

Preparing for Adulthood



PfA Resources – Better off in Work Guide

Employment is a very important part of life. When people have a job, they feel part of society, they have a purpose, make new friends plus have money in their pockets to buy the things they want!

Many people think that people with learning disabilities can't work or cannot work many hours. They have low expectations about what they are able to achieve and believe that they will never get off full-time benefits. The many case studies we have on our website show that this belief is incorrect.

We need to **change how people think** so that many more people with learning disabilities get a job, and we need to make sure people with learning disabilities understand that in virtually all cases, they will be better off in work. People with learning disabilities should have the same rights and opportunities as everybody else. The government is doing things to make it easier for people with learning disabilities to get real jobs, but the numbers of adults with a learning disability in work is still too low at just fewer than 5% in 2023.

There are opportunities in education to follow an education pathway that will support you into work. All young people should be following a study programmes from the age of 16. This gives opportunities for work experience, supported internships, traineeships and supported apprenticeships which can provide pathways to employment for people with learning disabilities. Each of these routes into work can offer opportunities to learn in the business environment and develop the skills needed to do the job well.



People with learning disabilities need to believe they can work and should expect to get a paid job, just like other people.

Otherwise, real equality will not happen.

Having a job is not just about having more money but it does buy some choice and control. For example, a young man who recently got a job is over the moon about being able to pay for a carer so he can independently go on an adventure holiday abroad without his mum.

He wants to try canoeing and a parachute dive, which are obviously not his mum's first choice! He said:

'Great this means mum doesn't have to watch me jump out of an airplane!'

A young woman who has recently started working in a hospital felt proud of her ability to earn money:

'It's great to know I have my own money and be able to say that I've earned it myself.'

Full-time work

Most people with learning disabilities will get more money in a full-time job than if they do not work and are on benefits.

Those who work 16 hours or more a week are considered to be working full-time and the more hours a person works, the better off they will be. People will have more money in a full-time job because they should get National Minimum Wage and may be able to apply for other benefits too.

Universal Credit, which is being rolled out across the country, brings together a range of benefits that were previously separate such as Job Seekers Allowance (JSA) Housing Benefit and Tax Credits. Universal Credit is designed to make it easier for people to work and keep some of their benefits. Case study 1 below demonstrates this point.

The minimum wage from April 2023 is;

**£10.42 per hour for those aged 23 and over,
£10.18 for those aged 21–22,
£7.49 for ages 18–20,
£5.28 for under-18s, and £5.28 for apprentices.
The London living wage is currently set at £11.95.**

Case study 1 Paul

Paul is aged 21 and living at home with his parents:
His Universal credit entitlement is £292.11 per month

Paul then finds a job in a warehouse and works 8 hours per week at minimum wage of £10.18. His monthly wage is £352.91

Universal Credit deducts 55p for every £1 earned over £379.

In this case, there is no deduction, leaving Paul entitled to Universal Credit each month Paul therefore receives each month:

His wage: £352.91

Universal Credit: £ £292.11

Total income £645.02

Hence, Paul is £352.91 better off by working.

If a person is earning sufficient income from a job, Universal Credit may not be relevant, but it is still likely that they will be better off in work than on benefits. Please see case study 2 below.

Case Study 2

Suki

Suki is 25 years old and living at home with her parents.

Her Universal Credit entitlement is £368.74 per month.

Suki finds a job of 25 hours per week at minimum wage (£10.42). Her monthly wage is £1128.83.

Universal Credit deducts 55p for every £1 earned over £379, so the deduction for Suki's Universal Credit per month would be £412.41.

Universal Credit has a built-in earnings taper which is applied. This shows that Suki's earnings exceed her Universal Credit entitlement therefore no Universal Credit is payable. This is shown below:

Her wage is £1128.83 per month and her Universal Credit entitlement is £317.82 per month.

Despite the Universal Credit not being paid, Suki would be £811.01 better off by working.

Help and Advice

It is always important to get support and advice about your benefits to make sure that you will be better off. There is lots of information on the [Gov.uk](https://www.gov.uk) website about which benefits you might be able to apply for.

There are some good online Benefits Calculators that can help you work out how much you would get from being in work:

<https://benefits-calculator.turn2us.org.uk/AboutYou>

<https://www.citizensadvice.org.uk/benefits/benefits-introduction/what-benefits-can-i-get/>

<https://www.gov.uk/benefits-calculators>

There are lots of ways you can get help and information and your local offer and SENDIAS should be able to help too.

About Preparing for Adulthood

This resource were created by the [National Development Team for Inclusion](#) as part of our delivery of the Preparing for Adulthood programme, which was funded by the Department of Education to support the SEND reforms. This programme came to an end in March 2022.