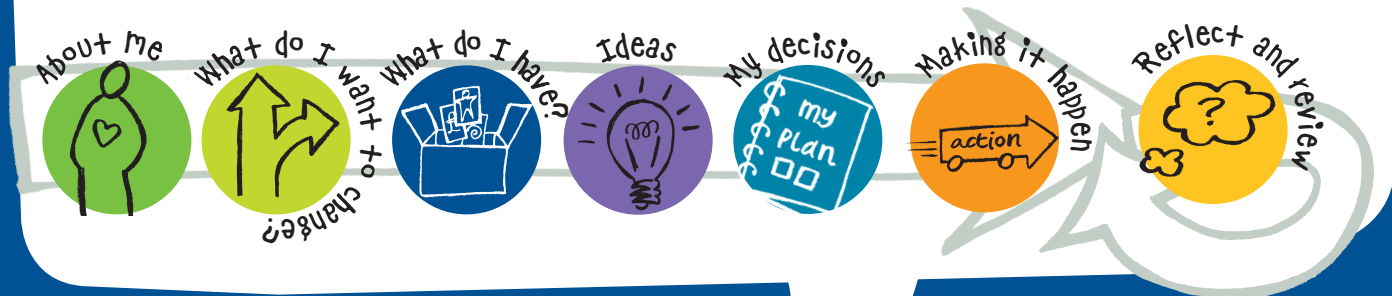




Getting A Life  
**JOBS FIRST**

# EMPLOYMENT SUPPORT PLANNING TOOLS





# Introduction

## Support Planning and Employment

Here are some additional questions to help people think about employment when they are developing their support plan. You can use them alongside the support planning tool Support planning tools to help you with your support plan (Helen Sanderson Associates, In Control and Shop 4 Support, 2009), to help people think about getting a job or setting up their own business. You can use them on their own to help people think about work or with the main cards to help people think about what support they need to get a job and live their life.

We have developed additional questions about employment as we know that certain groups of people (for example people with learning disabilities, long term mental health conditions and autism) are further away from the employment market and need greater support to ensure their support plans include employment outcomes. The additional questions focus on thinking about life in relation to work.

## What is the problem we are trying to solve?

Currently, few people with learning disabilities use their personal or individual budget to buy employment support. There may be many reasons for this, for example:

- Low expectations and aspirations of young people, families and professionals who work with them of what is possible and positive in relation to people with learning disabilities in employment.
- Lack of support to develop career plans and achieve meaningful work experience in the community during their school and college life.
- Lack of supported employment.
- Employment is rarely considered as part of support planning. The emphasis is often on residential support and social lives.
- The misconception that personal budgets can't be used for employment support.

Currently less than 6.8% of people with learning disabilities are in employment compared with 47% of disabled people generally. This is despite 65% of people with learning disabilities saying they want to work.

The Valuing Employment Now demonstration sites are looking at different approaches to address the problems listed above. One of these is to identify how to ensure employment outcomes are embedded in local personalisation strategies and systems. One element of

this work is to see how we can ensure that people explore employment during the support planning process, so that support plans for people with learning disabilities help them to get a real job and a life.

There is a range of different materials to support people to develop their support plan (see Appendix 1). Employment is mentioned in some support planning tools but what we are learning from the Getting a Life and Jobs First projects is that unless there is focused effort around employment, people do not think about using their personal or individual budget for employment support. This is why we have developed these questions to be used alongside Support Planning Tools to help you with your support plan. The support planning cards with additional employment questions will be tested out in Jobs First and Getting a Life sites.

The cards are prompts for people who are support planning. They are not for people with learning disabilities to use on their own. The resources listed in Appendix 1 contain information on accessible information about employment.

# Getting Started

## Who can use these employment questions?

These questions can be used by anyone supporting a person with learning disabilities to develop their support plan. They may be used by schools, colleges, day service staff, youth services, care managers, families, User Led Organisations, personal assistants and others.

The questions can be used to help someone think about what type of job they would like and how they can use their personal/individual budget to get the right support. Schools and colleges can integrate the questions into the school or college curriculum to help students to think about what type of job and life they want and whether they are on the right path. These tools can be used with groups or individuals.

## Who can help?

There are ranges of agencies that can support people to think about their life in relation to employment, including:

- A Disability Employment Advisor at the local Job Centre.
- Supported Employment Agencies.
- Social enterprises which support people to set up their own businesses or micro-enterprises.

## Before you start support planning

It is hard for people to think about what job they would like and how to achieve employment if they do not know what is possible or that employment is a positive choice. Evidence from Valuing Employment Now shows that many people have low expectations and aspirations of what people with learning disabilities can achieve in society. There are also misconceptions about whether it is positive for people with learning disabilities to work - for example, will they be better off financially? This affects what people with learning disabilities and their families think, and the choices they make.

Before you get started, it is important to support people with learning disabilities to see positive role models of people with learning disabilities in jobs they enjoy and setting up their own businesses. You could do this by watching a DVD, visiting workplaces (such as a Project Search open day) or meeting other people with learning disabilities who have jobs or have set up their own business. You need to think about what support people have to find out about different types of jobs and what they involve.

It is also important that people with learning disabilities and their families understand why employment is a positive choice and have chance to talk through any concerns. For example, providing good welfare advice can help reduce fears about moving off benefits.

## About me

You can use these questions to help you think about employment as part of your whole life, and about what is important to you in relation to your work-life balance. The tools can be used to help you think about what you have done already that will help you to get a job, what is important to you, what you have to offer an employer, what good support means for you, how you communicate and how you make decisions.

When you have used these tools, you will have a clearer idea about what is important to you about work and getting a job you enjoy.

## Employment history

Look at the 'History' exercise in the main support planning pack. You can use this tool to record all of the things you have done in relation to employment. It will be a useful record of your skills and talents, which you can "sell" to an employer.

You can use this tool to map your career journey so far. Useful questions to think about are:

- What work experience have I had? (e.g. school work experience, Saturday job, holiday job, helping with the family business).
- What courses have I done to prepare myself for employment?



- Can I travel on my own - have I done any travel training?
- Have I had a job already? What did I like/dislike about it? Why?
- What did I enjoy about these experiences and what would I not want to repeat?
- What was I good at?
- What did these experiences tell me about what good support I need to be supported well?

## Important to me

Look at the 'Important to me' exercise in the main support planning pack. This tool can tell you what really matters to you. It can help you to find out how to get a job that helps you to get the type of life you want. It also helps you think about the essential ingredients of a job you will enjoy.

You can use this tool to find out what are the essential ingredients of working for you. For example:

- Who do I like to work with? Why?
- Do I know if I want to work with others or alone? Do I want to work for someone else or run my own business?
- What type of leisure activities do I do? What do I like about them? Do I do them alone or with others?

- What type of environments do I like to be in? For example outdoors, an office, etc.
- What does this tell me about the type of job I am looking for?
- Do I like busy places or quiet spaces?

## Being in control

The main set of support planning cards has a section on being in control. You can use the cards from the main pack to find out about how you make choices and what support you need to be in control of your life. Once you have done this, think about what this means for your work life. For example, what does this say about how to be successful in supporting you to look for, get and keep your job?

## How do I communicate?

The main set of support planning cards has a section on “how do I communicate?” You can use the cards from the main pack to find out about how you communicate and what support you need to communicate with others. Once you have done this think about what this means for your work life. For example, what does this say about how to be successful in supporting you to look for, get and keep your job?

## Summary

What did I learn in the section that tells me what type of job I would like to do?

What did I learn in the section that tells me what type of support I would need?

What did I learn in the section that tells me what skills, experience and gifts I have?



## What do I want to change?

### Good day/bad day

The main pack of support planning cards has a section on “Good day/bad day”. You can use the cards from the main pack to find out what makes a good day and a bad day for you. Once you have done this, think about what this means for your work life. For example:

- What does this tell us about the type of job I want to do?
- If I am working already, what does this tell us about what I want to do next?

### My dreams

Look at the ‘My dreams’ exercise in the support planning cards. This tool can be used to help you think about what your dream job would be. Sometimes this can help you identify the areas you are interested in. Further discussion can also shed light on what specific things you would enjoy, and the different jobs and careers that might fit with this.

Good questions to ask yourself are:

- What is my dream job and why? What do I like about it?
- Who do I know who has a job or a life I would like?
- What are the essential elements of this dream job that I like?  
For example, do I like to dress smartly?



## Working/not working

You can use the cards from the main pack to think about what's working or not working in your life so far and how it is helping you to get a job or set up your own business.

You can ask the following questions.

- Am I currently doing something that will help me to do the type of job I want to do?
- What does this tell me about the type of job I want to do?

## My perfect working week

Look at the exercise 'My perfect week', in the support planning cards. This tool helps you to think about all the things that you want to do in your week. It is a useful time to think about whether you see a job within that week and if so how much of the week it would take up, and how you would fit your social life around it. You could also think about what you might do with your wages.

You can think about the following questions:

- Do I want to work every day?
- Do I know why it is important to work over 16 hours?

- Where would I be?
- Who would I be with?
- Do I want to work in the daytime, at the weekend or in the evenings?
- Is there a match between the job I want to do and my perfect week?
- How many days do I want to spend on my job hunt?

## Summary

What did I learn in the section that tells me what type of job I would like to do?

What did I learn in the section that tells me what type of support I need?

What did I learn in the section that tells me what skills, experience and gifts I have?



## What do I have?

In this section, you can think about the gifts and skills you have and what would be useful to an employer. You can also find out who could help you to think about, get, and keep a job

### Community connections

Look at the exercise 'Community Connections' in the support planning cards. You can use this tool to map what support is available locally to get and keep a job. You can ask questions like:

- Which local employers need what you can offer or do what you are interested in?
- Who are the local employers who are positive about disability equality and building a workforce that reflects their local community?
- What supported employment services are available - are there job coaches who could help me get a job?
- What support is available to set up your own business or micro-enterprise?
- Are there any internship schemes such as Project Search
- Are there apprenticeships that you could do to train on-the-job?



- Which local colleges offer a course related to the job you want to do or offer supported employment opportunities?
- Who would be able to help me to look for, get and keep a job?
- Where can I find out about coming off benefits and getting more money for my wages?
- Could the job centre help me with a ‘better off calculation?’
- Who will be able to check I can still afford my rent?
- Where can I buy travel training?

## My relationships

Use the relationship map in the main support planning cards to find out who is important in your life. Then use these questions to think about what your relationships tell you about working and to see if there is anyone who can help you to find, get and keep a job:

- What this tells me about the type of people I like to be around
- Who has connections with the types of businesses I want work in?
- Who has knowledge of setting up their own business if that is something I am interested in?
- Who would be prepared to support me to look for, get and keep a job? What would they be prepared to do?

## My gifts and skills

Look at the 'My gifts and skills' exercise in the support planning cards. Good supported employment involves finding out what someone is interested in and what their skills are, and matching these to an employer's needs. In order to find out what gifts, skills, and passions you have, you will need to ask people who know and care about you.

You could answer the following questions yourself, and then ask people who know and care about you:

- What am I good at?
- What do I enjoy doing?
- What am I passionate about?
- What do other people say I am good at?
- What do I do at home? Are there jobs I like doing? What do I hate doing? What do I do for fun?
- What did I like and what didn't I like at school? Did I have favourite lessons and why did I like them? Was I in any clubs?
- What types of places and employers need someone with my skills?
- What sort of business could I set up using my skills and capabilities?
- Can I travel independently? Do I need travel training?

## My money

You can use your personal budget to support you to look for and keep a job. The money could help you to buy a job coach who can help you apply for jobs, support you at interviews, and help you to learn a new job in the work place. You should be able to use more than your social care money. For example you may be able to use funding (money) from:

- Access to work (over 16 years).
- Work Choice (over 16 years).
- Children's Social Care (under 18 years).
- Adult Social Care (over 18 years).
- Education (16 years to 25 years for people with learning disabilities).
- Independent Living Fund - if working over 16 hours.
- Health money - such as a personal health budget.

If you are under 18, you should ask you local authority if they can give you an indicative budget so you know what you are likely to get. This will help you to plan for when you have your personal budget.

You can ask the following questions:

- How much money will I have to help me get a job?
- What type of support do I need?

- Who can give me this type of support?
- Will I be better off in work? (the Disability Employment Advisor at Job Centre Plus can do a Better Off calculation for you).
- How many hours of support can I buy with this money?

## Summary

What did I learn in the section that tells me what type of job I would like to do?

What did I learn in the section that tells me what type of support I need?

What did I learn in the section that tells me what skills, experience and gifts I have?



# Ideas

## How can I achieve my employment outcomes?

Now you can think about what employment outcomes you want (for example help writing a business case so you can set up your own business) and all of the different options for getting support to help you achieve this. You can use any of the four ideas tools in the main support planning cards to do this.

My creative options

The x three options

My outcomes and options

From different perspectives

You do not need to use all of them.



## Summary

What did I learn in the section that tells me what type of job I would like to do?

What did I learn in the section that tells me what type of support I need?

What did I learn in the section that tells me what skills, experience and gifts I have?



# My decisions

## Matching support

Look at the exercise for 'Matching Support' in the support planning cards. These tools could be used to help you recruit a job coach.

You can ask questions like:

- Who in my natural community could help me to find and get a job?
- If I want a job coach, what type of person am I looking for?
- If I want help to set up my own business what type of support do I need?
- What other type of support do I need, for example travel training?

## Planning my week and support

Look at the exercise for 'Planning my week and support' in the support planning cards. This tool can help you plan your week so you have time to look to develop your career plan or find a job.



You can think about questions like:

- How many days a week will I spend on job hunting?
- Do I need to change the days when I do other things?
- Do I need to spend less time on other things to look for a job?
- Do I live close enough to where I will be working?
- Do I need to spend time doing other things that will help me to get a job? For example travel training or a course?

## Budget lines

Use the tool in the main support planning pack to identify what funding streams you can access, what they are for and what you need to do to manage them. You could also ask what funding streams you will be using in addition to your personal budget?

## My action plan

Look at the template for developing your action plan support planning cards. Use this to develop an action plan that will help you get the right employment support. Key questions are:

- How do I make sure that my action plan relates to the needs for which I was assessed?
- What do I need help with ? What are the outcomes I want, for example, to write a CV, to search for work, to learn a new job, to write a business plan, or to attend interviews?
- Where will I live?
- Is this close enough to where I want to work?
- Can I pay the rent out of my wages?
- Do I need smart clothes for an interview?
- Do I need travel training?

# Appendix 1

## Useful resources

[www.in-control.org.uk](http://www.in-control.org.uk)

Good information on personalisation and employment.

[www.base-uk.org](http://www.base-uk.org)

Good information on supported employment.

[www.supportplanning.org](http://www.supportplanning.org)

For information on support planning.

[www.ncil.org.uk](http://www.ncil.org.uk)

For information on Local Centres for independent Living.

[www.changepeople.co.uk](http://www.changepeople.co.uk)

For good accessible information on employment and advice for employers on supporting people with learning disabilities.