# Looking for work – Starting your Job Search

## About this factsheet

This factsheet is part of a series of factsheets on employment issues. This factsheet is a guide for anyone who is thinking about starting a job search or for anyone who is currently in the process of looking for a job. At the end you will find the full list, and details of where to find them.

## For further information

RNIB Helpline can refer you to an employment specialist for further advice and guidance relating to your employment situation. RNIB Helpline can also help you by providing information and advice on a range of topics, such as eye health, the latest products, leisure opportunities, benefits advice and emotional support.

Call the Helpline team on **0303 123 9999** or email **helpline@rnib.org.uk**.

## 1. Planning your job search

Starting a job search can be a daunting task. There are a bewildering number of job roles in the labour market and sometimes it can be hard to know what you could and should be applying for. It is worth remembering that you are protected under the Equality Act 2010, which applies to the whole of the recruitment process. Employers have a duty to anticipate your requirements at every stage, from accessing vacancies, filling out application forms, to interview tests. The Equality Act's protection applies if you meet the Act's definition of a disabled person. If a consultant ophthalmologist has registered you as partially sighted/sight impaired or blind/severely sight impaired, then you are treated as meeting the Equality Act's definition of a disabled person. You will need to have a Certificate of Visual Impairment (CVI), or BP1 in Scotland, to satisfy this requirement. If you do not meet the criteria for registration, you can still meet the definition of disability under the Equality Act if your sight loss has a significant impact on everyday activities and is likely to last for 12 months or more. You can evidence this with a letter from your doctor.

There is a statutory Code of Practice which explains how the Equality Act applies to work. This is published by the Equality and Human Rights Commission (**equalityhumanrights.com**). It includes good examples of how the Act applies and suggests reasonable adjustments. Employers should consult the Code to help them understand what they need to do for people with disabilities.

Before you start sending out your CV or completing application forms you need to be thinking about where you are - this will include:

**Your knowledge** - What do you know? What subjects have you studied? What qualifications have you achieved? What training courses have you attended?

**Your skills** - What do you do well? What do people compliment you on?

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

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

**Your resources** - 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?

It is also important to think about where you want to be. Setting employment objectives 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?

### 1.1 Get some advice

You can get advice and guidance on answering the above questions from a Careers Adviser. Before you start a job search, getting some specialist advice to help point you in the right direction can save you time and effort.

There are many providers of career services that can assist you to identify your current position and your employment objectives. You can find details of some of the major providers in our “Job seeking resources” factsheet. Details of where to find this are given in “Other factsheets in this series”.

Once you have identified the type of work you are interested in your next step is to find out all you can about it. You may like to consider the following:

* Do you have the necessary skills and qualifications required?
* Is there training available to help you progress within the field you are interested in?
* Are there many jobs of this kind within your planned work area? If not are you willing to adjust your travel plans?
* Are there areas of the job that may be inaccessible? If yes, how would you deal with this?
* Do you know anyone who does this type of work? If yes, consider asking them for information on the role.

Once you have the answers to these questions and are happy that this type of work is for you, consider gaining some work experience, either via voluntary work or a work placement. This can then be added to your CV, highlighting the skills you have gained.

**Residential training courses**

Residential training courses can help people with sight loss get a job, gain more experience to keep a job or become self-employed. Blind and partially sighted people who are unemployed can apply for residential training if there aren’t any suitable training courses available locally. You can apply for residential training and find out what courses are available by contacting your Disability Employment Adviser at your local Jobcentre. The Royal National College for the Blind (RNC) offers a Specialist Employment Support programme for adult learners. For further information visit **rnc.ac.uk**.

You can also call the college on **01432 265 725** or email **info@rnc.ac.uk**.

### 1.2 Focus your time and effort

There is no substitute for time and effort in a job search, but this needs to be focused correctly. There is no point in completing 10 applications for a job in a specific sector if candidates are required to have an entry qualification that you do not have. This is why it is important to get the help of a Careers Adviser.

### 1.3 Identifying vacancies

**Internet job boards**

Job boards like Total Jobs, Guardian Jobs and Jobs Go Public represent some of the best ways to easily find job vacancies. Job search engines such as **indeed.co.uk** can also help by searching multiple job boards at once. Most printed job opportunities appear online, alongside many more that are only available via job boards. Most websites allow you to upload a copy of your CV and covering letter. This makes applying for vacancies very easy, but you should remember to tailor your CV and covering letter to each vacancy in order to maximise your chances of getting an interview. A list of internet job boards can be found in the Job seeking resources factsheet.

**Approaching employers directly**

If you can identify a specific employer that you would like to work for then you should approach them directly as only a very small proportion of jobs are advertised on job boards. For example, if you wanted to work for RNIB then it would be far better to check **rnib.org.uk/who-we-are/jobs-rnib** than to check online job boards or newspaper adverts. If you do not have internet access, write to an employer with a copy of your CV and a covering letter. Hopefully they will be able to keep your details on file and consider you for any opportunities in the future.

**Newspapers**

Publications offer a good range of job vacancies, especially at a local level. It may not be possible for you to access printed newspaper vacancies, either through a vision aid or the support of a friend or relative. If this is the case then you should seek advice from your local Jobcentre Plus or the employment agencies in your local area.

**Employment agencies**

Agencies are intermediary services that match jobseekers to vacancies. Once registered with an agency they will match your skills and experience to vacancies that may be appropriate for you.

**Trade publications and websites**

If you are interested in a career in a specific sector of employment then trade publications and websites can be an excellent resource. For example, if you are interested in pursuing a career in marketing there are numerous publications and websites that specifically list marketing vacancies.

**Careers fairs**

Careers fairs are an excellent way of seeing lots of employers in one day. Careers fairs provide information about job vacancies and how companies plan to recruit for those vacancies.

**Jobcentre Plus Telephone Jobsearch**

Jobseeker Direct is a phone service operated by Jobcentre Plus. It aims to keep you in touch with the latest job vacancies. This service is available to anyone who is looking for work, and the lines are open weekdays 8:00am – 6:00pm, and Saturdays 9:00am – 1:00pm. All calls are charged at local rates. Telephone **0845 606 0234** for details. Alternatively, you can look for jobs online by going to **direct.gov.uk**.

### 1.4 Disability friendly employers

There is no certain way to identify specific employers as disability friendly or not. However, if this is an important part of focusing your job search then there are a couple of methods you can use.

**Disability Confident scheme**

Some employers are signed up to the Disability Confident scheme. The scheme is designed to help employers recruit and retain disabled people and people with health conditions for their skills and talent. To find out more about this scheme, as well as a list of employers who are signed up to it, visit **disabilityconfident.campaign.gov.uk**.

**Business Disability Forum**

Business Disability Forum is a not-for-profit member organisation that works towards making it easier and more rewarding to do business with and employ disabled people.

They have more than twenty years’ experience of working with public and private sector organisations, formerly as the Employers’ Forum on Disability. Their members employ almost 20 per cent of the UK workforce and, together, they seek to remove the barriers between public and private organisations and disabled people.

A list of their members can be found at

**businessdisabilityforum.org.uk**

## Other factsheets in this series

We also produce the following factsheets, which you may find of use:

* Access to Work
* Staying in work
* Job seeking resources
* Self-employment
* Your rights in employment
* Looking for Work - CVs and Application Forms
* Looking for Work – Interview Skills
* Looking for Work – Tests
* Looking for Work – Disclosing a Disability

All these factsheets can be found in electronic form at **rnib.org.uk/information-everyday-living/work-and-employment**

For print, braille, large print or audio, please contact our Helpline team on **0303 123 9999** or email **helpline@rnib.org.uk**

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