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GUIDANCE

# Apprenticeships: guide for disabled learners

The benefits of apprenticeships and the support available to disabled learners.

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# About this guide

Into Apprenticeships is a guide for disabled people, parents and key advisers about applying for apprenticeships in Wales. 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 that 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 Disability Rights UK for working in partnership with Welsh Government to develop this guide.

Thanks also to all the apprentices who provided their stories and the people who helped find them.

# What are apprenticeships?

An apprenticeship is a real job with training. 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.

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 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, which 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 publishing, visually impaired people to take apprenticeships in photography and apprentices with dyslexia to support teaching and learning in schools.

Employers, colleges and training providers 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 training.

To achieve this, it recognises the need to encourage and enable many more

high quality disabled candidates to apply for and start apprenticeships.

The Department for Work and Pensions' Access to Work scheme can provide grants to pay for any specialist equipment and support costs in the workplace.

**What support can I get** 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.

## Case study: Caio Jones

I'm Caio Jones, and I'm 18 years old from Llanaelhaearn. I'm a reception assistant at Criccieth Health Centre on the Llyn Peninsula and was born with quadriplegic cerebral palsy. My condition affects the arms and legs, and so I use a wheelchair. I'm currently having driving lessons and have ordered an adapted car that I hope to be driving by next year.

After school, I joined Project Search, a one-year internship programme supporting people with learning disabilities and/or autism to gain skills and experience to move into paid employment.

In Wales, it's funded as part of the Welsh Government-supported Engage to Change project. The scheme helped me start a Skills for Life and Work course at Llangefni College and linked me with a reception job on the minor injuries ward at Ysbyty Gwynedd.

Here I spent six months on a supported internship, completing courses in customer service. I am now working part-time as a reception and admin assistant at the health centre in Criccieth, whilst completing a two-year apprenticeship.

I love working with people. I deal with prescriptions, answer the phone and book

appointments. I love coming to work every day - it makes me feel connected. I love working in the NHS because it allows me to give back to the people who've helped me so much in my life. When I'm not working, I love playing on my PlayStation, listening to music and farming with my grandfather.

My apprenticeship has been vital for me. I don't know what I'd do if I didn't work. I'm a pretty determined person and it always makes me happy when I've managed to do something that I've set my mind to.

## Is an apprenticeship right for me?

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
- earn a wage

Usually apprenticeships involve working four days a week and spending one day a week studying.

## Who can do an apprenticeship?

Anybody who is over 16, eligible to work in Wales 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 three years depending upon the level of qualification.

## What levels are there?

- Foundation Level: equivalent to five GCSEs Grades A\* - C at Level 2
- Apprenticeships Level: equivalent to two A Levels or an NVQ Level 3
- Higher Level Apprenticeships; equivalent to Foundation degree, NVQ Level 4 and 5
- Degree Apprenticeships: leading to Level 6

## What kinds of jobs have apprenticeships?

Almost all jobs have apprenticeship programmes. Types of 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
- Information and Communication Technology
- Leisure, Travel and Tourism
- Retail and Commercial Enterprise
- Science and Mathematics

The [Apprenticeships Wales](#) website has many examples of different types of apprenticeships and case studies of different apprentice experiences.

## The Apprenticeship Vacancy Service

You can find apprenticeship vacancies on [Find an apprenticeship](#).

This service is a central place for employers to advertise their apprenticeship opportunities in Wales. New jobs are added daily so it's worth regularly checking the site.

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.

## How do I get careers advice?

There is a wide range of careers advice available to you through [Careers Wales](#). You can also contact Careers Wales via the phone, webchat and email.

The Careers Wales website has a number of supportive tools available online, including:

- the Career Search Tool will provide you with up to date information on qualifications, average salary and current vacancies
- the Job Matching Quiz can offer you valuable guidance by matching your skills and interests to over 700 job titles and generate personal career ideas

## 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?

Apprentices who are under the age of 19 or are in their first year of an apprenticeship are entitled to a minimum wage of £4.15 per hour.

After the first year, those aged 18 to 20 earn £6.15 per hour and those aged 21 to 24 earn £7.70. These are the minimum wages (from April 2019) and most apprentices earn more. The average pay rate at Level 2 and Level 3 is £6.31 and the average for Level 4 and 5 Higher Apprentices is £9.68.

Apprentices must be paid for all their working hours and for any time they spend on training, which is part of their apprenticeship. The training could be classroom based or in the workplace. Apprentices are also entitled to at least 20 days paid holiday a year plus bank holidays.

## 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 and so most of your training takes place on-the-job. The rest takes place at a local college or training provider or at your place of work where an assessor will come to assess you.

You usually complete this off-the-job training one day per week. It could also be done 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
- a knowledge-based qualification such as a Higher National Certificate, Higher National Diploma, Foundation Degree or Bachelor's Degree
- a technical qualification such as a BTEC or City & Guilds (relevant to the specific apprenticeship)
- essential Skills Qualification in Application of Number and Communication and an ICT/Digital literacy 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 apprenticeships at Level 3 and Higher 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.

## Funding for training apprentices

Apprenticeship funding mainly comes from the Welsh Government with employers contributing through a tax on big business (known as the apprenticeship levy). As an apprentice, you should never have to pay for your own training.

Providers can 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.

## How do I apply?

In Wales, most vacancies are listed on the [Apprenticeship Vacancy Service](#).

Registering on the site is a good first step. To apply for a vacancy, track applications and receive alerts about new apprenticeships, you will need to

create an account.

When creating an account, the 'Tell us more about you' section gives you the option of saying if you have a disability. Employers who are part of the 'Disability Confident' scheme will guarantee disabled candidates an interview if they meet the basic apprenticeship criteria.

You can search for vacancies using a key word or you can browse by category. Clicking on a vacancy takes you to the apprenticeship vacancy details page with information on the employer, training provider, pay, length of apprenticeship, start date, duties involved and person specification.

The vacancy details 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 top or bottom of the page. This will take you to an online form.

Some vacancies have additional questions, for example, why have you applied for an apprenticeship in IT?

Spend time on your answers. 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.

## **What happens after I send my application?**

After you have sent your application, you can track its progress through My applications on your home page. This is only applicable if you apply on the AVS website and not to an employer directly. If your application is shortlisted, the training provider will usually contact you for an interview or assessment. Sometimes the employer will contact you directly. After you complete your first

online application, all the information is saved for you to use in future applications.

## 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 are 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 or Traineeships?
- Can they help and advise you on next steps after you successfully complete your apprenticeship?

You may still have to apply through [Find an apprenticeship](#) for any vacancies that the college or training provider helps you find.

## Can I approach employers directly?

You could also contact companies directly to ask if they have any opportunities.

They may have something coming up in the future, which isn't yet advertised.

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.

## **'Disability confident employer' badge**

This badge shows an organisation has made specific commitments to recruiting, and retaining disabled people. You'll see the badge displayed on apprenticeship 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, it might also be worth asking:

- 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, social media, LinkedIn, employers' own websites and Facebook pages, newspaper adverts and careers fairs.

On Twitter you can follow [@apprenticewales](https://twitter.com/apprenticewales)

On Facebook you can like our apprenticeship page [Prentisiaethau Cymru/ Apprenticeships Cymru](#)

## Entry criteria

Employers will usually decide what qualifications, skills and experience you need to start an apprenticeship with them. This will vary from one type of job to another. For example, entry requirements could be different for hairdressing compared with business administration.

It is common for apprenticeship vacancies to ask for GCSE grade A\* to C in English/ Welsh and Maths. Sometimes employers will accept someone working towards these or an equivalent Level 2 qualification.

## Interviews and assessments

After applying, it's important to prepare so you're ready for an interview or assessment. Careers Wales and Working Wales have lots of good tips. The following things are especially important:

- 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 [Telling people about your disability](#)
- 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
- Dress appropriately and look ready to start work. For help on what might be suitable, speak to the training provider

- Take a copy of the vacancy and your application form
- Arrive early. This will give you time to gather yourself for a few minutes in reception. It also makes a good impression
- 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.

## Case study: Nicholas D'Cruz

I'm Nicholas D'Cruz and I'm 25 years old from Swansea. I have severe learning disabilities which affect my ability to communicate and be independent. I wanted a job that would help me towards my long-term goal of moving out of the care home where I live, into supported housing.

My social worker and Job Centre Plus advisor linked me with Shaw Trust, a

charity helping people to enter work, gain an education and training and improve their wellbeing, who helped me to put together a plan to support me in developing the skills needed to live on my own for the first time. My Shaw Trust key worker helped me start a placement at Café Darcy, based in Darcy Business Centre in Skewen, above Shaw Trust's offices.

I have been employed as an apprentice at the Café for five months now on a Level 2 Foundation Apprenticeship in Hospitality. It's a busy job. I clean up, collect dishes, chat to the customers and I've just started to prepare food. When they want a bacon sandwich, the regulars ask for me! I'd never cooked for myself before.

Doing an apprenticeship has changed my life. It's helped me financially. I can go more places and do more things. I went to Silverstone this year and I love musicals and go to as many as I can.

My apprenticeship has also helped my confidence. First for me is to learn how to cook my own meals and live independently and then, who knows? Maybe I can become a chef. Having my own cooking chat show would be nice!

## 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 whom 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 Apprenticeship Vacancy Service on the Careers Wales website, you can choose to answer 'Yes', 'No' or 'Prefer not to say'. Your answer will be passed on to the employer and provider. Employers who are part of the 'Disability Confident' scheme will guarantee all disabled candidates an interview if they meet the apprenticeship criteria.

## 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 or training provider.

## **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.

## **Funding for support costs**

Your training provider will ensure that all of the necessary support is in place to enable you to undertake your apprenticeship learning.

The Access to Work scheme can pay towards additional help in the workplace needed on apprenticeship programmes and Job Support Wales programmes.

If you're open about your impairment, it's usually easier to arrange individual support.

## **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 Additional Learning Needs Coordinator (ALNco). Otherwise, it might be a Careers Adviser or someone in Job Centre Plus such as the Work Coach. Colleges 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, 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 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 General Data Protection Regulations 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.

## 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 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 or training provider?**

All colleges and most large training providers have staff members responsible for supporting disabled apprentices. You should be able to have a confidential discussion with them about your individual needs.

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 hand-outs 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 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.

## **For more information**

**The Disability Rights UK factsheet Adjustments for Disabled Students** contains lots of suggestions on the kinds of support that might be helpful.

## 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 scheme run by Jobcentre Plus. 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. 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.

Your training provider should be able to help coordinate your Access to Work support.

## How to contact Access to Work

Telephone: 0345 268 8489

E-mail: [atwosu.london@dwp.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:atwosu.london@dwp.gsi.gov.uk)

Access to Work Operational Support Unit  
Harrow Jobcentre Plus  
Mail Handling Site A  
Wolverhampton  
WV98 1JE

## 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 [When to mention your disability](#).

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 may 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 note takers. 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, 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 legal 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.

Telephone: 0800 328 5050

E-mail: [students@disabilityrightsuk.org](mailto:students@disabilityrightsuk.org)

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

## What happens to my benefits?

Personal Independence Payment (PIP) is now replacing Disability Allowance (DLA).

PIP was introduced in 2013 for people aged 16-64. By the end of 2018, all eligible DLA claimants aged 16-64 will have been invited to claim PIP by the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP). During your apprenticeship, you should still receive Personal Independence Payment (PIP).

PIP is a non-means tested benefit. If you are in receipt of PIP you may also be entitled to other benefits such as Housing Benefit or Council Tax Support from your local council.

## Personal Independence Payment (PIP)

PIP is a benefit for people with a long-term health condition or impairment, whether physical, sensory, mental, cognitive, intellectual, or any combination of these. It is paid to make a contribution to the extra costs that disabled people may face, to help them lead full, active and independent lives.

Sometimes the activities you do as part of your apprenticeship can suggest that your daily living or mobility needs have changed and you can be asked to undergo a reassessment.

## Universal Credit

Universal Credit is a new means-tested benefit for people on low incomes, replacing Income Support, income-based Jobseekers Allowance and income-related ESA, Housing Benefit, Child Tax Credit and Working Tax Credit. 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.

Universal Credit has been rolled out to all new UC claimants. The Managed Migration from legacy benefits will conclude by end of 2023 (on current DWP planning assumptions).

## For more information

The Disability Rights UK Student Helpline can give you more information on the

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benefits you may be able to claim as a disabled apprentice. You could also contact local advice agencies such as the Citizens Advice Bureau.

You may find the following Disability Rights UK publications helpful:

**A factsheet called [Getting Advice](#)**

**[Personal Independence Payment – a guide to making a claim](#)**

## **Not yet ready for an apprenticeship?**

If you're not ready to take up an apprenticeship and need support to overcome any barriers, **[Working Wales](#)** may be able to help you.

Job Support Wales will provide the skills you need to start an apprenticeship or other type of employment, whilst at the same time providing extra support tailored to your individual needs. Further information will be available on the [Working Wales website](#) in due course.

## **Case study: Sarah-Jayne Mawdsley**

I'm Sarah-Jayne Mawdsley and I'm 19 years old from Caernarfon. I'm a pharmacy apprentice assistant at Ysbyty Gwynedd in Bangor and I have Mosaic Down's Syndrome, a condition that affects just one in 100,000 people in the UK.

I left school with several GCSEs but I didn't know what I wanted to do next. I started the Skills for Life and Work course at Llangefni College and worked part-time in a shop. I'm now working towards my NVQ Level Two in Pharmacy Services and in Customer Services, on a two-year apprenticeship at the hospital.

They put me to work on reception in the dispensary because they said I proved

quickly that I was good at the job. Most days I'll do everything from taking prescriptions to answering the phone, greeting patients and advising them on waiting times.

I've recently taken on new admin duties like filing and scanning.

I love my job. I'm happiest at work and when I'm busy.

I love being an apprentice here and I'm looking forward to an exciting career in pharmacy. Having Mosaic Down's Syndrome makes me push myself harder. I now want to help other people with the condition as not a lot is known about it, and if I can help by raising awareness of the opportunities available as an apprentice in Wales, that's a start.

Having this condition doesn't stop me from doing anything and I think it's so important that people talk about it. I watched a video on Facebook about a nursery school teacher in Argentina who had Down's Syndrome and it really inspired me to work hard so that I can do anything I want to do.

## **Case study: Safyan Iqbal**

I'm Safyan Iqbal and I'm 22 years old from Cyncoed, Cardiff. I was born with poor hearing which worsened over time until I had surgery aged 11 to fit a cochlear implant which helped me to hear more clearly. I could hear dogs barking in the park for the first time and babies crying. It was amazing. It changed my life.

I've always wanted to work in TV and I was worried that being deaf might be a barrier to that. I then started doing some work experience at ITV Wales, which progressed into a month-long paid internship.

I'm now a Creative and Digital Media Apprentice at ITV Wales, where I've learnt a variety of skills including how to operate cameras, shoot and edit as part of my ambition to become a camera operator or filmmaker. Every person with a hearing impairment is different but when I started work, I wanted to give my colleagues some suggestions that worked for me, so that nobody felt awkward asking. I suggested that people talk to me face-to-face, don't turn their head away, and try not to mumble.

An apprenticeship really works for me because I'm always hungry for learning - but this is totally different from school or college. Each day is different. I get to watch camera operators at work, go on cool locations, and create my own films. It's the best experience. I'm having so much fun. I love being an apprentice because I'm learning from doing.

I am hoping to use my apprenticeship to raise awareness about the challenges that can face young deaf people. I want to help children going through what I did.

## **Case study: Corinna Roberts**

I'm Corinna Roberts. I am 26 years-old and I live in Tonypany. I have achieved a Foundation Apprenticeship and an Apprenticeship in Business Administration.

I have also secured a permanent Civil Service job while juggling parental responsibilities and learning to manage my mental health. I believe that completing an apprenticeship has boosted my confidence and skills and brought value and fresh ideas to the Intellectual Property Office (IPO) in Newport where I work.

I struggled with severe obsessive compulsive disorder, anxiety and depression

when I joined IPO. Now, I help others as a diversity and inclusion officer and I have established the first mental health awareness programme of its kind.

I trained as a mental health champion and as an allies' representative for the LGBT network, and I have run cross-government awareness sessions with IPO and Companies House. I was the first apprentice at IPO to work part-time and from home but was able to complete the programme in the same time as my peers while juggling my parental responsibilities and health issues.

I am supported by my training provider ALS Training, and I plan to continue my learning journey by progressing to either a Higher Apprenticeship (Level 4), a Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development or an Open University qualification.

## Go for it!

If you're looking to thrive in the workplace, the answer is apprenticeships. Being an apprentice means that you can gain recognised qualifications, essential skills and earn a wage. So go on - take the plunge!

For more information on apprenticeships and help for disabled people, visit [Working Wales](#).

## Resources

### Websites

#### [Access to Work](#)

Basic government overview of the Access to Work scheme including eligibility

and how to claim.

### **Advice Guide**

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

### **Bright Knowledge**

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

### **Bobath**

Bobath Children's Therapy Centre Wales, 19 Park Road, Whitchurch, Cardiff, CF14 7BP

Telephone: 02920 522600

E-mail: [info@bobathwales.org](mailto:info@bobathwales.org)

### **British Deaf Association Wales**

47 Newport Road, Cardiff, CF24 0AD

Telephone: 0845 130 2851

E-mail: [wales@bda.org.uk](mailto:wales@bda.org.uk)

### **Disability Wales**

Bridge House, Caerphilly Business Park, Van Road, Caerphilly CF83 3GW

### **Careers Wales**

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

### **Employer toolkit**

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

## **Go Think Big**

Online hub with advice on work experience opportunities, insider contacts and career tips.

## **Good practice in 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.

## **Not Going to Uni**

Online guide that offers advice on how to become an apprentice, as well as gap year's programmes and distance learning.

## **The Student Room**

Forum and discussion areas for sharing experiences and thoughts about studying. Includes a forum about apprenticeships and alternatives to university.

## **Transition Information Network (TIN)**

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

# **Publications**

## **Welsh Government**

### **Apprenticeships in Wales**

**Apprenticeships Skills Policy Plan: 'Aligning the Apprenticeship Model to the Needs of the Welsh Economy'**

**Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015**

**Taking Wales Forward 2016-2021**

**Employability plan**

## **Framework for Action on Independent Living**

## **Equality and Human Rights Commission in Wales**

### **Is Wales Fairer: The state of Equality and Human Rights 2018**

#### **Apprenticeships that work**

2017 guide for employers from the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD), including the message that quality is just as important as quantity and advice on integrating apprentices into the workforce.

**Creating an Inclusive Apprenticeship Offer:** 2012 report by Peter Little and Rob Holland Executive Summary and list of 20 recommendations

## **Disability Rights UK publications**

Disability Rights UK produces a range of factsheets for disabled students. They cover topics such as the Equality Act, funding and adjustments for disabled students.

Disability Rights UK also produces **Into Higher Education - a detailed guide to applying to university**. And a free publication called **Personal Independence Payment – A guide to making a claim**.

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

#### **Engaging people with learning difficulties in workplace learning**

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

## **Supported Internship evaluation**

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Go to <https://www.gov.wales/apprenticeships-guide-disabled-learners-html> for the latest version.

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

## Organisations

### Education

#### Construction Youth Trust

The Building Centre, 26 Store Street, London WC1E 7BT

United Welsh Group, Y Borth, 13 Beddau Way, Caerphilly, CF83 2AX

Telephone: 07944 643259

E-mail: [cymru@constructionyouth.org.uk](mailto:cymru@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.

#### Learning and Work Institute

3rd Floor, 33-35 Cathedral Road, Cardiff, CF11 9HB

Telephone: 02920 370900

E-mail: [enquiries@learningandwork.wales](mailto:enquiries@learningandwork.wales)

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, 1 Mount Stuart Square, Cardiff, CF10 5FL Telephone: 02920 435390

Social Media: [www.facebook.com/nationalunionofstudents](http://www.facebook.com/nationalunionofstudents)

Give advice and produce information on welfare rights for students.

## Disability

### Action on Hearing Loss

Ground Floor, Anchor Court (North), Keen Road, Cardiff, CF24 5JW Telephone: 029 2333 3034

Textphone: 029 2033 3036

Phone line open Mon to Fri 9am-5pm SMS: 0780 0000 360

E-mail: [wales@hearingloss.org.uk](mailto:wales@hearingloss.org.uk)

Video conferencing, Skype or FaceTime call can be arranged.

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

### Arthritis Care

Saffron House, 6-10 Kirby St, London, EC1N 8TS

Telephone: 0300 790 0400

Helpline: 0808 520 0520

E-mail: [info@arthritiscare.org.uk](mailto:info@arthritiscare.org.uk)

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

### British Dyslexia Association (BDA)

Unit 8 Bracknell Beeches, Old Bracknell Lane, Bracknell RG12 7BW

Telephone: 0333 405 4555

Helpline: 0333 405 4567

Phone line open Tues-Thurs 10.00-13.00

E-mail: [helpline@bdadyslexia.org.uk](mailto:helpline@bdadyslexia.org.uk)

Offers information, advice and support to people with dyslexia.

### West Wales Dyslexia Association

Telephone: 01792 700896 or 01792 201776

E-mail: [westwalesdyslexia@gmail.com](mailto:westwalesdyslexia@gmail.com)

### **Powys Dyslexia Support Group**

Telephone: 07749 301 812

E-mail: [powysdyslexia@outlook.com](mailto:powysdyslexia@outlook.com)

Social media: Powys dyslexia support group

### **DIAL UK**

Telephone: 0808 800 3333

A network of disability information and advice lines. They can give advice on issues such as welfare benefits, community care, equipment, independent living and transport.

### **Disability Wales**

Brydon House, Block B, Caerphilly Business Park, Van Road, Caerphilly, CF83 3ED

Telephone: 02920 887325

E-mail: [info@disabilitywales.org](mailto:info@disabilitywales.org)

### **Epilepsy Action**

New Anstey House, Gate Way Drive, Yeadon, Leeds LS19 7XY Telephone: 0808 800 5050

Phone lines open Mon to Thurs 8.30-17.30

E-mail: [helpline@epilepsy.org.uk](mailto:helpline@epilepsy.org.uk)

Offers a range of services including information and advice.

South Wales Branch

Epilepsy Action Cymru, Neath Port Talbot CVS, 19 Alfred St, Neath, SA11 1EF

Telephone: 07432 429 609 or 01633 253 407

E-mail: [asivapatham@epilepsy.org.uk](mailto:asivapatham@epilepsy.org.uk)

### **Equality and Human Rights Commission in Wales**

Equality and Human Rights Commission Block 1, Spur D, Government

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Buildings, St Agnes Road, Cardiff, CF14 4YY  
Telephone: 02920 447710 (non helpline calls only)  
Email: [wales@equalityhumanrights.com](mailto:wales@equalityhumanrights.com)

We welcome correspondence in Welsh. We will respond to it in Welsh.  
Corresponding in Welsh will not lead to delay in responding. We welcome phone calls in Welsh.

### **Equality Advisory Support Service**

Advice and support about discrimination and human rights. If you need expert information, advice and support on discrimination and human rights issues and the applicable law, especially if you need more help than advice agencies and other local organisations can provide, please contact the Equality Advisory and Support Service (EASS).

Please note: EASS is completely independent of the Commission.

Phone: 0808 800 0082 Textphone: 0808 800 0084 Y

You can email using the contact form on the EASS website. Also available through the website are BSL interpretation, web chat services and a contact us form.

Post: FREEPOST EASS HELPLINE FPN6521

Opening hours:

9am to 7pm Monday to Friday 10am to 2pm Saturday

Closed on Sundays and Bank Holidays

### **ELITE Supported Employment**

Unit 8 Magden Park, Greenmeadows, Llantrisant, RCT, CF72 8XT

Telephone: 01443 226664

Email: [information@elitesea.co.uk](mailto:information@elitesea.co.uk)

Established in 1994, ELITE Supported Employment is a registered charity that enables people with disabilities and those facing a disadvantage access training, vocational opportunities and paid employment through the provision of one to one in work support. We work closely with jobseekers and employers to support the recruitment and retention of people with a disability or disadvantage across South, East and West Wales.

### **Gofal Cymru**

26 Dunraven Place, Bridgend, CF31 1JD  
Email: [centraloffice@gofalcymru.org.uk](mailto:centraloffice@gofalcymru.org.uk)  
Telephone: 01656 647722

### **Leonard Cheshire Wales**

Llanhennock Lodge, Llanhennock Nr Caerleon, NP18 1LT  
Telephone: 01633 422583

### **Learning Disability Wales**

41 Lambourne Crescent, Cardiff Business Park, Cardiff, CF14 5GGE  
Telephone: 02920 681160  
E-mail: [enquiries@learningdisabilitywales.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@learningdisabilitywales.org.uk)

### **Mind Cymru**

3rd Floor, Castlebridge 4, Castlebridge, 5-19 Cowbridge Road East, Cardiff,  
CF11 9AB  
Telephone: 02920 395123  
E-mail: [supporterrelations@mind.org.uk](mailto:supporterrelations@mind.org.uk)

### **Merthyr Tydfil Institute for the Blind**

Unit 4 Triangle Business Park Pentrebach, Merthyr Tydfil, CF48 4TQ  
Telephone: 01685 370072

### **Multiple Sclerosis Society – Wales**

MS Society Cymru, Baltic House, Mount Stuart Square, Cardiff, CF10 5FH  
Telephone: 0208 438 0700  
E-mail: [mscymru@mssociety.org.uk](mailto:mscymru@mssociety.org.uk)

### **National Autistic Society in Wales**

NAS Cymru, 2nd Floor, Lancaster House, 106 Maes-y-Coed Road, Heath,  
Cardiff, CF14 4HE  
Telephone: 02920 629312

E-mail: [wales@nas.org.uk](mailto:wales@nas.org.uk)

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

Nationwide Access Consultants

32 Underhill Crescent, Abergavenny, Monmouthshire, NP7 6DF

Telephone: 01873 852109

### **The National Deaf Children's Society Cymru**

2 Ty Nant Court, Morganstown, Cardiff, CF15 8LW

Telephone: 02920 373474

Textphone 02920 811861

Freephone Helpline: 0808 800 8880 [helpline@ndcs.org.uk](mailto:helpline@ndcs.org.uk)

E-mail: [ndcswales@ndcs.org.uk](mailto:ndcswales@ndcs.org.uk)

### **Remploy Cymru**

Individuals: Telephone: 0300 456 8025

Email: [waleswhp@mail.remploy.co.uk](mailto:waleswhp@mail.remploy.co.uk)

Employers: Telephone: 0300 456 8025

Email: [employers@remploy.co.uk](mailto:employers@remploy.co.uk)

Partners: Telephone: 0300 456 8025

Email: [waleswhp@mail.remploy.co.uk](mailto:waleswhp@mail.remploy.co.uk)

General enquiries: Telephone: 0300 456 8025

Email: [waleswhp@mail.remploy.co.uk](mailto:waleswhp@mail.remploy.co.uk)

### **Royal National Institute for the Blind, RNIB Cymru**

RNIB Cymru, Jones Court, Womanby Street, Cardiff, CF10 1BR Telephone: 02920 828500

E-mail: [cymru@rnib.org.uk](mailto:cymru@rnib.org.uk)

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

### **Scope Wales**

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Scope, Disability Advice Project, Unit 9A, Caldicot Way, Avondale Business Park, Cwmbran, Torfaen, NP44 1UG

Telephone: 0808 800 3333 or 01633 485 865

E-mail: [helpline@scope.org.uk](mailto:helpline@scope.org.uk)

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

### **Shaw Trust**

Contact us with your general enquiries including Work Programme, Work Choice (Work Choice Direct 0300 30 33 111) and SES enquiries.

Contact Customer Support Centres on 0800 389 0078.

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For more information refer to our [accessibility statement](#).

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