# **Looking for Work**

This factsheet is a guide for anyone who is thinking about starting work or starting self-employment. We’d recommend you look at our eLearning for Jobseekers course, as this has much more detail about job search, CVs (Curriculum Vitae) and application forms, interview skills, both virtual and face to face, and how to discuss your sight loss with your employer.

At the end of this factsheet you will find a full list of resources available and details of where to find them.

## **eLearning for jobseekers**

RNIB's free eLearning course has been designed to help people with sight loss decide the next steps to take when thinking about employment. Using experts in this field, we’ve put together our top tips for a successful approach to looking for work.

The eLearning covers everything from what you need to do before applying for opportunities, how to write a CV, complete application forms, interview techniques and more.

The full course lasts approximately fifty minutes, but you can choose to do the sections relevant to you or the entire course. You can start and pause the course, so you can take as much time as you need to complete it. Once you sign up, the course will be available for you to revisit any time you want to refresh your job search skills. To register for the course visit netlearn.com/jobseekers.

### **Starting your Job Search**

There are a large variety of roles available, presenting opportunities to discover the perfect fit for your skills and aspirations.

Before sending your CV or completing application forms think about your:

* knowledge
* skills
* experience
* interests – both personal and what type of employment you might be interested in.

Careers advisers can provide more information and guidance and ideas about moving in the right direction.

When you’ve decided what type of employment you want, you’ll need to think about how you are going to apply for the roles. This can include:

* internet job searching websites, offering a wide range of opportunities across different sectors
* approaching employers directly – via their own websites or by writing to them
* newspapers and trade publications
* employment agencies
* careers fairs
* Job Centre Plus.

There are disability friendly employers, you can learn more through the disability confident scheme, by visiting disabilityconfident.campaign.gov.uk.

Or you might look into opportunities with employers who have achieved the RNIB Visibly Better Employer quality standard. These are employers who have demonstrated their commitment to fair recruitment and retention of employees with sight loss. You can find out more at **rnib.org.uk/work-with-visibly-better-employer**.

### **CVs, application forms and covering letters**

A CV is a document that has your personal details and your relevant skills, experience and qualifications. It should be kept up to date and no longer than two sides of A4 paper.

Information to include in a CV:

* Personal profile – an introductory paragraph detailing your skills and achievements and goals.
* Key Skills – any transferable skills that are relevant to the job you are applying for.
* Employment history and work experience – any experience including voluntary work.
* Education history – any qualifications you have.
* References – it is always useful to put available on request, especially if you have more than two references. That way, you can choose who is most relevant.

Application forms are used for some job roles instead of your CV. The forms will ask for all your personal details and job history and could also ask you to write a statement about your relevant experience and examples of how you have overcome situations. It is useful to follow the personal specification in the job description and answer each point.

A covering letter can accompany your CV or application form when applying for your job role. It is a letter that introduces yourself and will generate interest from the employer to know more about you.

### **Interview skills**

Whether you have experience in having interviews or it’s your first one, interviews can be daunting. To be offered an interview, you will have been shortlisted and shown that you have the necessary experience, qualities and qualifications (if necessary) that the employer is looking for and they want to know more about you.

Before your interview, make sure to research the company or organisation and the team and department you will be working within so that you feel confident in knowing that you understand the job and the organisation. The more you know, the more confident you will be and remember, you know your qualities better than anybody else.

### **Tests at Interview**

When you are invited for an interview, the employer will tell you if part of your interview includes a test.

These could include:

* competency tests
* psychometric tests

If your interview does include a test, you should contact the employer to see what format the test is in, to ensure that it will be accessible for you and if there are any adjustments needed.

### **Talking to an employer about your sight loss**

Choosing when to talk about your sight loss will depend on several things, including how comfortable you are. Have a look at the detailed guidance in our eLearning to see how you can put this into context.

## **Self-Employment**

You may feel that you would like to have more control over how you work and become self-employed, or you are already self-employed and would like to know if there is any additional support out there.

There are three different types of business structure for self-employment. These are:

* Sole trader
* Partnerships
* Limited company

To become self-employed, you need to think about the type of business you would like to start – a service or a product – and how you will develop this into a viable business plan.

Once your business plan has been completed, you could then be able to source funding. There are four types of funding available:

* Grant funding
* Loans
* Benefits: Working Tax credit, blind persons allowance or permitted earnings
* Government support: Access to Work scheme.

## **Access to work**

You may get funding from Access to Work for any specialist equipment or extra transport costs and help with work-related barriers resulting from sight loss. Access to Work is available to those who are self-employed or in employment. Employers may be concerned about the potential costs of taking on an employee with sight loss and many are not aware of the Access to Work scheme. By openly speaking about your sight loss, you will be able to raise the employer's awareness about the help that is available and allow them to focus on your skills and abilities. For more information visit gov.uk/access-to-work.

## **Further information**

#### **Jobcentre Plus**

Jobcentre Plus is a government agency supporting people of working age from welfare into work. Your local Jobcentre Plus office can give you a wide range of information on jobs, training and self-employment options. To find the contact information for your local Jobcentre Plus visit gov.uk/contact-jobcentre-plus.

## How we can help

### RNIB Helpline

There is more information about equality and employment on our website, visit rnib.org.uk/equality-employment.

If you need someone who understands sight loss, call our Helpline on **0303 123 9999**, say **“Alexa, call RNIB Helpline”** to an Alexa-enabled device, or email **helpline@rnib.org.uk**. Our opening hours are weekdays from 8am – 8pm and Saturdays from 9am – 1pm.

### Sight Advice FAQ

Sight Advice FAQ answers questions about living with sight loss, eye health or being newly diagnosed with a sight condition. It is produced by RNIB in partnership with other sight loss organisations. **sightadvicefaq.org.uk**

### Connect with others

Meet or connect with others who are blind or partially sighted online, by phone or in your community to share interests, experiences and support for each other. From book clubs and social groups to sport and volunteering, our friendly, helpful and knowledgeable team can link you up with opportunities to suit you. Visit **rnib.org.uk/connect** or call **0303 123 9999**.

**RNIB Employment Services**

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