**Employment First Steps**

# **Why work?**

Working, whether paid or unpaid, is good for our health and wellbeing. It contributes to our happiness, helps us to build confidence and self-esteem.

* Keeps us busy, challenges us and gives us the means to develop ourselves
* Gives us a sense of pride, identity and personal achievement
* Enables us to socialize, build contacts and find support
* Provides us with money to support ourselves and explore our interests

## **Where do I start?**

Look at what interests you:

* What do you enjoy doing?
* What are you passionate about?
* What hobbies or interests do you have?

Ask yourself what resources you have:

* What financial resources can you draw upon?
* What contacts do you have?
* Who is prepared to help you?
* Do you have access to a computer, tablet or other device which can access the internet, if not how will you access information on vacancies?

Set yourself some employment objectives, these can include:

* What type of occupations are you interested in?
* How far are you prepared to travel to work?
* Do you want to work full time or part time?
* What training or support do you require?

### **What skills do I have?**

Skills are things you learn, that help you do other things. You might pick them up through work, study or activities you do in your spare time. If you are able to recognise and talk about your skills, you'll find it easier to work out what you want to do.

* What subjects have you studied?
* What qualifications have you achieved?
* What training courses have you attended?
* What do you do well?
* What do people compliment you on?

What experience have you gained?

* What jobs, paid or unpaid, have you performed in the past?
* Where have you been successful?
* Consider any work experience, work placements or voluntary work you have carried out

#### **What am I able to do?**

It is important to remember what your interests and skill sets are when considering working.

Thanks to equipment like screen reading and magnifying software and various other tools, people with low vision can hold lots of different jobs.

Blind and partially sighted people succeed in a wide variety of jobs in almost all employment sectors.

The RNIB conducted some research and some of the main findings are:

* People with sight loss work in every major category of employment
* Blind and partially sighted people typically work in professional, associate professional, and administrative roles
* Administration is a common employment destination for people with sight loss
* Blind and partially sighted people are most commonly employed by large organisations
* A typical destination for blind and partially sighted people is the non-profit sector

Some examples of jobs successfully held are:

* Teachers and college professors
* Social workers and psychologists
* Doctors, nurses and occupational and physical therapists
* Customer service representatives
* Restaurant and shop workers
* Factory workers
* Freelance writers, journalists and TV and radio broadcasters
* DJs and musicians
* Coaches and athletes
* Authors and motivational speakers
* Researchers, engineers and scientists

##### **Resources**

**National Careers Service**

The National Careers Service provides information, advice and guidance to help you make decisions on learning, training and work opportunities. The service offers confidential, helpful and impartial advice, supported by qualified careers advisers.

Tel: 0800 100 900

Website: [nationalcareersservice.direct.gov.uk](http://www.nationalcareersservice.direct.gov.uk)

**Royal National Institute for the blind (RNIB)**

The RNIB provide specialist support and advice to help blind and partially sighted people find employment, start their own business or stay in their jobs if they are losing their sight.

They produce printable fact sheets:

* [Starting your job search](https://www.rnib.org.uk/sites/default/files/Starting_your_Job_Search.docx)
* [CVs and application forms](https://www.rnib.org.uk/sites/default/files/CVs_and_Application_Forms.docx)
* [Disclosing a disability](https://www.rnib.org.uk/sites/default/files/Disclosing_a_Disability.docx)
* [Interview skills](https://www.rnib.org.uk/sites/default/files/Interview%20Skills.docx)
* [Tests at interview](https://www.rnib.org.uk/sites/default/files/Tests_at_Interview.docx)

Telephone: 03031339999

Website: www.rnib.org.uk/information-everyday-living-work-and-employment/looking-work

Email: [helpline@rnib.org.uk](mailto:helpline@rnib.org.uk)

**Remploy**

Remploy is the UK's largest provider of jobs for disabled people. Remploy's recruitment services are designed to provide employment opportunities to disabled people across all sectors of business and industry.

Telephone: 0845 601 5878

Website: www.remploy.co.uk

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

**Thomas Pocklington Trust**

They help blind and partially sighted people wanting to start, restart or progress their careets and can receive professional, relevant services and support.

Telephone: 020 8995 0880

Link to web page: [www.pocklington-trust.org.uk/pages/category/employment-resources](http://www.pocklington-trust.org.uk/pages/category/employment-resources)

Email: [emplyment@pocklington-trust.org.uk](mailto:emplyment@pocklington-trust.org.uk)

###### **Resources – National Bodies**

**National League of the Blind & Disabled**

The National League of the Blind and Disabled (NLBD) is a Trade Union organisation for blind and disabled persons only, established in 1899. The objective of the organisation is to promote the education, training, employment and general welfare of blind and disabled people, and to provide representation at work on an individual and collective basis. The NLBD operates under the umbrella of Community - The Union for Life. Their principle function is to campaign for full civil rights for all disabled people.

Website: [www.community-tu.org](https://wiltsblind-my.sharepoint.com/personal/data_sightsupportwest_org_uk/Documents/Group/1.%20Sight%20Support/Services/Employment%20Support%20Docs/www.community-tu.org)

Email: [nlbd@community-tu.org](mailto:nlbd@community-tu.org)

**ABAPSTAS (The Association of Blind and Partially Sighted Teachers and Students)**

ABAPSTAS was founded in 1970 by a small number of visually impaired people with the primary aim of supporting VI students, teachers and lecturers. Since then, ABAPSTAS has grown into a national self-help and campaigning organisation with a strong voice. Their main focus is still on education and employment, but members now include people who have moved into careers other than teaching.

Telephone: 0117 966 4839

Website: [www.abapstas.org.uk](https://wiltsblind-my.sharepoint.com/personal/data_sightsupportwest_org_uk/Documents/Group/1.%20Sight%20Support/Services/Employment%20Support%20Docs/www.abapstas.org.uk)

**Association of Disabled Professionals**

Telephone: **01204 431638** (answerphone only service)

Website: [**www.adp.org.uk**](https://wiltsblind-my.sharepoint.com/personal/data_sightsupportwest_org_uk/Documents/Group/1.%20Sight%20Support/Services/Employment%20Support%20Docs/www.adp.org.uk)

Email: [**info@adp.org.uk**](mailto:info@adp.org.uk)

ADP is a membership organisation that provides advice, information and peer support to disabled people interested in working in professional fields. ADP also provides a quarterly newsletter and a series of employment guides for disabled people.