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Benefits and working for students with additional needs

Will working affect my benefits?

If you are claiming ESA, Income Support, Incapacity Benefit and Universal Credit, you can work as a volunteer but you cannot work as a volunteer for a relative. You can only get paid food expenses and the DWP must decide that it is reasonable for you to work without pay. You must inform the Jobcentre of any changes immediately.

Permitted Work Rules - there are some benefits people with disabilities or health conditions who are in paid work can receive and still keep some of their benefits. If you are claiming Employment Support Allowance (ESA), working up to 16 hours per week and earning no more than £120 per week, you may be able to retain this benefit and other benefits such as housing benefit. This can be done under **Permitted Work Rules**. Permitted Work Rules help people with disabilities or health conditions 'try out work' without it affecting your money. There are three levels to permitted work rules and students would need to talk to colleagues at the Job Centre and ask to go on to this. To apply you will need to complete a PW1 form and get this agreed with the Benefits Service before you can start this work.

Permitted work rules are quite involved so it's a very good idea to look them up on www.direct.gov.uk to find out more and to speak to advisors at the local Job Centre. For those people on Universal Credit there is a similar system, but the earnings allowances are

different. For more information about this, speak to advisers at the Job Centre.

Telling people about your disability

You don't have to tell an employer about your disability unless you are asked direct questions about your health or disability on a medical questionnaire.

Disclosure is a personal decision and disabled people often worry about discrimination, prejudice or lack of confidentiality. The main benefit of disclosure is that it gives you more protection under the Equality Act if you have a dispute at work. If an employer can show they didn't know you had a disability, you wouldn't have a case for discrimination. Other advantages of disclosing include:

- Some employers are keen to employ disabled people
- It's an opportunity to describe your disability positively
- Adjustments can be put in place earlier
- You might build a better working relationship
- You can explain aspects of your CV that might otherwise count against you, such as gaps in your education or work history.

Information about your disability is protected by the Equality Act and the Data Protection Act. It is sensitive personal information and cannot be passed on to other people without your permission.

Access to Work Programme

The Access to Work Programme gives people with health conditions and disabilities who need support to work to get additional help from the Government (over and above employer reasonable adjustments) to access specialised equipment, or one-to-one support to help you to work. Please see the attached documents for full details.

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Access to Work funding as well as being available to support people in employment, is also available for people who wish to be self-employed, people accessing supported internships and people going for work trials.

Be aware however, that Access to Work funds are not a benefit so not everyone will get them. Also how long you qualify for help can vary so please check the rules and the details.

Personal Independence Payments (PIP)

This is a benefit that people with disabilities or a health condition may be able to access to help them cover extra costs in their lives brought about as a result of a condition or disability they live with.

It is not income related so can also be accessed by people in paid work. It does not directly relate to work but having this benefit can help people have support that also helps them when they are working. Please check the www.direct.gov.uk website for details about how to apply.

Using Your Care Package to help you to access Work

Some disabled people receive a care package from the Council's Social Services department to help them to get the care and support they need and to live a fulfilling life.

As well as helping people to get help with personal care needs this can also be used to help people to volunteer and try out and do paid work. If you are receiving a care service paid for by Social Services speak to your Care Manager or Care Coordinator to see you can use some of this support to help you to work. For those who would like to apply for Care Support please contact Leicester City Council directly.

Using the Help Available through Education and Health Care Plans

Many young people with special educational needs or SEN, will already be getting help to learn and get ready for adulthood through the help of an Education and Health Care Plan (EHCP).

The EHCP also includes financial support and young people and their supporters can ask for funds within these plans to help them access and get ready for paid work. For more details about this, if you already have an EHCP please contact your Key Worker to see how your EHCP can be used to help.

What support will I get?

The Disability Employment Coaches can work to support Work Coaches who are the Job Centre staff now providing front line support to all our customers.

Disability Employment Coaches can put you in touch with the right employment support agency and/or organisation. If you want to find some volunteer work, register on to the WorkFit Project or if you need help, you may wish to discuss options with your parents or guardians.

If you need further help contact your learning coach or mentor (if at Leicester College), if you need be referred to Student Services to speak to a careers or welfare adviser.