This section outlines the transition issues that disabled people may face when entering employment and the support that is available.

By the end of this section you will:

- Understand some of the issues facing disabled jobseekers
- Know about the support available through local Jobcentres
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The Disability Discrimination Act
As outlined in Section 2: The DDA, Part 2 covers all employers, regardless of the number of employees, except the armed forces. Employers must ensure that they do not discriminate against disabled employees and applicants, and that reasonable adjustments are made to work practices and procedures. Discrimination is prohibited in all areas of employment activity, including advertising a vacancy, recruitment, promotions and transfers, training, working conditions and employee benefits.

Activity: reflection
Re-read Section 2: The DDA to refresh yourself about the duties employers have towards disabled people.

Finding disability-friendly employers
Many of the larger employers are aware of their duties under the DDA, and smaller organisations are also becoming more aware of the legislation. However, sometimes jobseekers may wish to look out for signs that an organisation has a particularly positive approach towards recruiting people with disabilities.

Disability Symbol
The Disability Symbol is awarded by Jobcentre Plus to companies or organisations that have made certain positive commitments towards employing disabled people. Jobcentre Plus publishes leaflets about the symbol and the commitments that employers need to make in order to display it.

The symbol (‘two ticks’ and the wording ‘positive about disabled people’) will be displayed on job adverts and application forms.

Action: download
Download information about the disability symbol from the Jobcentre Plus website www.jobcentreplus.gov.uk

Employers’ Forum on Disability
The Employers’ Forum on Disability is an organisation with over 300 corporate members. It aims to improve the job prospects of disabled people by making it easier for employers to recruit, retain and train disabled employees. Companies that are members are likely to have a positive attitude towards employing people with disabilities. You can contact the Forum to obtain a list of members.
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Action: contacts
Contact the Employers’ Forum on Disability and obtain a list of members. Visit www.employers-forum.co.uk

Culture of an organisation
It may be possible to identify what sort of attitude an employer will have towards employing disabled people by looking at the general culture of the organisation, from looking at brochures, equal opportunity policies and annual reports.

Alternative ways of working
There are increasing opportunities to do work which does not follow the traditional 9am to 5pm pattern. People with certain kinds of disabilities may benefit from more flexible work patterns. It may be worth exploring the possibility of part-time work or a job share. A number of organisations now offer a flexi-time system, giving people more control over working hours. There may also be self-employment or homeworking options.

Job applications
When requesting further information about a job, it can be requested in an alternative format, such as large print, Braille, tape or on a computer disk. Applications can also be submitted in an alternative format.

Job interviews
Under the DDA, the employer has a duty to make reasonable adjustments to the arrangements for interview. If a person has any particular needs, it is usually advisable that they tell the employer in advance so that the necessary adjustments can be made. For example, if a person is unable to attend an interview at a specific time because of a disability, it is likely under the Act that the employer would have to rearrange the time.

Disclosing disability
One of the issues that can arise when looking for work is whether, when and how to disclose disability. Section 3: Disclosing a disability goes into some detail about the different approaches that can be taken and the potential implications of each decision. Some of the benefits of disclosure are: the employer then has a duty to consider reasonable adjustments, disability can be presented in a positive light, any gaps in a CV can be accounted for, general openness which can help to foster a good working relationship with colleagues. Disclosure can also make it more straightforward to obtain help from government/Jobcentre schemes.
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Action: download

Download and read Skill’s publication *Get that job* from
www.skill.org.uk/page.aspx?c=144&p=238

7.2 Support from Jobcentre Plus

Disability Employment Adviser (DEA)
The Disability Employment Adviser is a member of the Disability Services and Financial
Services Team at Jobcentre Plus. DEAs can carry out assessments and provide
ongoing support for people with disabilities. They can help find solutions to practical
difficulties, ergonomics and accessibility of premises, as well as make referrals to Work
Preparation schemes, to an occupational psychologist for an Employment Assessment
and to Jobcentre schemes designed for disabled people.

Access to Work (AtW)
Access to Work provides practical help to disabled employees. It has been created to
be a flexible scheme equipping disabled people to overcome barriers in the workplace,
by meeting some of the extra employment costs that arise from a disability. It can pay
for many aspects of support ranging from the extra cost of getting to and from work to
special aids and equipment, and adaptations to premises.

Examples of help available through Access to Work:

- A communicator/interpreter for a job interview
- A support worker if someone needs practical help, either at work or getting to work,
such as a reader for somebody with a visual impairment; a specialist job coach for a
person with a learning difficulty; or an assistant for personal care needs
- Specialist equipment (or alterations to existing equipment) or software
- Alterations to premises or a working environment
- Help towards taxi fares or other transport costs if they cannot use public transport to
get to work, including help with adaptations to a car

Help from Access to Work is available to people who are disabled and either about to
start a job or already in work. It does not matter if they are currently employed,
unemployed, changing jobs or self-employed. They can be in or about to start any kind
of work; part-time, full-time, temporary or permanent. They should contact an Access to
Work business centre or the DEA at the local Jobcentre Plus to make an initial
application for support.
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Job Introduction Scheme (JIS)
If a disabled person secures a job but they or their employer are unsure of how they will deal with the job or the work environment, the Job Introduction Scheme can give them some time to adjust, to see what their capabilities are in the job and help them decide if they will continue. During the first six weeks of employment, the JIS provides a weekly grant for employment costs and the Disability Employment Adviser can help with any difficulties or issues faced by them and their employer.

New Deal
People with disabilities who are unemployed can join New Deal at any time. Features of New Deal for jobseekers with disabilities include specialist advice and support, taster options of work lasting for a trial period without any threat to benefit entitlement and extra training opportunities. The DEA will be able to give you details of how New Deal operates in your area.

Pathways to Work
Pathways to Work is a programme for people claiming Incapacity Benefit or Income Support on health grounds. It is currently being offered to new claimants in a number of pilot areas across the UK. The programme involves attending an initial work-focused interview with a personal adviser. Participants will then be asked to attend up to five additional interviews at monthly intervals. The goal is to help them identify their future life and work goals and any barriers to achieving them, and to support them in overcoming these barriers. An action plan will be agreed which lists the steps to be taken and this will be reviewed at each meeting.

As part of the Pathways to Work programme, there is a £40 per week payment for participants who start work of at least 16 hours per week. This is known as a Return To Work Credit. Anyone wishing to apply has to have been receiving an incapacity benefit (including statutory sick pay) for 13 weeks immediately prior to starting work. It is payable for up to 52 weeks.

The DEA will be able to give you details of how Pathways to Work operates in your area.

WORKSTEP
WORKSTEP is a Jobcentre Plus programme offering support to disabled people and their employers. A DEA devises a development plan, which is agreed by the disabled person and the employer. The scheme is available to disabled people facing complex barriers to getting or keeping a job, but who can work effectively with support from WORKSTEP. Disabled people are expected to work at least 16 hours a week.
WORKSTEP providers, such as local authorities, Remploy, and Mencap receive money from the government to fund support in the workplace for the disabled employee and the employer. This might include mentoring or disability awareness training for colleagues. The employee is offered the same wage and working conditions as other employees in similar posts.

**Work Preparation**

Work Preparation aims to help disabled people find suitable employment by identifying appropriate work, providing work experience, updating skills and building confidence. It can last from a few days to a few weeks and can be undertaken full or part-time. Work Preparation programmes are run on behalf of Jobcentre Plus, often by voluntary organisations. Disabled people are able to retain their welfare benefits and receive expenses payments while on the programme. Work Preparation is usually held locally, although there may be some residential opportunities depending on the person’s needs. At the end of the Work Preparation programme, the disabled person will agree an action plan for the future.

**Action: contacts**

Contact your local DEA and find out how New Deal, Pathways to Work, WORKSTEP and Work Preparation operate in your area.

**Action: case studies**

After reading the information about opportunities and support in the transition to employment, look at the case studies below. There are questions at the end of each case study to prompt you to think about what advice and information would have been appropriate.

There are suggested answers on page 124 to give you some pointers.

**Claire**

Claire’s sight has been deteriorating since her early twenties. She has adopted a resilient attitude to this and wants to make the most of her residual vision. She thinks that her experience of working in offices all of her adult life ought to enable her to hold down a job as efficiently as any other worker. She is not sure that employers will share her optimism and wants help with her job search.

**How might Claire present her situation to potential employers?**
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What support might be available to her in the workplace?

Where would funding for this support come from?

Dwayne
Dwayne is making a gradual recovery from a debilitating illness and is worried about the gaps in his CV. He feels that he has to take steps to get ‘a real job’ as soon as possible. At the same time he is apprehensive about taking on more than he can handle at the risk of damaging his health and losing his benefits.

How might Dwayne maximise his chances of finding a suitable job?

What Jobcentre schemes might help him to move forward?

What other options might he have right now?

7.3 Useful organisations

There are many organisations that help disabled jobseekers. Some can help people with any kind of impairment and others will help people with specific impairments. All contact details can be found in Section 9: Sources of information.

Blind in Business (BIB)
Supports visually impaired students and graduates searching for work, through supplying recruitment materials and vacancy information in a range of formats, to providing specialist seminars and advice.

Deafworks
A Deaf-led business dedicated to advising, supporting and empowering the Deaf Community and those who work with them.

Employment Opportunities for people with disabilities
Offers advice on job-seeking including writing CVs, completing application forms and producing good application letters.
Leadership Recruitment
Provides a 12-month programme, consisting of two 6-month placements with various national employers, for disabled graduates.

Leonard Cheshire’s Workability project
Provides disabled adults with computers and help searching for jobs.

Prospects
Helps people with autism or Asperger’s syndrome with work preparation and support in the workplace.

Shaw Trust
Shaw Trust is a national charity that provides training and work opportunities for people who are disadvantaged in the labour market due to disability, ill health or other social circumstances.

Answers to case studies

Claire

How might Claire present her situation to potential employers?
Claire has a lot of work experience and should focus on this. She could explain how she has done jobs previously and therefore present the management of her visual impairment in a positive light.

What support might be available in the workplace?
Possibilities could include equipment, eg computer, magnifier or CCTV, JAWS or other screen-reading package. Employers may also need to make adjustments such as ensuring materials are available in large print.

Where would funding for this support come from?
Access to Work

Dwayne

How might Dwayne maximise his chances of finding a suitable job?
He should explain the gaps in his CV and present himself in a positive light. He could also do some volunteering or work experience to get back into the work environment.
What Jobcentre schemes might help him to move forward
Job Introduction Scheme or New Deal.

What other options might he have now?
Further education or training might be an option, or volunteering to increase his confidence and work skills.