Work
A guide to for work and adjustments
Inclusion Scotland has written this guide to finding employment to share what we have learned through supporting disabled people to find work.

We hope you find it useful and we welcome any feedback. You can contact us via interns@inclusionscotland.org

We welcome contact using the Contact Scotland service for sign language users. Find out more at http://contactscotland-bsl.org/

Please visit our website at wecanwork.org.uk
When looking for work it's important to think about what it is you would like to do, and what skills and experience you might need to gain to get there. The advice we give in this guide will be even more useful if you have thought about what you want to get from work, and what you are interested in.

- It's a good idea to visit a careers adviser to talk through the things you are interested in. You can make an appointment with Skills Development Scotland.
- Looking at employer websites and LinkedIn pages can help give an idea of what they are looking for.
- Work shadowing can be a useful way of getting to know the type of work you want to get into. You may want to contact employers to see if you can visit their workplace and spend time with their employees.
- If you aren’t really sure what you want to do, or are just looking for a job to gain money and experience, don’t worry. Think about things you like, stuff you’re good at or would like to get better at and do a bit of research.
- If you have been thinking about starting your own business there may be support available from Business Gateway or the Princes Trust.
- Think about the kind of adjustments you might need in work, and find out more about them so you can visualise doing tasks you are maybe worried about.
Finding Jobs

It’s a good idea to keep up to date with the work that is out there, and knowing where to look for vacancies is half the battle! Here is a list of some useful places to look.

- **Indeed.co.uk**
  Indeed pulls together jobs from many sources, and is a good starting point.

- **Goodmoves.org.uk**
  Goodmoves is SCVO’s job site for voluntary sector jobs, primarily based in Scotland.

- **Myjobscotland.gov.uk**
  Local Authority jobs across Scotland.

- **opportunities.creativescotland.com**
  Creative Scotland jobsite which also lists development and funding opportunities for creatives.

- **Universal Jobmatch**
  The government’s job site.

- **Company Websites and Social Media**
  If there’s somewhere in particular you’d like to work, keep an eye on their site and follow them on Twitter, LinkedIn or Facebook.

- **Civil Service Jobs**
  Jobs in the civil service, including Scottish Government.

- **Work for MP and mspjobs.scot**
  Political, policy and public relations jobs board and advice on applying.

- **Our internship opportunities** will be advertised on the We Can Work website. We also share member organisation's opportunities through our newsletter.
Adjustments when applying

Employers should make their application processes accessible to disabled people. Information provided in adverts should be clear, and adjustments should be offered where needed. Some employers may ask this during the application stage, it’s not to trip you up! Employers want to help you be at your best during the recruitment process.

Sometimes employers don’t ask about this and you might need to approach them and tell them what you need. Here are some examples of things that may need to be changed a bit in the application process:

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- Online testing may be difficult for people with some impairments.
- Timed exercises may disadvantage people who need extra time i.e. people who use assistive technology.
- Deaf people may prefer to apply in British Sign Language with an interpreter.
- People with learning disabilities may wish to apply with a video CV rather than a written one to get skills across.
- Some employers offer a guaranteed interview for disabled applicants who meet the essential criteria, but not all employers do this. Check if you are unsure.
Writing a good application

- Read the job description and the person specification! Make sure your application shows you have the main things they are looking for, not what you hope they are looking for.
- Contact us if you need advice about adjustments in the application process. We are also happy to proofread applications and give pointers if you request this.
- Be sure to mention things you have done, and give examples to back them up. Sometimes it is easy to assume that employers can guess you have certain skills by looking at your work history, but to make an application stand out you should demonstrate the points in the person spec as much as possible and focus on YOU, not WE.
- If you don’t have direct experience of something, think about other things you have done that are similar and show your transferable skills. Don’t play down your skills and experience even if it’s not a perfect fit.
- Don’t hold back the juicy stuff for interview, make sure you get an interview by telling the employer in the application! It’s common for people to think they will “bore” the employer if they use the same examples… not true!
- You can copy and paste bits of applications if it saves time, but always tailor it to the job and always proofread. There’s nothing worse than an employer reading how much you want to work for someone else!
Adjustments for interview

You are entitled to ask for reasonable adjustments for taking part in a job interview. The purpose of this is not to give disabled people an advantage, but to level the playing field. If there are things that you need to help you in work then they should be considered for interview. This includes any tasks that may be given as part of the process. For example

- An applicant with Asperger’s asks for interview questions in advance to have time to formulate responses. (The other candidates should not be given the questions as well).
- An applicant with anxiety asks to take notes into the interview.
- An interview slot is moved to later in the day for an applicant who has drowsiness from medication in the morning.
- A dyslexic applicant is able to take their own laptop into the pre-interview task to enable them to use their Text Help software to check their spelling and similar sounding words.
- An applicant with a stammer is given extra time for their interview so they are not rushed in answering questions.
1. Be prepared!
It shows the employer that you care about the job. It also gives you an opportunity to show your work ethic, your research ability, your problem solving skills. All the things an employer likes! Being prepared helps your confidence too.

2. Know the employer
Show you have an understanding of who they are, what they do and what they may do in the future. Knowing the history is good, but thinking about their future and how you fit could win you the job! Look at their website, mission statement, news articles etc.

3. Know the role
One of the first things that is almost always asked is “tell us what attracts you to this role”. Your answer to this can set the tone for the whole interview. Show that you fit what they are looking for, rather than trying to make their role fit your experience and interests.

4. The interviewer is likely as scared as you are
A lot of the time the interviewer hasn’t done this very often. Remember that!
5. Don’t sell yourself short! This can be hard if you have had your confidence knocked, or if you don’t have a lot of direct experience. Try to think about your potential, the employer already is as they have invited you to interview to see what you are like.

6. Use STAR and use one example per question! The next section talks about STAR in detail, employers like this structure as it helps you give a thorough answer that demonstrates you can do the job.

7. Talk about what YOU did. It’s ok to talk about work done as a team, but you MUST talk about what you did yourself. This is essential, and should really be tip number one.

8. Close by asking a thoughtful question. They aren’t asking to be nice, they want you to ask a question. You can even ask a question that gives you an open to talk about something you really want them to know. You can prepare some back up questions in case you get stuck, preferably tailored to the employer.

9. Ask for feedback! This can be really important in learning how to improve your interview skills. It can be easy to make assumptions about why you missed out, and constructive feedback will make a lot of difference.
Be a star, use the STAR format

Example question: “Can you tell us about a time when you managed your time effectively?”

Situation (What happened?) When completing my honours project I fell behind with time because the ethical approval process took longer than I expected.

Task (What did you need to do?) I still had to complete my research on time.

Action (What did you do? How did you do it?) I set myself a deadline for finishing my interviews.

Result (What was the benefit of this? Did you learn anything?) This meant that when I didn’t get as many subjects as planned I knew I had to move on to the next stages and finish the whole project on time. I also had enough time to seek advice from my tutor when I needed to. By managing my time effectively, the finished report was of a consistent standard throughout. This also minimised any potential stress.”

You’ll see that instead of assuming that the employer knows all of the hard work that went into completing your project, you have clearly demonstrated all of this effort and shown you can manage time effectively.
Questions to ask yourself

You may find it helpful to practice the following questions, really dig deep and create some examples. The STAR format can be used for most questions, even strengths based questions.

“tell us about a time when you had to adapt your communication style to suit a different audience”
“tell us about a time when you worked on your own initiative”
“tell us about a time when you had to manage conflicting priorities”
“how do you manage your time effectively?”
“What is your biggest strength? What is your weakness?”
“tell us about a time when you planned a project and what you did to make it a success?”
“how do you work as part of a team? What role do you play in a team?”

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Yay, you got the job! Did you know that employers have a duty to make reasonable adjustments to support you in work? Adjustments are arrangements that make work more accessible to disabled people. These can vary depending on impairment related barriers. Reasonable adjustments refer to those which an employer can be expected to make for an employee. It's common for people to be unsure of what they can ask for, or if they even qualify for reasonable adjustments. People may be scared to disclose to employers to get the conversation about adjustments going for fear of being discriminated against. It can be helpful to think about what you need and going in prepared to discuss it.

Adjustments that are beyond what is deemed “reasonable” are usually supported by Access to Work funding. Access to Work is a scheme offered by the UK Government to pay for support in work for disabled people. Unfortunately many disabled people and employers are not familiar with the scheme. It can cover a wide variety of things and it's always worth checking to see what you could claim for.

On the next page there are some examples of adjustments that might be made. If you would like more information on adjustments please have a look at our website.
Visual impairment

- Workplace assessment from Access to Work, recommending assistive software such as Zoomtext or screen readers like Jaws.
- Electronic magnifiers or document readers.
- Travel assistance from access to work.
- Personal assistance.
- Ergonomic assessment so you are comfortable using the equipment.

Mental health

- Flexible working, e.g. no set start time giving leeway for getting to work in the morning, or for medication side effects
- Home working.
- Support to deliver presentations
- Voice recorder from Access to Work
- The mental health support service from Access to work.
- Buddying or mentoring

Health condition

- Flexibility with working hours and locations, home working.
- Considering how work setting and tasks could aggravate condition and what accommodations could be made, lighting, work load, physically demanding tasks etc.
- A disability leave policy to differentiate from “sick leave”.
- Awareness training for colleagues
Inclusion Scotland is a national disabled people’s organisation (ran by disabled people), working to promote equality for disabled people in Scotland in a variety of ways, including:

- Taking part in advisory groups and briefing elected officials on how decisions impact on disabled people.
- Gathering the views and experiences of disabled people across the country and ensuring that these views are heard when policies and services are being designed.
- The Independent Living in Scotland project (ILiS).
- We administer the Scottish funding for the Disability Research into Independent Living and Learning project, which gives funding to disabled people to research issues that affect us.
- Access to Politics and Elected Office work to increase the representation of disabled people in parliament, local councils, and other areas of civic life including community councils and non party political campaigning.
- Internships for disabled people to promote equality in employment by education employers and interns alike on the support available in work.
Inclusion Scotland offers employability support to disabled people across the country. This support is largely based around our internship programmes. We are often involved in other work around employability from time to time such as advisory groups, parliamentary briefings around disabled people and employment, and partnership working with other organisations.

We are currently delivering a National Disability Internship Programme, with opportunities in the Scottish Parliament, the Scottish Government and the public sector. There will also be opportunities in the third sector. As part of the programme we will be encouraging employers to learn about inclusion, from recruitment to employment. Interns are encouraged to join our peer network and get involved in our wider work.

To read up to date information on our current projects and opportunities to work with us please visit wecanwork.org.uk
Some useful contacts

Skills Development Scotland—Scotland’s careers service www.skillsdevelopmentscotland.co.uk.

LEAD (Linking Education and Disability) - LEAD is a voluntary organisation that looks to widen access to learning for disabled people http://www.lead.org.uk/.

Access to Work— The government scheme to support disabled people in work www.gov.uk/access-to-work/overview.

Reed Recruitment – Reed has useful templates for CVs and cover letters www.reed.co.uk.

Citizens Advice Scotland—Your local bureau can help you with better off in work calculations when you are thinking about salaries and working patterns.
University or college careers services—You should be able to get advice about opportunities from the place you studied at.

Local Council Employment and Training Units—Find out what your local council offers by getting in touch.

GCIL Equality Academy—Glasgow Centre for Inclusive Living provide employability services for disabled people.

Local disabled people’s organisations—Get in touch with us to find out about what is going on in your area.