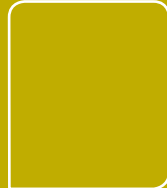


tackling worklessness

a series of 'how to' guides
for councils and their partners

helping people stay in work



1. why retention is important

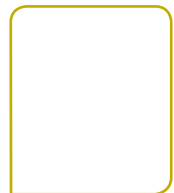
Helping people stay in work rather than return to out-of-work benefits is important for the individual, reducing child poverty and maximising the effectiveness of public spending on employment and skills. This guide is about what councils and partners can do to help people stay in work and progress in their career once they have found a job.

Around 40 per cent of claimants leave their new jobs in the first three months, and by twelve months 70 per cent have left. However, after 12 months most people stay in work. Helping people stay in work in the early months of a new job can make a big difference to sustaining employment and not returning to out-of-work benefits.

The two main groups of claimants who are at the greatest risk of not sustaining a job are lone parents and those who have been long-term claimants, including those on incapacity benefit. Lone parents are twice as likely as others to leave

employment, usually immediately before or during school holidays.

At the time of writing, the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) is concluding a long-term evaluation of providing retention and advancement services for lone parents in pilot areas. Initial results show that lone parents receiving in-work support increase their earnings substantially, mostly because more are working full-time. As a result of these pilots, a number of initiatives have been introduced nationally.



lone parents

In Work Advisory Support (IWAS) is a voluntary initiative with the aim of assisting lone parents in their transition into work and their career progression once in work. Eligible lone parents will be able to access adviser support and guidance of approximately one hour per month during their initial 26 weeks of employment.

In Work Emergency Discretionary Fund (IWEDF) is available to lone parents for the first 26 weeks of their employment to provide in-work financial help to lone parents to overcome unexpected financial issues which might otherwise be a barrier for them to remain in employment. IWEDF is paid at the personal advisor's (PA's) discretion, and they are responsible for identifying whether the customer is experiencing financial difficulties or emergencies that would prevent them from remaining in employment.

In Work Credit (IWC) was introduced to help lone parents make the transition from welfare into work of at least 16 hours per week. IWC is a credit paid to all eligible lone parents (parents in pilot districts) for a maximum of 52 weeks. It is a non-taxable weekly payment of £40 (non-London districts) and £60 (London districts only). IWC is not treated as income when customers are applying for carers allowance, working tax credit (WTC), housing benefit (HB), including Housing Allowance where this is being piloted, and Council Tax Benefit (CTB).



2. people with a disability or health condition

There are a number of initiatives that can support people with health problems and disabilities when moving into work.

- **Access to Work** can help employers with the extra costs of employing staff with a disability or health condition. For example, it might pay towards the cost of equipment which they need at work, adapting premises to meet their needs, or a support worker.
- **Workstep** enables people with more complex employment barriers to work effectively with the right support alongside non-disabled colleagues.
- **The Job Introduction Scheme (JIS)** can offer a weekly grant of £75 to employers recruiting a disabled person, to help them with the cost of wages or other employment costs for the first few weeks of their employment.

- **New Deal for Disabled People** is a voluntary initiative that operates in some areas of the UK. It aims to support people on disability or health-related benefits to move into and retain paid work.
- **Pathways to Work** offers in-work support from an advisor alongside sub-contracted specialist support services covering occupational health, mentoring, job-coaching, in-depth support such as counselling and financial and debt counselling services.

www.jobcentreplus.gov.uk/JCP/Employers/advisoryservices/diversity/index.html

There are a number of different reasons why people either cannot or choose not to stay in a job:

- the person was not suited to the job
- career decisions, including leaving for a better job or full-time training
- vulnerable employment, often linked with poor working conditions
- inadequate life skills and/or motivation to work

- seasonal workers who find it difficult to find out-of-season employment
- financial reasons, including insufficient financial gain when working, possibly as a result of lack of awareness of in-work tax credits or continued entitlement to housing and other benefits
- caring responsibilities for children and other dependants, especially if the working hours are inflexible.

3. what are you trying to achieve?

Leaving a job can be a positive decision to get a better job. The objective is to minimise bad or misinformed decisions of employers and employees. There is an important distinction between sustained employment and a sustained job. The former means that someone remains working but in a number of different jobs. The latter focuses on keeping someone in their current job. The nature of support and advice can be very different according to which is being pursued.

Sustained employment will stress career advice, building skills, improving qualifications, financial advice and job-search skills. Sustaining a job will stress mentoring, dispute resolution, impartial advice, improving skills needed for the job, the availability of childcare, flexible working and advice to employers.

steps towards helping new workers keep jobs

Experience shows that a large majority of people who leave a job, for whatever reason, do so within the first six months. A focus on providing the right advice and support in the first months of employment is therefore critical. Here are some steps which local partners can take:

1. Better advice: Job Seekers Allowance (JSA) claimants now have skills health checks that will identify basic skills needs and provide advice on training opportunities. When a claimant goes on a training course and then gets a job they can often continue their training with a grant by Train to Gain. The new Adult Advancement and Careers Service (AACS) will start to be

rolled out nationwide from 2010, available to adults who need information and advice about finding or progressing in work. The intention is that AACCS will be available in a variety of ways, either via face-to-face meetings, telephone or the internet.

2. Rewarding providers of employment programmes for retention: DWP contractors for the Flexible New Deal, starting in parts of England in October 2009, will be partly rewarded for people who retain employment for 24 weeks, an increase on the present definition of a sustained job of 13 weeks. The intention is to incentivise contractors to maintain some support in the early months of employment. Councils could consider how they could encourage employment projects they fund to encourage retention.
3. Financial advice and incentives: the transition to work can be a particularly difficult time for the cashflow of individuals and households when there is uncertainty about continuing access to housing benefit and associated benefits such as free school meals. As shown earlier, lone parents are also entitled to additional payments in their first 52 weeks of employment. Local agencies will need to work in partnership to make sure claimants starting work, especially lone parents, have the right information about their entitlements.
4. Debt and money advice services: starting work can be more difficult if the individual or household is already in debt. Debt and money advice services can provide important advice on how repayments can be negotiated.
5. Recruitment processes: providing pre-employment support and work trials may help improve job matching. Signing a Local Employment Partnership (LEP) with Jobcentre Plus is the best way to put together the right package of support (see **guides 8 and 12**).
6. In-work support and continued training: promoting the Skills Pledge with local employers can encourage continued training for new employees. Support for new employees can include mentoring and coaching, dispute resolution and continued advice.

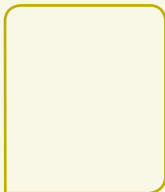
case study 1

Plymouth City Council

Plymouth's multi-agency income maximisation strategy was launched in April 2006 and has been commended as national good practice. It built on successful work regarding welfare benefits and tax credits take-up, debt services delivered by statutory and voluntary sectors, and included new areas for advice such as financial inclusion, fuel poverty and money management.

Since its launch, debt advice has alleviated over £51 million of personal debt. Over £6.2 million in previously unclaimed welfare benefits and tax credit were achieved.

www.plymouth.gov.uk/incomemaximisation



Taken together, these steps are intended to reduce the number of people who quickly return to out-of-work benefits. The nature and range of services requires a strong partnership approach between the different agencies involved.

promoting retention and advancement locally

Councils may feel that they have a minimal role in promoting retention and advancement. However, they can have a considerable influence through:

- analysis, delivery and monitoring performance through the Local Strategic Partnership (LSP) and through promoting flexible working
- ensuring that support services are sufficient and co-ordinated
- aiming to be an exemplar employer by providing support to new recruits
- meeting its statutory commitments under the Childcare Act to provide affordable and accessible childcare.

analysis, delivery and monitoring performance

The first step is for partners to focus on considering how they can improve retention and advancement locally and how they will monitor performance. Engaging employers in promoting flexible working is also important, as indicated by statistics on lone parents leaving work before or during the school holidays.



case study 2

Future Skills Dudley

Future Skills Dudley (FSD), which is part of Dudley Metropolitan Borough Council, has over 60 staff and an annual income in excess of £3 million. It offers a range of employment and job brokerage services including in-work training, support and mentoring.

In partnership with two other councils - Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council and Birmingham City Council - it operates the Building Essential Skills for Trades (BEST) programme for unemployed people and those in work who require additional or updated skills.

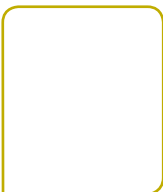
FSD also works with Green Care, the council's grounds maintenance direct services organisation. Future Skills are now piloting a transitional labour market scheme, which will allow trainees to be placed within Green Care for an extended period of up to six months, whilst they receive a wage payment. This approach allows trainees to gain enhanced work experience, which is linked to the possibility of gaining a temporary contract within Green Care or to moving into sustainable employment within the industry.

www.idea.gov.uk/idk/core/page.do?pageId=752398

sufficient and co-ordinated support services

Retention and advancement may not be the primary aim of support services but they can make a large contribution to helping people stay in employment. Some services that help increase retention, can be planned, funded and delivered locally. These include:

- information and advice services
- mentoring
- pre-recruitment programmes and work experience
- money and debt advice
- benefit take-up
- language and translation services
- childcare, especially during school holidays
- support for carers
- specialist support for disadvantaged groups
- support for care leavers.



case study 3

Manchester's Integrated Recruitment Scheme (IRES)

Manchester City Council's Integrated Recruitment and Employment Scheme (IRES) helps unemployed Manchester residents get a job with the city council. The posts that are offered are entry-level posts, which are mainly administrative roles.

The council works in partnership with an external training provider. There is no guarantee of a job, but most of the candidates that go through this scheme have been offered permanent employment, with a six month probationary period where training or development needs can be identified. If candidates are not offered a post, wider jobsearch support is given.

www.manchester.gov.uk/site/scripts/documents_info.php?categoryID=100008&documentID=2338&pageNumber=5

progressing in work

People are more likely to stay in work if they feel they have an opportunity to progress in their career and improve their earnings. Learning opportunities and securing a higher qualification are often important for someone to move upwards. Employers who have signed the Skills Pledge are more likely to provide these opportunities for people with low qualifications. Unionlearn is a further route in some workplaces as well as online advice.

Most councils provide support for, or advice on, adult education and family learning. Many of these courses are increasingly geared to providing the skills needed to maintain employment, especially basic skills. Sometimes people prefer to pursue learning routes outside of the work context, and for some it is the only option if their employer is not providing training. Is adult education and family learning in your area helping people get the skills they need to progress in work?

case study 4

Skills Pledge: Norfolk County Services

Signing the Skills Pledge reinforced Norfolk County Services' commitment to training and has provided a new impetus to the company's already award-winning training programme. With 4,500 employees across the eastern region and with a recent assessment showing that more than 70 per cent of employees lacked numeracy and literacy skills, the task of training is not an easy one.

Norfolk County Services is making good use of Train to Gain. Since September 2007, approximately 326 employees have achieved NVQ Level 2 with a further 75 on the waiting list. This is in addition to the Skills for Life and general training initiatives that the company also offers.

In the waste management and ground divisions alone, 50 per cent of employees now have a Level 2 qualification and the training has been so successful that the catering division, which is the largest within Norfolk County Services, currently has 150 employees about to start the NVQ Level 2, over 100 cooks and kitchen assistants already being qualified.

top tips

sign the skills pledge and encourage other employers to sign it.

promote LEPs with local employers.

if you provide or fund employment projects, encourage them to report on their success at keeping people in work for at least 24 weeks.

analyse with your local partners whether the lack of retention is a problem locally and identify the key groups who are most likely to leave a job and return to out-of-work benefits.

make sure information and advice services are aware of the needs of claimants going into work, including in-work financial support. Examine your council record in recruiting, retaining and progressing low-qualified staff.

examine what adult education and family learning can do to help people progress in work.

consider how you support the successful transition to employment and training for care leavers.

support employers in developing flexible working schemes.

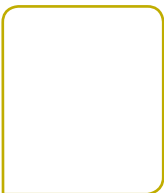
4. useful contacts and links

- Employment Retention and Advancement Demonstration pilot
www.dwp.gov.uk/asd/asd5/report_abstracts/rr_abstracts/rra_489.asp
- unionlearn
www.unionlearn.org.uk/about/index.cfm
- learndirect
www.learndirect.co.uk/
- Lone Parents advice
- nextsteps
www.nextsteps.org.uk
- Coaching and mentoring advice
www.accaglobal.com/employers/approved/services/employers/develop/professional_resources/coaching/toolkit
www.exemplas.com/Skills-and-Training/Mentoring--Coaching/Effective-mentoring
- Mentoring and Befriending Foundation
www.mandbf.org.uk
- National Graduate Development Programme
www.idea.gov.uk/idk/core/page.do?pagelId=4433562
- NHS
www.nhsemployers.org/RecruitmentAndRetention/DomesticRecruitment/Pages/Retainingtherightstaff.aspx
- Working Families
www.workingfamilies.org.uk/asp/employer_zone/e_welcome.asp

- National Audit Office report on sustainable employment
[www.nao.org.uk/
publications/0708/supporting_
people_to_stay_in_w.aspx](http://www.nao.org.uk/publications/0708/supporting_people_to_stay_in_w.aspx)

www.direct.gov.uk

www.jobcentreplus.gov.uk



5. glossary

- **advancement**

When people go on to gain jobs with higher pay, better benefits and conditions of service, regular hours, and/or full-time status.

- **sustained job**

Under the New Deals 18-24 and 25+, from 1998-2009, a sustained job was defined as the person being in work for 13 weeks. Under the Flexible New Deal, starting October 2009, and provider-led pathways for ESA/IB claimants, a sustained job or long job, as they are now being termed, is defined as the person being in work for 26 out of a period of 30 weeks. There is a payment to providers after 13 weeks of work. This is now termed as a short job.

- **learndirect**

This offers flexible courses that can be completed at a local centre, from home or at work, provided the participant has access to the internet. Courses are broken down into units so people can fit learning into their lives. In many cases, funding is available to help participants.

- **nextstep**

A free service that offers face-to-face help, assigning people a personal nextstep adviser to help people understand the job market, search and apply for jobs, find funding to support any learning and develop their CV. The service is available for anyone aged 20 or over. It is also available to people aged 18 or 19 if they have been referred to nextstep by Jobcentre Plus.

- **retention**

This term relates to employees who remain in their job when their own circumstances change or when the job itself changes.

- **unionlearn**

Established by the TUC to help unions communicate to members the benefits of study in the workplace or at a local college or learning provider. Through the programme, unions broker learning opportunities for their members securing the best courses to meet learners' needs, and running phone and online advice services.



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INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

©IDeA – April 2009

ISBN 978-0-7488-9282-2

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Text printed on 100 per cent recycled paper.
Printed using vegetable-based inks.

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L09-296

Produced by Liberata Design and Print Studio

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Local Government Association

The Local Government Association is the national voice for more than 450 local authorities in England and Wales. The LGA group comprises the LGA and five partner organisations which work together to support, promote and improve local government.

