



Into Apprenticeships 2025

The guide for disabled people



WE BLAZE OUR OWN TRAIL

Earn while you learn: get a
competitive salary and
your training paid for

Visit apprenticeships.gov.uk

**FIRE
IT UP**

 Apprenticeships



HM Government

Into Apprenticeships 2025

● Preface	2
-----------	---

SECTIONS

1 Introduction	3
2 What are the benefits?	7
3 How do I apply?	9
4 Telling people about your disability	16
5 What support can I get?	21
6 What happens after I start?	25

RESOURCES

● Websites	28
● Publications	29
● Organisations	30

CASE STUDIES

● Jane Forster – Cashier, Barclays	6
● Daryl Jones – Apprentice Technician, Listers Volkswagen	10
● Ashley Fox – Greenkeeper, Ely City Golf Club	14
● Chloe O’Toole – Agency Sales Apprentice, Channel 4	16
● Holly Woodward – Application Tester, IBM	18
● Nicola Alegata – Hairdresser, Joy’s Hair Salon	20
● Dale Connell – Landscaper, Nature’s Landscapes	26

Preface

Into Apprenticeships is a guide for anyone living with a disability, health condition or learning difficulty thinking about applying for an apprenticeship.

ABOUT THIS GUIDE

Into Apprenticeships is a guide for disabled people, parents and key advisers about applying for apprenticeships in England. It deals with common questions such as how to find an apprenticeship, whether the training will be accessible and what support is available in the workplace.

There are several stories written by disabled apprentices about their own experiences and the challenges they have faced. As well as taking advantage of the support on offer, the apprentices talk about the importance of their own creativity, perseverance and motivation.

The guide also contains a useful resources section listing further websites, publications and organisations which can help.



Doing an apprenticeship is a great way to earn a salary, get training and qualifications and develop your career. We hope this guide will help you make the right choices and get any support you need.

Acknowledgements

Thanks to all the apprentices who provided their stories and the people who helped find them. Main photography Dick Makin Imaging. Additional images courtesy of the National Apprenticeship Service.



Introduction

An apprenticeship is a real job where you get paid, learn and gain experience. They are available for a wide range of job roles across many different industries. Almost any type of apprenticeship can be made accessible and support is available while you learn and work.

MAKING APPRENTICESHIPS ACCESSIBLE

Apprenticeships have a long history, based on the idea of learning skills from more experienced workers, with knowledge passing from one generation to the next.

In the past, apprenticeships tended to be in particular trades such as crafts, engineering and building. Nowadays they cover a much wider range of jobs and there are many different and flexible ways to join an apprentice programme. There are also colleges, universities and training providers to help support your training. At the same time, old ideas about apprentices have begun to change.

These changes mean that apprenticeships are open to a wider range of people, including those with a disability, health condition or learning difficulty. Employers are beginning to understand that it's important to give everyone a fair and equal chance and are also seeing this means they can choose from a wider pool of talent.

Almost all apprenticeships can be made accessible and being disabled should not restrict peoples' job choices. It's possible, for example, for deaf people to work in music, visually impaired people to take apprenticeships in photography and apprentices with dyslexia to support teaching and learning in schools.

Employers, colleges and universities have a duty under the Equality Act 2010 to make reasonable adjustments for disabled people. This means they should be able to offer additional support during work and training.

The government Access to Work scheme can provide grants to pay for any specialist equipment and support costs in the workplace. Section 5 of this guide covers the extra funding and help that is available.

For all of these reasons, apprenticeships can be a great, direct route for disabled people to get skilled jobs and careers.



WHAT ARE APPRENTICESHIPS?

Apprenticeships allow those aged 16 and over to receive practical training by working in a real job at the same time as studying.

As an apprentice you will:

- work alongside experienced staff
- gain the skills necessary for work
- study for a particular qualification
- be paid a salary and get the same rights as employees.

Who can do an apprenticeship?

Anybody who is over 16, eligible to work in England and not in full-time education can apply for an apprenticeship.

Apprenticeships should be open to anyone, including disabled adults who might reach this stage several years after leaving school.



How long do apprenticeships last?

Apprenticeships usually last for between one and six years depending on which apprenticeship you choose, the level and your previous experience in that job area.

What levels are there?

- Intermediate: equivalent to five A*-C or 4-9 GCSE grades at Level 2
- Advanced: equivalent to two A Levels at Level 3
- Higher: equivalent to Foundation degree, a Higher National Certificate (HNC), or a Higher National Diploma (HND), NVQ Level 4 and above
- Degree: leading to Level 6 and 7, equivalent to a full bachelor's or master's degree


What kinds of jobs have apprenticeships?

Almost all jobs have apprenticeship programmes.

Apprenticeships include jobs in:

- Agriculture, Horticulture and Animal Care
- Arts, Media and Publishing
- Business, Administration and Law
- Construction, Planning and the Built Environment
- Education and Training
- Engineering and Manufacturing Technologies
- Health, Public Services and Care
- History, Philosophy and Theology
- Information and Communication Technology
- Languages, Literature and Culture
- Leisure, Travel and Tourism
- Retail and Commercial Enterprise, including hairdressing, beauty therapy and hospitality
- Science and Mathematics

The *Apprenticeships* website has lots of examples of different types of apprenticeship and videos of different apprentice experiences.

 www.apprenticeships.gov.uk

It's important to research and choose carefully. Concentrate first on the subjects you're interested in. Most types of apprenticeship can be made accessible with the right support.

Can I do an apprenticeship part-time?

Part-time apprenticeships should be available for all types of apprenticeships and can be a great way of allowing extra flexibility for disabled candidates.

This could be something to ask employers about directly as sometimes they don't know that part-time is an option.

An apprenticeship is considered to be part-time if it is less than 30 hours per week.

Where a part-time working pattern is agreed, the length of the apprenticeship will be extended to allow enough time to successfully complete the training.

You, your employer and the training provider must all agree the extended apprenticeship duration and keep evidence of the agreed average weekly hours.

HOW DO I GET CAREERS ADVICE?

Schools and further education colleges in England have a duty to provide access to independent and impartial careers guidance to all students aged 11 to 18, or up to the age of 25 if they have an Education, Health and Care (EHC) Plan.

Careers guidance should include information about all the opportunities available at school, college, university, apprenticeships and jobs with training. The advice and guidance should be impartial and promote your 'best interests'. Alternatively, you can use the National Careers Service, which offers advice about careers in England.



The National Careers Service

T 0800 100 900

W nationalcareersservice.direct.gov.uk

If you're aged 13 or over you can access advice through webchat, telephone and email helpline. If you're aged 19 or over, you can also get face-to-face advice.

Call to make an appointment with an adviser at your nearest National Careers Service Centre.

If you're looking for information about training or careers in other parts of the UK, please visit:

My World of Work – Skills Development Scotland

W www.myworldofwork.co.uk

Careers Wales

W www.careerswales.com

Careers Service Northern Ireland

W www.nidirect.gov.uk/campaigns/careers

Jane Forster

Cashier, Barclays

My local optician noticed abnormalities at the back of my retina when I was 15 years old which was scary but also something of a relief. It meant I was finally taken seriously about problems I'd been having with my sight. Eventually I was diagnosed with Stargardt's Disease.



I had help and support from a charity called Henshaw's Society for Blind People. They helped me on the road to employment with their Skillstep course. I learned CV writing, interview skills, basic word processing and other topics that help build up the skills you might need for work.

I'm now doing an apprenticeship in Financial Services, an NVQ level 2 equivalent qualification. I chose Barclays as I thought it would be a good opportunity to work for a large company, especially having a disability. I also thought it would be interesting working in a bank.

Having a disability impacted on my training at first as there were delays waiting for equipment and adjustments to computer screens. I was a little disheartened but I decided to deal with it patiently. The training provider Elmfield and Barclays were very supportive throughout.

“

Don't think you can't do the job because you've got a disability.

I now have ZoomText software to enlarge the text on my computer. I also have an electronic magnifier and an audio PIN Sentry device to give the secure code needed for identifying customers. All of these have been provided by Barclays. My colleagues have also been extremely supportive, for example on the occasions when my equipment has failed.

I've maintained close links with Henshaws over the years and I've also had help and advice from friends, family, my Elmfield trainer and my line manager.



My experience has been very positive as I've realised I can overcome the barriers to working independently. My advice to others in a similar situation would be "Don't think you can't do the job because you've got a disability".

What are the benefits?

Doing an apprenticeship can be very rewarding. You earn a wage while getting ‘on the job’ experience and ‘off the job’ training. The qualifications you gain will be recognised and highly valued by employers.

HOW MUCH WILL I EARN?

From April 2025, apprentices who are under the age of 19 or are in their first year of an apprenticeship are entitled to a minimum wage of £7.55 per hour. After the first year those aged 18 to 20 earn £10.00 per hour and those aged 21 and over earn £12.21.

Although these rates may seem quite low, most apprentices are paid more than the national minimum wage. The average hourly rate for apprentices ranges between £8.56 for Level 2 and £17.34 for Level 7.

Apprentices must be paid for all their working hours and for any time they spend on training which is part of their apprenticeship.

Apprentices are also entitled to at least 20 days holiday a year plus bank holidays, sick pay and any benefits offered such as childcare voucher schemes.

WHAT TRAINING WILL I RECEIVE?

Apprenticeships are designed with the help of employers in the industry. They offer a carefully structured programme that takes you through the skills you need to do a job well.

As an employee, you’ll be working most of the time so most of your training takes place ‘on the job’. Full-time apprentices need to undertake a minimum average of 6 hours ‘off-the-job’ training per week regardless of the hours worked. If you work less than 30 hours per week, you are considered to be a part-time apprentice and at least 20% of your normal working hours must be spent on off-the-job training.

The training can take place at a local college, university or training provider, online or at your place of work. The frequency can vary, one day a week or over a number of days in a block.

This enables you to develop the knowledge and skills you need, whilst the employer provides the practical experience to demonstrate those skills.

Many jobs need the same sets of skills. These skills can be transferred to different types of apprenticeships. This gives you more flexibility and choice.

Transferable skills include:

- Communication
- Using numbers
- Computers and IT
- Working with others
- Improving your own learning and performance
- Problem solving



What qualification does it lead to?

Apprenticeships may result in the following qualifications:

- An appropriate work-based qualification such as a National Vocational Qualification (NVQ) at either Level 2, Level 3 or Level 4 and above, or an industry recognised professional qualification.
- An academic qualification such as a higher national certificate, higher national diploma, foundation degree, bachelor's degree or master's degree.
- A technical qualification such as a BTEC or City & Guilds (relevant to the specific apprenticeship).
- Functional Skills Qualification in Maths and English and an ICT qualification if required by the sector.

These are national qualifications and well respected by employers. You can read the case studies in this guide for examples of the individual qualifications each apprentice is working towards.

HOW WILL IT HELP DEVELOP MY CAREER?

With an apprenticeship under your belt, you could progress through many other roles in your industry. Other exciting career options will also become available.

Progressing through intermediate and advanced levels you can collect UCAS points and go into higher education. Many colleges and universities will value your skills and knowledge and you can apply for Foundation Degrees or other higher level qualifications including degree apprenticeships.

72%

of trained apprentices in employment planned to continue working for the same employer

45%

of all former apprentices had received both a pay rise and a promotion

Findings of the Apprenticeship Evaluation Learner Survey published in March 2023 showed that:

- 72% of apprentices planned to continue working for the same employer after completing their training, 7% planned to work for a different employer and 11% planned to enter other education or training.
- 45% of all former apprentices had received both a pay rise and a promotion. 82% of total promotions and 70% of total pay rises were at least helped by having completed an apprenticeship.

FUNDING FOR TRAINING

Apprenticeship funding mainly comes from the government with employers contributing through a tax on big business (known as the apprenticeship levy), or 5% of the cost if they're a small employer. As an apprentice you should never have to pay for your own training. Where an employer has fewer than 50 people working for them, the government will pay 100% of the training costs.

If you're aged 16-18

- employers and training providers should each receive £1,000 towards your training costs.

If you're aged 19-24

- the same funding as above (for 16-18 year olds) will be available to employers and providers if you have an Education, Health and Care (EHC) Plan
- extra funding will also be available if you've been in the care of the local authority.

Providers can also claim additional funding from the government to pay towards any extra support you need to achieve your apprenticeship if you have a disability or learning difficulty. The learning support system is described in more detail in Section 5.

How do I apply?

In England most vacancies are listed on the Find an Apprenticeship service on GOV.UK. Registering on the site is a good first step. You can also approach companies directly to ask if they have any opportunities.

HOW DO I FIND OUT ABOUT VACANCIES?

You can search for vacancies on the *Find an Apprenticeship* website.

www.findapprenticeship.service.gov.uk/apprenticeshipsearch

Once you have created an account, you can you apply for a vacancy, track applications and receive alerts about new apprenticeships.

You can search for vacancies using a key word or you can browse by category. A filter can be applied to display only employers who are part of the 'Disability Confident' scheme. Employers who are part of the scheme will guarantee disabled candidates an interview if they meet the basic apprenticeship criteria.

Clicking on a vacancy takes you to an apprenticeship summary page with information on the employer, training provider, pay, length of apprenticeship, start date, duties involved, person specification and application process.

Currently there is no function that allows you to specifically look for part-time apprenticeships. You can read through apprenticeship descriptions to find out if there is a formal part-time option. Employers should also be willing to consider individual requests from candidates.

The summary page also gives details on how to apply. Some employers want candidates to apply directly through their website.



Others prefer you to apply through *Find an Apprenticeship* which means clicking on the green 'Apply for Apprenticeship' button at the bottom of the page. This will take you to an online form.

You need to fill in the form with information about your education, qualifications, training and work experience.

Each application is unique and includes specific questions set by the employer, for example it may ask about your skills and strengths, your interest in the apprenticeship and your motivations for applying.

Applying for vacancies

- Go to www.findapprenticeship.service.gov.uk/apprenticeshipsearch
- Create and activate your account
- Ensure your profile details are correct
- Browse your results
- Set-up 'search alerts'
- Search and apply for vacancies online by preparing your application form
- Manage your application

Daryl Jones

Vehicle Technician, Listers Volkswagen

I'm 17 years old and live in Nuneaton, Warwickshire. I've always had an interest in cars as my dad worked at Jaguar and we regularly attended family open days.



At school I had a Statement of special educational needs because of dyslexia and speech and language difficulties. I find it difficult to concentrate, remember information and follow long instructions. These difficulties affect my self-esteem and I'm hesitant about trying new things.

At school I had to work extra hard and had support throughout year 10 and 11. I completed a Car Maintenance and Repair Level 1 qualification via a Young Apprenticeship with Jaguar Land Rover. Additional support and extra time in exams really helped. When I left school, I enrolled on a Level 2 Motor Vehicle course with North Warwickshire & Hinckley College.

During my college course I had the opportunity to do a Supported Internship. Initially I was wary but I realised it was an opportunity to prove myself. Following meetings with me, my mum and college staff, an interview was arranged at Listers Volkswagen, a family owned business of 35 years.

I was really nervous so a Job Coach came with me to the interview which really helped.

Listers agreed to a four-week work experience placement at their Nuneaton site. This was successful and led to a full internship placement. The staff were very supportive and agreed to break down and list instructions clearly so I didn't forget things. I still make notes constantly. During the internship, with my manager's help, I applied for an apprenticeship position. There were four applicants and I was the successful one!

“

I always had to work harder than others to get to the same level but that work now seems to be paying off.

I still get confused with some of the technical work and find it a stressful when the workshop has multiple jobs with lots of instructions and tight deadlines. The other Listers technicians I work with are patient and understanding. They constantly teach me new things and don't mind me asking questions. I've already attended an open day at the VW National Learning Centre in Milton Keynes, where I'll complete my block release apprenticeship training for five weeks per year.

I'm still a bit quiet but my confidence has increased and I felt a huge amount of pride when I signed off my very first job card. I also recently passed a Level 2 assessment in diagnostic testing.

I would advise anyone who wants to succeed in anything to work hard, get as many qualifications as you can and get a good grounding through work experience and voluntary work.

Spend time on your answers. You might want to include examples of managing your disability as a way of demonstrating your strengths, for example showing greater determination or the ability to take initiative. Employers want to see how you stand out from the rest of the candidates and why they should shortlist you for the next stage of the application.

UCAS

It is now possible to explore apprenticeship opportunities alongside undergraduate courses through the UCAS hub. To ensure a comprehensive selection of apprenticeship vacancies, the Government has collaborated with UCAS to share information collected through the Find an Apprenticeship Service.

The aim of these changes is to establish a single place where you can access information on a variety of education and training options, whether it's an apprenticeship, a Skills Bootcamp, a T Level or a degree.

WHAT HAPPENS AFTER I SEND MY APPLICATION?

After you've sent your application you can track its progress through 'My applications' on your home page. If your application is shortlisted, the training provider will usually contact you for an interview or assessment. Sometimes the employer will contact you directly.

CAN I APPLY THROUGH COLLEGE?

Colleges and training providers work with employers to help them recruit apprentices and support your training.

It's a good idea to contact local colleges to find out what vacancies they're recruiting for. Your careers adviser should also be able to recommend training providers in your area. They might ask you to fill out their own application form or come in for an informal interview.



You can ask the college or training provider questions to help decide if they're right for you.

For example:

- Can they help you to find and apply for an apprenticeship that suits your skills and interests?
- What support with your disability will they provide during your apprenticeship?
- Do they offer any alternative routes such as Supported Internships?
- Can they help and advise you on next steps after you successfully complete your apprenticeship?

You may still have to apply through the *Find an Apprenticeship* website for any vacancies that the college or training provider helps you find.

CAN I APPROACH EMPLOYERS DIRECTLY?

You could also contact companies directly by phone or email to ask if they have any opportunities. They may have something coming up in the future which isn't yet advertised. Some companies advertise apprenticeships through their own websites so it is worth checking them.

All employers should have fair and equal selection processes. However, you might want to look out for signs that an organisation has a particularly positive attitude towards recruiting disabled apprentices.

The 'Disability confident employer' badge shows an organisation has made specific commitments to recruiting and retaining disabled people. You'll see the badge displayed on adverts and application forms.

It may also be possible to find out the attitude of an employer by looking at the general culture of the organisation. You can sometimes get a feeling about this by looking at the messages in its brochures, equal opportunity policies and annual reports.



As part of your research, you might also ask:

- Have they employed any disabled apprentices before?
- Will you have a work-based mentor?
- What are the opportunities for you afterwards?

FINDING VACANCIES

Once you know the type of apprenticeship you're looking for, there are many sources of information on vacancies. These include internet jobsites, LinkedIn, newspaper adverts, careers fairs, employers' own websites, recruitment agencies and social media platforms such as Facebook, X (formerly Twitter) and Instagram pages. On X you can follow @apprenticeships.

ENTRY CRITERIA

Employers will usually decide what qualifications, skills and experience you need to start an apprenticeship with them. This will be different depending on the industry, job role and the apprenticeship level. For example, entry requirements could be different for hairdressing compared with business administration.

It is common for apprenticeship vacancies to ask for GCSE grade 9-4/A* to C in English and Maths. If you are not able to achieve the minimum level of English or Maths because of your learning difficulty or disability you can still access up to a level 3 apprenticeship as long as you can achieve an entry level 3 qualification during your apprenticeship. See section 5.

British Sign Language can be an alternative to English Functional Skills for Deaf people whose first language is BSL.

INTERVIEWS AND ASSESSMENTS

After applying, it's important to prepare so you're ready for an interview or assessment.

The National Careers Service has lots of good tips on their website:

W <https://nationalcareers.service.gov.uk/careers-advice/interview-advice>

The following things are especially important:

IMPORTANT INTERVIEW TIPS

Preparation

- Find out as much as you can about the employer and the apprenticeship.
- Make sure you read any information sent to you about what the interview or assessment will involve.
- Decide whether you want to tell the training provider or HR department about any support you need. The pros and cons and timing of when to tell people about your disability are discussed in Section 4.
- Plan your transport a few days before.
- Make a list of questions you could ask in the interview. This will help you decide if it's the right apprenticeship for you. It also shows you're keen.

On the day

- Take a copy of the vacancy and your application form.
- Dress appropriately and look ready to start work. For help on what might be suitable, speak to the training provider
- Arrive early. This will give you time to gather yourself for a few minutes in reception. It also makes a good impression.

In the interview

- Be polite, honest and positive. Employers won't be expecting you to have years of experience. If you get an interview, chances are you already have many of the things they're looking for.

Discussions about your disability should not be part of the selection process. You should only be judged on your skills and experience.

APPLYING FOR MORE THAN ONE VACANCY

You can keep most of the information in your online Profile for future applications, for example your education history and work experience. However, don't send exactly the same application every time you apply. Change it to fit the particular apprenticeship.

Some apprenticeships are very competitive with lots of people applying. If you're not successful with your first application, keep applying and don't take it personally. You could always ask for feedback to see if there is anything you can improve on.



Ashley Fox

Greenkeeper, Ely City Golf Club

I've been interested in golf since I was in my teens and used to work at the driving range in my spare time when I was still at school. I have Kleine-Levin Syndrome which is a condition which includes bouts of prolonged sleep which can last a number of days. I also have dyslexia and received support at school.



When I left school I thought I was better at practical work and I asked at the golf club if they would take me on permanently. After a few months trial they suggested an apprenticeship in horticulture as a sports turf groundsman and introduced me to the College of West Anglia. The college provided a tutor who came to the golf club one day a week so that the apprentices could study the theory of the work on maintaining the golf course, and I received support for my dyslexia from the tutor.

I had some choices on the apprenticeship, for example green spraying and learning to use the chainsaw, and I was able to do both. My employer was very supportive when I needed time off when I had spells of sleeping.

We work as a team on the golf course so it could cause difficulties but all the lads pull together if I am away. They are aware of how my condition affects me and I do get a day or so warning of an episode.

My disabilities don't stop me using the chainsaw safely and I was able to get my driving licence supported by a letter from my doctor.

Sometimes I missed tutorials and was behind on my college work but the college organised for my time on the apprenticeship to be extended so that I could complete it. The only downside was that it took a long time to finish but I stuck at it.

“

I would recommend anyone to have a go at finding an apprenticeship. Learning doesn't just come from books.

I was Apprentice of the Year at the College of West Anglia and attended the awards ceremony in Peterborough. Now I am employed in a job I love as a Greenkeeper at Ely City Golf Club.

I would recommend anyone to have a go at finding an apprenticeship. Learning doesn't just come from books, I learnt from being shown how to do things by the staff at the golf club. If there is something you enjoy doing and there is a place near you, go and ask if they will take you on.

SUPPORTED INTERNSHIPS

Supported Internships are available to disabled young people aged between 16 and 24 who have an EHC plan and want to move into employment and need extra support to do so.

On a Supported Internship, you'll spend most of your time (around 70%) in the workplace doing a real job. You'll also have a personal study programme.

The internship can help you with your long-term career goals, give you new skills and real job experience. Supported Internships are especially helpful if you want to improve your confidence.

You will receive support from a job coach to learn more about a particular job role. The internship normally lasts for at least six months and up to a year.

All colleges, sixth forms and independent specialist providers in England can offer Supported Internships as part of their learning programme for disabled students.

Access to Work can be used for Supported Internships. This means that government money is available to help with extra disability-related support costs in the workplace, including the job coach and extra fares to work.

You can apply for Access to Work up to six months in advance of starting a Supported internship.



Chloe O'Toole

Agency Sales Apprentice, Channel 4

I'm 20 years old with severe hearing loss in my right ear and I'm deaf to high pitched frequencies in my left. I communicate through lip reading and speech. Although I can hear sounds and people talking, sometimes it takes me a while to figure out what they're saying, making a lot of my responses very delayed.



I found out about Channel 4 apprenticeships through a brilliant website called *GoThinkBig*. I was going to apply for university but somehow felt it wasn't quite right for me. I always wanted to work in television so when I came across this opportunity I just knew it was for me.

I already knew about Channel 4's positive approach to disability, especially after the broadcasting of the Paralympics. In my application I told them of my deafness. When they invited me to an interview, they also asked if they needed to do anything to help which was amazing.

There were so many talented people at the interview, some having experience in TV before. I honestly thought I had no chance. We had to prepare an idea for a six-part series on All 4. I worked so hard focussing on this every day until the interview and it bagged me the deal! I was so proud, I couldn't believe it ... I'm working for Channel 4! Not only that – I'm earning good money and completing qualifications at the same time.

“

My tips when applying for apprenticeships are: be yourself, don't be ashamed to say you're disabled; ask for help and support. Tell the employer any ways your disability has opened up new opportunities and let your colours shine!

Since working here, I feel like a new person. Channel 4 are so supportive. They provided me with a text phone. Although I don't use the automated speech, it's much louder and clearer than the office phones. I don't feel embarrassed telling people I'm deaf. I'm proud of having achieved a wonderful role in a wonderful team. I absolutely love my job; learning about different departments, travelling, going to events and parties, even meeting celebrities, I wouldn't change it for the world.

My office has already picked up on my design skills and given me lots of opportunities to show them off. I get to create posters, interactive emails, logos ... you name it! I'm also completing a Level 3 Diploma in Digital Marketing qualification.

After completing her apprenticeship, Chloe was offered a full-time job as a sales executive at Channel 4.

Telling people about your disability

You might be unsure whether to tell the training provider or employer about your disability or wondering about the best time to do this. It can be helpful to think about what you expect to happen and who you might tell. The focus should always be on the support you need to overcome any barriers, not the details of your disability or health condition.

WHEN TO MENTION YOUR DISABILITY

Some apprentices are happy to be open about their disability, learning difficulty or health condition because they had support at school. The application process should give you an early opportunity to do this.

The training provider or employer will usually have an Equal Opportunities form where you can mention your disability. This form is separate from your main application. It can be used to let the Human Resources (HR) department know about any support you might need in a job interview.

When you apply for a vacancy through the *Find an Apprenticeship* service website, there is a question in the 'Interview adjustments' section which asks if there is anything they can do to support your interview. It gives examples such as step-free access to the interview room or a quiet place.



If you do make a request, this information will be shared with the employer. You can choose to answer 'No' on this question if you prefer and wait to see if you are offered an interview before discussing your needs with them.

How do I decide whether to tell people?

Remember that it's up to you whether or not you tell people. It can be hard to be open about your disability, health condition or learning difficulty because:

- You might think people will be less likely to offer you a place or that they'll treat you differently;
- You might not want to be labelled as a 'disabled person';
- You might think your disability makes no difference to your ability to carry out the work, so why should anyone else know about it?

However, if you're thinking of applying for an apprenticeship, there are some definite advantages to being open with the employer, college, university or training provider.

1: The right to equal treatment

Under the Equality Act 2010, all colleges, universities, training providers and employers have a duty to give equal treatment to disabled people. They also have to make changes called 'reasonable adjustments' to help you access the training and the workplace. If you don't tell them you're disabled, it can be harder to complain if they don't treat you fairly.

Holly Woodward

Application Tester, IBM

I'm aged 20 and working towards completing my apprenticeship at IBM. It's a three-year programme that aims to help each apprentice to find their preferred area and build both business skills and specialised technical skills.



I'm currently working in Portsmouth at IBM's North Harbour location. There are locations all over the country and I'm looking forward to working at some of these in the future.

I have mild cerebral palsy which means I have to use a wheelchair to get around. In addition to this I often get quite tired. This was a concern when I first started because I'd never had a job before as I was unable to do the physical aspect of most jobs. However this hasn't been an issue. The building I work in is fully accessible and there's also the option to work at home if I'm struggling on the day.

I stumbled across the scheme after a quick Google search. I completed the application process at the same time as my university applications – before I decided that university wasn't right for me. IBM's process is simple. You first fill out an online CV. If successful you go to an online test and assessment centre. After being chosen you're matched with a job role they feel you would be good at. You can choose your locations. I chose to stay close to home but can still go further field if I want to.

My favourite aspect of the scheme is that it's not a traditional apprenticeship and you don't spend any time at a college. Instead you're sent on training courses and events in hotels. The courses themselves are intense and you learn a lot. But they are very social.

“

I've learnt so much from my colleagues and the working environment. It wasn't as daunting as I thought it would be – everybody just wants you to be successful.

IBM has a great Foundation community full of apprentices, people on placement years and graduates, so I feel I've still had the university experience in terms of meeting new and interesting people.

I wasn't the most technical person before joining IBM but I've learnt so much from my colleagues and the working environment. It wasn't as daunting as I thought it would be – everybody just wants you to be successful.

I feel I have achieved so much in my time here, and have learnt some invaluable lessons. Every day brings a new challenge and I really thrive on that.

2: Funding for support costs

In further education, each student's funding assumes an element for support, which includes extra disability related costs. Similarly, the Access to Work scheme can pay towards additional help in the workplace needed on apprenticeship programmes or Supported Internships. Section 5 has more details and examples. If you're open about your impairment, it's usually easier to arrange individual support.

3: Show your strengths

It's also the case that some of your experiences as a disabled person could make you a stronger candidate for an apprenticeship. You might want to tell employers or training providers how the skills which you've learnt in managing your disability actually make you particularly suited for a certain job.

WHO CAN I TALK TO FOR ADVICE?

You could start by talking to whoever is advising you about apprenticeships. If you're at school, this is likely to be a teacher or the Special Educational Needs Coordinator (SENCO). Otherwise it might be a Careers Adviser or someone in Job Centre Plus such as the Work Coach. Colleges and universities have support staff called Learning Support Advisers or Disability Advisers and you should be able to have a confidential discussion with them.

WHEN SHOULD I TELL PEOPLE?

Ideally tell people as soon as possible. The earlier colleges, universities, training providers and employers know what you need, the easier it is to put the right support in place.

You might think the apprenticeship won't present any barriers and decide not to say anything at the beginning. If you find there is a problem later, you should start by talking to the person in the organisation, college, university or training provider you feel most comfortable with.



If I tell one person about my disability, does it mean that everyone will know about it?

No. Under the Data Protection Act 2018 your personal information should be kept private and confidential. However, it sometimes makes sense for other people to know in order for your support needs to be met. For example, if you need materials in large print, everyone who teaches or manages you will need to be aware of this. It's important that you talk with your tutor or line manager about who needs to know and how much they need to know.

What about if I'm asked about my disability on a health questionnaire?

Some apprenticeships, for example in health and social care, have 'fitness to practise' rules. You could be asked to fill in a health questionnaire to make sure you can carry out these roles. It's best to give straight and honest answers to these questions. However, no one should assume that having a disability would make you unfit to practise. Colleges, universities, training providers and employers should focus on putting in place any support and reasonable adjustments you need to succeed with your apprenticeship.

For more information

Find out more by reading the Disability Rights UK factsheet *Telling people you're disabled: clear and easy guide for students:*

www.disabilityrightsuk.org/resources/telling-people-youre-disabled-clear-and-easy-guide-students

Nicola Alegata

Hairdresser, Joy's Hair Salon

Hairdressing is something I've always enjoyed and wanted a career in. My neighbour is a hairdresser and I used to enjoy watching her with her clients and learning new skills and techniques. I've always done my friends' hair to gain experience and had good feedback. Hairdressing is something that I'm really passionate about.



I have dyslexia which can affect my short term memory. When working in the salon I'm constantly checking that I've done things correctly and making sure I haven't forgotten anything. I write things down to prompt my memory and I double-check with my employer and assessor to ensure everything has been covered. They watch what I'm doing and are always there to support me if necessary.

My assessor from Training Plus Merseyside (tpm) helps by explaining words when I struggle to understand what they mean and what they're asking of me. My assessor also supports me with twice weekly visits for my workplace assessments, as well as providing me with one-to-one sessions in the classroom for theory and knowledge units.

I receive support in other ways such as 25% extra time for exams. Even so, I've been struggling to pass and I've now been provided with a reader for exams and a My Apps tool which enables me to change the colour of my computer screen if needed. It also has a ruler which helps me keep my position when reading paragraphs of text.

“

I double-check with my employer and assessor to ensure everything has been covered. They watch what I'm doing and are always there to support me

I was given advice from the recruitment team at tpm to help me decide that hairdressing is the right career for me and confirm this is what I wanted to do. They also explained what would be asked of me and what I would have to do in order to gain the relevant vocational qualifications.



The advice from my employer and my assessor has been invaluable in ensuring I attend college and gain the functional skills I need to help me achieve my goals and develop a successful career.

What support can I get?

All types of apprenticeships can be made accessible to disabled people. Support is available while you learn and work. You are legally protected against discrimination and there is funding available to help with extra disability-related costs.

GETTING SUPPORT

If you have a disability, you may need extra support to help you successfully complete your apprenticeship.

The legal definition of disability is very broad and includes specific learning difficulties such as dyslexia, medical conditions, visual or hearing impairments, and mental health conditions such as depression.

You don't have to accept the word 'disability' as a label, but it can be used as a way to get support. It's important to remember that anyone can ask for help.

The college, university or training provider should take the lead in helping you. You might also need to discuss with your employer the best way of supporting you in the workplace.

How do I get support from the college, university or training provider?

All colleges, universities and most large training providers have staff members responsible for supporting disabled apprentices. They are usually called the Learning Support Adviser or Disability Adviser.

You should be able to have a confidential discussion with them about your individual needs.

If you have an Education, Health and Care plan it can be shared with the college or university to help them provide the necessary support.

Support can include many different things, for example:

- specialist equipment, such as a voice-activated computer
- sign-language interpreters
- digital recorder for keeping notes
- extra tutorial help
- changing the height of desks
- providing handouts on different colour paper, or in a larger font
- allowing you extra time to complete any assessments or tests.

Under the Equality Act 2010, colleges, universities and training providers have to make reasonable adjustments for disabled apprentices. This means that, as well as not discriminating against you in the recruitment process, they're expected to provide support and make changes to help you learn.





Disabled Apprentice Network

Improving the diversity and accessibility of Apprenticeships

Convened by Disability Rights UK, the Network brings together disabled apprentices to champion improvements to apprenticeships for disabled people.

They consider the barriers that might be faced, what makes apprenticeships successful and what employers can do to provide support. They share experiences, advise on key issues, suggest solutions and support the development of practical resources and toolkits. The Network meets monthly for one hour.

A report has been published (during National Apprenticeship Week) and a short video produced.

Champion improvements to apprenticeships

If you are currently a disabled apprentice or have recently completed an apprenticeship – join the network to champion improvements to apprenticeships for disabled people.

Join the Network

For more information or to join the Network please contact:
youngvoices@disabilityrightsuk.org



Supporting the Department for Education to improve the diversity and accessibility of Apprenticeships



Free to download

Into Higher Education

For anyone with learning, health or disability issues

This guide is designed to help disabled students make the right decisions about studying in higher education. It deals with common questions: whether the college or university will be accessible, how to choose a course and what support will be available.

The guide includes:

- The student finance system, tuition fees, repayment methods and the support that will be in place
- Case studies where disabled students write about their own experiences
- A resources section listing helpful websites, publications and organisations

“A great resource focused on the needs of disabled learners. The case studies are extremely useful, providing an insight into applying to and progressing through university. Highly recommended.”

Undergraduate Recruitment and Widening Participation Coordinator,
 University of Manchester

You can buy our publications online at www.disabilityrightsuk.org



Providers can claim learning support funding to pay for extra support that learners might need. This is fixed at a monthly rate of £150. If your support costs exceed this, but are less than £19,000 in the funding year, the provider can claim excess learning support from the funding body. If support costs exceed £19,000 in any one funding year the provider can claim Exceptional Learning Support.

For more information

The Disability Rights UK factsheet *Adjustments for disabled students and apprentices* contains lots of suggestions on the kinds of support that might be helpful.

W www.disabilityrightsuk.org/resources/resources/adjustments-disabled-students-and-apprentices

Can I get support in the workplace?

As an apprentice, you'll be working most of the time and most of your training will take place 'on-the-job'. Therefore it's important that any support is tailored to your job role.

Under the Equality Act, employers have to make reasonable adjustments for disabled people. This means that, as well as not discriminating against you, they're expected to provide support and make changes to the workplace to help you do your job. Common adjustments include:

- making adjustments to buildings
- flexible working hours
- providing specialist equipment
- changing parts of your job description

It's important to remember that all employers have this legal duty. However, you can help persuade them that costs won't be a problem by telling them about Access to Work.

What is Access to Work?

Access to Work is a government funded employment support programme scheme. It can help in a number of ways, for example by paying towards:

- communication support at interviews
- special equipment to suit your needs
- a support worker or job coach to help you in your workplace
- additional costs of taxi fares if you can't use public transport
- disability awareness training for your work colleagues

Access to Work can cover all of the agreed costs for anyone starting an apprenticeship or Supported Internship. If you've already been employed for six weeks or more, the employer may have to help pay some of these costs. How much they pay depends on the size of the company.

To get help from Access to Work you can apply online. An Access to Work adviser will then contact you and your employer to find out what support is needed.

W www.gov.uk/access-to-work/apply

Your college, university or training provider should be able to help coordinate your Access to Work support.

How to contact Access to Work

T 0800 121 7479
 Textphone: 0800 121 7579
 Relay UK: 18001 then 0800 121 7479
 BSL video relay service available
 Phone line open Mon to Fri 09.00-17.00
 Access to Work Operational Support Unit,
 Harrow Jobcentre Plus, Mail Handling Site
 A, Wolverhampton, WV98 1JE.

Support for apprentices experiencing depression, anxiety or stress

Apprentices experiencing any kind of mental health condition, including depression, anxiety or stress, can get support from Maximus or Able Futures through a partnership scheme with Access to Work.

Maximus

T 0300 456 8114

W <https://atw.maximusuk.co.uk>

Able Futures

T 0800 321 3137

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

You can contact Maximus or Able Futures directly or go through the regular Access to Work process. To qualify for this service:

- you must be in an apprenticeship (attending or signed off sick) and
- have a mental health condition that has resulted in absence or is causing difficulties to remain in the apprenticeship.

Support is tailored to your individual needs and can include:

- Emotional wellbeing advice and guidance for nine months
- Practical workplace coping strategies
- A support plan to get you back on track
- Advice on adjustments that could be made to help you complete your apprenticeship more easily
- Help for your employer to understand how they can support you



Support for English and maths training

If your learning difficulty or disability is a significant barrier to achieving the standard English and maths requirements, the training provider can adjust these requirements to an Entry Level 3 Functional Skills qualification in those subjects. This gives people with learning difficulties and disabilities an equal opportunity to gain the skills and experiences offered through apprenticeships.

The training provider will need to evidence that, even with support, reasonable adjustments and ‘stepping stone’ qualifications, you are not able to achieve the minimum level of English or maths because of your learning disability or difficulty.

From August 2022 there has been a change to English and maths requirements for those starting a Level 2 apprenticeship without a Level 1 English and maths. Apprentices no longer need to automatically attempt Level 2 English and maths tests to complete their apprenticeship. This means that apprentices can focus on securing a Level 1 English and maths qualification with only those who are really ready to take the Level 2 tests attempting them.

Care leavers bursary

A care leavers bursary of £3,000 is available to all care leavers aged 16-24 starting an apprenticeship. The bursary will be paid to the training provider in three instalments over the first year of the apprenticeship. The provider will then make the payment to you.



What happens after I start?

Starting an apprenticeship is very exciting, but you might also feel a bit nervous. Allow yourself some time to settle into a routine. If you experience any difficulties connected with your disability, remember that lots of people are there to help you.

WHAT HAPPENS ON THE FIRST DAY?

It's natural to feel a bit nervous about starting an apprenticeship. Even people who've had lots of jobs get nervous on their first day.

Try not to worry or get stressed. Starting an apprenticeship is a very positive and exciting step in your life and lots of people will be there to help.

The training provider will give you an induction, explain what skills you'll be learning and what your work will be like.

First impressions are important. It's helpful to find out as much as you can about the employer before you start, dress appropriately (ask the training provider for help on what might be suitable) and be punctual and polite. As an apprentice, you're not supposed to be an expert already so try to relax and just show that you want to learn. Take your time to really get to know the apprenticeship and don't be afraid to ask questions if there's something you don't understand.

SHOULD I MENTION MY DISABILITY?

If you haven't already told them, you may want to speak to the training provider or HR department about any support you need for your training or work. The pros and cons of doing this are discussed in Section 4.

If people can see or know you have a disability, you may find they ask questions about it. This can be a good thing if they're asking about the kind of support you need, for example, if you need a larger font size, better lighting or your desk at a different height.

Occasionally you may have to deal with personal questions. People might ask about physical things such as 'Can you use your legs?' or 'When did you become disabled?'. They may not think about less obvious issues – such as the fact that on some days you might feel better than others.

If you can relax, this will help other people to relax around you. However, if you feel uncomfortable about anything that's said, speak to your line manager at work or the learner support coordinator at the training provider. You're protected by the Equality Act 2010 against any comments you find offensive.

WHAT IF MY SUPPORT IS NOT YET IN PLACE?

Sometimes it might take a while to put in place the support you need. It can take a few weeks to get into a routine with interpreters or notetakers. You might need time to learn to use any new equipment or people may not immediately adapt their training style enough to meet your needs. Try to be patient at the beginning.



At the same time, talk to your training provider about your progress and let them know of any difficulties, especially if you start to fall behind with your training or work. Don't wait until it becomes a big problem.

WHAT IS THE EQUALITY ACT?

The Equality Act 2010 has been mentioned a few times already in this guide. This is the law that protects people against discrimination. It covers all areas of becoming an apprentice including applying, training and employment.

Colleges, universities, training providers and employers must not discriminate against you either directly or indirectly, or for any reason connected with your disability. They should make reasonable adjustments to make sure that you're not disadvantaged during your course.

You're also protected against harassment and victimisation. If you feel that you've been discriminated against, you can contact the Equality Advisory Support Service (EASS) for information and advice.

For more information

The Disability Rights UK Student Helpline can give you advice on informal ways to resolve the situation and how to make a complaint if necessary.

T 0330 995 0414

E students@disabilityrightsuk.org

As the personal stories in this guide show, disabled people usually have very positive experiences of apprenticeships. Most colleges, universities and training providers have excellent support arrangements, and any difficulties can be quickly resolved.



Dale Connell

Landscaper, Nature's Landscapes

Dale Connell completed an apprenticeship in Horticulture with Nature's Landscapes run by Newcastle City Council, with the support of Newcastle College.

Dale has mild cerebral palsy and specific learning difficulties and says when he left school he didn't have much confidence and felt his future prospects didn't seem good.

During his apprenticeship, as well as hands-on experience, Dale gained a Level 2 Diploma in Horticulture and other vocational qualifications. He won the North East Pearson Award for Intermediate Apprentice of the Year.

He now says he has developed self belief, has a new, positive outlook on life and is able to plan for his future. "I have received so much help, advice and support that I never knew was available".

WHAT HAPPENS TO MY BENEFITS?

During your apprenticeship you should still receive your Personal Independence Payment (PIP).

The amount of any means-tested benefits will be affected by your earnings as an apprentice. However you may still be eligible for support such as Universal Credit or Council Tax Reduction if you're on a low income. This is likely to be the case if you're only earning the apprenticeship minimum wage.

Personal Independence Payment (PIP)

PIP has replaced Disability Living Allowance for people between the ages of 16 and 64. PIP is a non-means tested benefit for people who need help taking part in everyday life or find it difficult to get around. It is always paid on top of other benefits.

For more information

The Disability Rights UK Student Helpline can give you more information on the benefits you may be able to claim as a disabled apprentice. You could also contact local advice agencies such as the Citizens Advice Bureau.

Publications

You may find the following Disability Rights UK free publications helpful.

A factsheet called *Getting Advice* which gives brief information on ways you can get advice on benefits, social care and health related issues:

www.disabilityrightsuk.org/resources/resources/getting-advice

Personal Independence Payment – A guide to making a claim can be downloaded for free from:

www.disabilityrightsuk.org/resources/resources/personal-independence-payment

Universal Credit

Universal Credit is a new means-tested benefit which has been rolled out across the UK to replace working age means-tested benefits.

Under Universal Credit there are no limits to the number of hours you can work a week. Your Universal Credit payment will reduce gradually as you earn more – you won't lose all your benefits at once if you're an apprentice on a low income.

How much you'll receive depends on your personal circumstances. Universal Credit will be paid on a monthly basis and will include any support for housing costs you're entitled to.



Resources

WEBSITES

Access to Work

www.gov.uk/access-to-work

Basic government overview of the Access to Work scheme including eligibility and how to claim.

Amazing Apprenticeships

www.amazingapprenticeships.com

The Amazing Apprenticeship website is packed with information, resources and activities whether you're a parent, teacher or thinking of becoming an apprentice yourself.

Apprenticeships

www.apprenticeships.gov.uk

Information on apprenticeships and resources and projects to inspire young people in England.

Bright Knowledge

www.brightknowledge.org

The Bright Knowledge resource library has information about apprenticeships, health, money and careers.

Careers Wales

<https://careerswales.gov.wales>

Careers information and advice as well as contact details for local careers centres in Wales.

Citizens Advice

www.citizensadvice.org.uk

Information from Citizens Advice on consumer and money issues, benefits, health, housing and legal advice.

Disabled Apprentice Network

www.disabilityrightsuk.org/disabled-apprentice-network

The Disabled Apprentice Network brings together disabled apprentices, and those who recently finished their apprenticeship, to share their experiences, advise on key issues and suggest solutions to make apprenticeships successful for disabled people.

Employer toolkit

<https://apprenticeship-hub.co.uk/resources/employer-toolkit>

Toolkit designed for employers that want to develop a more inclusive and accessible apprenticeship offer. It provides practical information and case studies of employers who have benefited from hiring apprentices.

Find an Apprenticeship

www.findapprenticeship.service.gov.uk/apprenticeshipsearch

Searchable database of apprenticeship vacancies.


Good Career Guidance: Reaching the Gatsby Benchmarks

www.gatsby.org.uk/uploads/education/good-career-guidance-handbook-digital.pdf

Handbook to help secondary schools create a career guidance programme based on international best practice.

Good practice in supporting disabled learners

www.disabilityrightsuk.org/news/2016/april/good-practice-supporting-disabled-learners

Disability Rights UK toolkit of resources for education providers to showcase good practice in supporting disabled learners to make the transition to internships and paid employment. See also Disability Rights UK's video case story at:  www.youtube.com/user/DisabilityRightsUK1

National Careers Service

<https://nationalcareers.service.gov.uk>

Career planning, information and advice service for students in England.

Not Going to Uni

www.notgoingtouni.co.uk

Online guide that offers advice on becoming an apprentice, gap years programmes and distance learning.

Skills Development Scotland**www.skillsdevelopmentscotland.co.uk**

Information on education opportunities, career planning, Individual Learning Accounts and finding a local careers centre in Scotland.

The Student Room**www.thestudentroom.co.uk**

An online community for sharing experiences and thoughts about studying. Includes a forum about apprenticeships and alternatives to university.

Transition Information Network (TIN)**councilfordisabledchildren.org.uk/about-us-0/networks/transition-information-network**

News, resources and events on issues relating to transition, designed to be useful to disabled young people, parents/carers and professionals.

PUBLICATIONS**Creating an Inclusive Apprenticeship Offer**

2012 report by Peter Little and Rob Holland. Executive Summary and list of 20 recommendations available from:

W www.gov.uk/government/publications/sfa-creating-an-inclusive-apprenticeship-offer

Disability Rights UK publications

The *Future Ready Hub* brings together everything Disability Rights UK has created related to education and employment. Our monthly e-newsletter is designed to support and empower young disabled people on their journeys through education and employment.

W www.disabilityrightsuk.org/future-ready

The *Get Ahead* resource was co-produced with and for disabled young people to help navigate the wide range of information and resources available in post-16 education, training, and work.

W www.disabilityrightsuk.org/get-ahead

We produce factsheets for disabled students, on a range of topics including the Equality Act, funding, and adjustments for disabled students and apprentices. Examples include:

Assessment, Eligibility and Support Planning:

W www.disabilityrightsuk.org/resources/assessment-eligibility-and-support-planning

Into HE, a detailed guide to applying to university:

W www.disabilityrightsuk.org/resources/higher-education

Personal Independence Payment – A guide to making a claim:

W www.disabilityrightsuk.org/resources/personal-independence-payment

Disclosure

Published by AHEAD, the Association for Higher Education Access and Disability based in Ireland. This booklet provides a suggested approach to telling people about your disability and a useful self-assessment checklist.

W www.ahead.ie

Employable

Guide to inclusivity in the workplace produced by Barclays with contributions from Disability Rights UK and Remploy.

W <https://www.disabilityrightsuk.org/news/2016/december/dr-uk-contributes-barclays-disability-and-careers-toolkit>

Engaging people with learning difficulties in workplace learning

Research report and guide for providers on making workplace learning more inclusive for disabled employees.

W www.gov.uk/government/publications/sfa-engaging-individuals-with-ldd-in-workplace-learning

Getting it Right for Disabled Apprentices

This 2022 report highlights the benefits of apprenticeships for young disabled people. It describes their experiences during an apprenticeship, considers the barriers they may face and looks at the best way for employers and training providers to provide the support they need to get the most out of their apprenticeship.

The 2023 follow up report, *Speaking from Experience: Getting It Right for Disabled Apprentices* considers what works well through analysis of young disabled people's experiences of how they receive information about apprenticeships; their engagement with training providers and employers, and the support they have received.

Published by the Disabled Apprentice Network (run by Disability Rights UK) and funded by the Department for Education, 'Getting it right for Disabled Apprentices' reports are available from:

W www.disabilityrightsuk.org/disabled-apprentice-network

Learning difficulties/disabilities: Supported Internship evaluation

Findings from the 2013 evaluation of the Supported Internship trial carried out by Disability Rights UK and CooperGibson.

W www.gov.uk/government/publications/learning-difficultiesdisabilities-supported-internship-evaluation

Richard Review of Apprenticeships

2012 independent review by Doug Richard. Considers what an apprenticeship should be and how they can meet the needs of the changing economy. See also the government's response to the Richard review: Future of Apprenticeships in England: Richard Review Next Steps Consultation.

W www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-richard-review-of-apprenticeships

ORGANISATIONS

EDUCATION

Careers and Enterprise Company

120 Aldersgate St London, EC1A 4JQ

T 020 7566 3400

E Complete the contact form on website

W www.careersandenterprise.co.uk

Works to link schools and colleges to employers, in order to increase employer engagement for young people.

Construction Youth Trust

London Scottish House, 95 Horseferry Road, London SW1P 2DX

T 020 7467 9540

E hello@constructionyouth.org.uk

W www.constructionyouth.org.uk

The trust helps financially disadvantaged young people who face barriers to accessing opportunities in the construction industry. Funding can help with fees and other costs associated with study, such as travel, specialist equipment and childcare.

Department for Education

Piccadilly Gate, Store Street, Manchester M1 2WD

T 0370 000 2288

Textphone 18001 0370 000 2288

E Web contact form:

https://form.education.gov.uk/service/Contact_the_Department_for_Education

W www.gov.uk/government/organisations/department-for-education

Education and Skills Funding Agency

Piccadilly Gate, Store Street, Manchester M1 2WD

W www.gov.uk/government/organisations/education-and-skills-funding-agency

The Education and Skills Funding Agency can investigate complaints against an FE college or apprenticeship scheme. You should contact the ESFA office in your region.

Learning and Work Institute

Unit 123 St Martins House, 7 Peacock Lane, Leicester, LE1 5PZ

T 0207 582 7221

E enquiries@learningandwork.org.uk

W www.learningandwork.org.uk

The Learning and Work Institute was formed through the merger of NIACE and the Centre for Economic and Social Inclusion. It aims to promote lifelong learning, full employment and inclusion.

NUS (National Union of Students)

NUS HQ, Macadam House, 275 Gray's Inn Road, London WC1X 8QB

E Complete the online contact form

W www.nus.org.uk

www.facebook.com/nationalunionofstudents

Give advice and produce information on welfare rights for students

Student Finance England

24+ Advanced Learning Loans, PO Box 302, Darlington DL1 9NQ

T 0300 100 0619

Phone line open Mon to Fri 08.00-20.00 and Sat 09.00-16.00

W www.gov.uk/advanced-learner-loan

Provides information and services to students who normally live in England.

DISABILITY

British Dyslexia Association (BDA)

Office 205 Access Business Centre, Willoughby Road, Bracknell RG12 8FB

T 0333 405 4555

Helpline 0333 405 4567

Phone line open Mon 11.00-14.00,
Tues 10.00-13.00, Wed 10.00-15.00
and Thurs 13.00-17.00

E helpline@bdadyslexia.org.uk

W www.bdadyslexia.org.uk

Offers information, advice and support to people with dyslexia.

Capability Scotland

Vantage Point, 24 St John's Road, Edinburgh EH12 6NZ

T 0131 337 9876

E Complete the contact form on website

W www.capability.scot

Provides free confidential advice and information on a range of disability issues including advice on cerebral palsy.

Dyslexia Scotland

Cameron House, 1st Floor, Forthside Way, Stirling, FK8 1QZ

T 01786 446 650

Helpline 0344 800 8484

Phone line open Mon to Thurs 10.00-16.30
and Fri 10.00-16.00

E helpline@dyslexiascotland.org.uk

W www.dyslexiascotland.org.uk

Enables and encourages people with dyslexia to reach their potential in education, employment and in life.

Epilepsy Action

New Anstey House, Gate Way Drive, Yeadon, Leeds LS19 7XY

T 0808 800 5050

Phone lines open Mon to Fri 08.30-17.00
and Sat 10.00-16.00

E helpline@epilepsy.org.uk

W www.epilepsy.org.uk

Offers a range of services including information and advice.

Equality Advisory Support Service

Freepost EASS FPN6521

T 0808 800 0082

Textphone 0808 800 0084

Phone lines open Mon to Fri 09.00-19.00
and Sat from 10.00-14.00

E Complete the contact form on website

W www.equalityadvisoryservice.com

The EASS provides information, advice and support on discrimination and human rights issues to individuals in England, Scotland and Wales.

Equality and Human Rights Commission

Correspondence Unit, Arndale House, The Arndale Centre, Manchester, M4 3AQ

T 0161 829 8100

E Complete the contact form on website

W <https://www.equalityhumanrights.com>

Produces government information booklets on equality and human rights issues including the Equality Act.

Lead Scotland

525 Ferry Road, Edinburgh EH5 2FF

T 0131 228 9441

Textphone 18001 0131 228 9441

National Disabled Students Helpline:
0800 999 2568

E enquiries@lead.org.uk

W www.lead.org.uk

Enables disabled adults and carers to access inclusive learning opportunities in Scotland. They also run an information and advice service for disabled students in Scotland.

Mind

2 Redman Place, London E20 1JQ

T Mind infoline 0300 123 3393

Open Mon to Fri 09.00-18.00

E infoline@mind.org.uk

W www.mind.org.uk

Provides an information service and information booklets about mental health.

Multiple Sclerosis Society

Carriage House, 8 City North Place, London, N4 3FU

T Helpline 0808 800 8000

Open Mon to Fri 09.00-19.00

National offices:

England: 020 8438 0700

Scotland: 0131 335 4050

Northern Ireland: 028 90 802 802

Wales: 020 8438 0700

E helpline@mssociety.org.uk

W www.mssociety.org.uk

Provides information and support in the UK to anyone affected by MS from their network of over 350 local branches.

National Autistic Society

2nd Floor, Weston House, 42 Curtain Road, London EC2A 3NH

T 020 7833 2299

E nas@nas.org.uk

W www.autism.org.uk

Information, advice and support to people with autism and Asperger syndrome and their families.

RNIB (Royal National Institute of Blind People)

154a Pentonville Road, London, N1 9JE

T Helpline 0303 123 9999

Phone line open Mon to Fri 08.00-20.00
and Sat 09.00-13.00

E helpline@rnib.org.uk

W www.rnib.org.uk

Offers advice and specialist assessments in study needs and access technology for blind and partially sighted learners.

RNID (Royal National Institute for Deaf people)

Brightfield Business Hub, Bakewell Road, Orton Southgate, Peterborough PE2 6XU

T 0808 808 0123

Phone line open Mon to Fri 08.30-17.00
SMS 07360 268 988

E contact@rnid.org.uk

W www.rnid.org.uk

Campaigns and lobbies to raise awareness of hearing loss and tinnitus and provides support services for deaf and hard of hearing people.

Scope

Here East Press Centre, 14 East Bay Lane, London E15 2GW

T 0808 800 3333

Open Mon to Fri 09.00 to 18.00
and Sat and Sun 10.00 to 18.00

E helpline@scope.org.uk

W www.scope.org.uk

Range of services for disabled children and adults, with a focus on people with cerebral palsy.

Scottish Sensory Centre

Moray House, School of Education, University of Edinburgh, Holyrood Road, Edinburgh EH8 8AQ

T 0131 651 6501

E sscmail@ed.ac.uk

W www.ssc.education.ed.ac.uk

Services to support the education of children and young people with a sensory impairment.

Shape Arts

Floor 2 Peckham Library, 122 Peckham Hill Street, Peckham, London SE15 5JR

T 020 7424 7330

E Complete the contact form on website

W www.shapearts.org.uk

Shape provides opportunities and support for disabled artists, as well as disabled people wanting to work in the arts and cultural sector.

Trailblazers

2nd Floor, 30 Park Street, London SE1 9EQ

T 020 7233 6600

W www.whizz-kidz.org.uk

National network of young disabled people which campaigns for access to education and employment.

Versus Arthritis

Copeman House, St Mary's Court, St Mary's Gate, Chesterfield S41 7TD

T 0300 790 0400

Helpline 0800 5200 520

Open Mon to Fri 09.00-18.00

E enquiries@versusarthritis.org

W www.versusarthritis.org

Services include a confidential helpline, self-management and awareness training for people with arthritis and healthcare professionals, and local activity and support.

DISABILITY RIGHTS HANDBOOK

Edition 50
April 2025 - April 2026

A guide to benefits and services for all disabled people, their families, carers and advisers



Published April each year

“Anyone and everyone personally or professionally involved with disability or welfare issues, really needs this book”

Phillip Taylor MBE, Barrister,
Richmond Green Chambers

Benefits and social care Everything you need to know

If your life is affected by a disability or health condition – welfare reform and changes to the social security system can make getting the support you need even more of a challenge.

The Handbook provides in-depth information on the entire benefits system and includes specific guidance to help disabled people get the benefits, services and resources they have a right to expect.

Trusted by claimants and advisers for almost 50 years

Written in plain English, our user-friendly benefits guide is designed for both claimants and advisers. Updated every year, it has the answers you need to provide advice or claim what you're entitled to.

As comprehensive as ever

- Benefits for people of all ages with an illness, injury or disability
- Benefits for carers, people looking for work or in retirement
- Personal Independence Payment: help with care or getting around
- Universal Credit: Who is eligible and how it's worked out
- Challenging benefit decisions; how to appeal
- How care and support needs are met

You can buy our publications online at www.disabilityrightsuk.org



Expert training and advice for colleges and universities

Disability Rights UK is a registered charity with expert trainers and advisers on disability issues. We have a unique perspective as we are led by disabled people and support people across the UK with every type of impairment.

Our services for education providers include:

- Disability Confidence and Equality Act training
- Benefits training for student advisers in FE or HE
- Disability advice line services for employees and HR professionals
- Membership packages including access to our range of helplines and free copies of our education publications

For more information please contact:

Tony Stevens
Telephone: 07952 548393
tony.stevens@disabilityrightsuk.org

ABOUT DISABILITY RIGHTS UK

Disability Rights UK is a charity. We work to create a society where disabled people have equal power, rights, and equality of opportunity. We are disabled people leading change and we are the largest national pan-disability organisation, led, run and controlled by disabled people.

Disability Rights UK has four main priorities:

- 1 Building a movement – strengthen our collective voice
- 2 Independent living – live with choice and control and equality in everyday life
- 3 Inclusive economic opportunities – campaign for a fairer benefits system, ensure disabled people have the opportunities to work and flourish
- 4 Influencing public attitudes and behaviours – create a narrative about our lives, our contribution, our experiences.

Other publications

We are authors of the *Disability Rights Handbook*, our annual guide to welfare benefits and services. We also publish a range of other guides and information, much of which is free to download from our website. These include *Into HE 2025*, a guide for anyone with a health condition, learning difficulty or disability, thinking about studying in higher education. Our factsheets for disabled students cover various topics including the Equality Act and funding from charitable trusts.

Advice and information

Through our various helplines we provide information on benefits, tax credits and direct payments, including individual budgets, funding from social services in relation to care needs and advice on employing personal assistants.

Disabled Students Helpline

We provide free information and advice for disabled students, covering further and higher education, employment, apprenticeships and volunteering. Our helpline is open Tuesday and Thursday 11.00-13.00.

T 0330 995 0414

E students@disabilityrightsuk.org

Policy and campaigns

Disability Rights UK is a campaigning organisation. This includes working to influence decision-makers on issues of access and support for disabled people taking apprenticeships or studying in further and higher education.

Membership

Join Disability Rights UK and help us strengthen the voice of disabled people. We are a membership organisation with over 2,000 members, including universities, colleges and individual students. You can find out about the benefits of becoming a member and sign up on our website:

W www.disabilityrightsuk.org/membership

Into Apprenticeships
Published by Disability Rights UK © 2025
Registered Charity No. 1138585

Written by Tony Stevens, Rundip Thind,
Liz Maudslay and Barbara Waters

Disability Rights UK
Plexal, Here East, 14 East Bay Lane,
Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park,
Stratford, London E20 3BS

Telephone: 0330 995 0400
Email: enquiries@disabilityrightsuk.org
www.disabilityrightsuk.org



For free information
and advice for disabled
students visit the Disability
Rights UK website.