



Employment & Training Opportunities for Women

A supported guide to next steps



Considering your next steps

There are a range of services out there to support you when you are considering next steps to employment, training, or education. This information booklet outlines some of the options and key contacts to support you, including how you can access financial support that you may be entitled to.



This guide has been created to reassure you that you will receive confidential help and advice from trained professionals to support you through the next steps of your journey. There are a variety of options here to show what kinds of support are available, so you can choose the options that best suits you.

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Support with digital access and skills for accessing online resources is available.

A lot of the information in this guide needs you to have basic digital skills for work, as well as access to devices and data.

We recognise that not everyone has this starting point, and if you need help you can reach out to **Mhor Collective**, a community interest company who focus on digital inclusion.

- **Phone:** 07785 462010
- **Online:** www.mhorcollective.com/contact-us

Getting started

Looking for work and understanding the different support available can feel overwhelming. Please be assured that there is help available to navigate these first steps, and this section details some helpful services that you can reach out to if you'd like more information or a one to one chat with a professional.

Citizen's Advice

Citizens Advice Scotland is an independent charity that provides free, confidential, impartial advice on topics like benefits, cost of living support and employment. It can be a useful place to start if you would like to speak to someone about what financial support you might be entitled to, if you would like help applying to benefits, or if you want to understand your employment rights.

Contact details & next steps

You can visit www.cas.org.uk/get-advice to find contact details for your local Citizens Advice Bureau.

Freephone: [0800 028 1456](tel:08000281456)

Website: www.citizensadvice.org.uk

If you would like support with a new universal credit application, you can access the **Help to Claim** service. See www.cas.org.uk/get-advice/help-claim for full details.

Skills Development Scotland

Skills Development Scotland (SDS) is your career service. It is there for everyone, at any age and at any stage of their career. You can get support to make informed decisions about your education, training, and career choices to help you get into work, change career, or to upskill/reskill.



Scan the QR code to find out how a Careers Advisor can help you.

You can get expert information, advice and guidance on:

- Career options and changes
- Job search, CVs and applications
- Learning and funding
- Volunteering

How to contact SDS

SDS has a network of centres and community venues across Scotland. To find details for your local centre or community venues, or to send an online enquiry, visit:

<https://www.skillsdevelopmentscotland.co.uk/contact-sds>

Freephone: 0800 917 8000.

Website: www.myworldofwork.co.uk

If you would like to speak with a female Careers Advisor, you can scan this QR code to arrange a free and confidential meeting:



Benefits and employment support

In Scotland, most benefits are delivered by either the UK Government (through DWP) or Scottish Government (through Social Security Scotland), with some support also available through your local council. This section explains how you can access the support you're entitled to.

- You can find further information on **help with the cost of living** at costofliving.campaign.gov.scot.
- You may also find it useful to use a **benefit calculator** to see an estimate of the support you could receive. For links and further information please visit: www.gov.uk/benefits-calculators.

Universal Credit & JobCentre (UK Government)

The JobCentre plays a key role in helping people find jobs. When you claim Universal Credit or Job Seeker's Allowance, a JobCentre work coach will offer you tailored support. They can provide a range of advice and support, from helping with CVs and interview techniques to matching you with job vacancies.

Contact details and next steps

Apply online for Universal Credit:

www.gov.uk/universal-credit/how-to-claim

Apply online for Jobseeker's Allowance:

www.gov.uk/jobseekers-allowance/apply-new-style-ja

Freephone: 0800 055 6688, Monday to Friday, 8am to 5pm

If you want to contact your nearest office, you can find their details here: <https://find-your-nearest-jobcentre.dwp.gov.uk/>

Social Security Scotland (Scottish Government)

Social Security Scotland delivers financial support to people who need it. Their payments help eligible people and include low-income benefits, disability support, and carer benefits. They also provide Job Start Payment, which you could be entitled to if you are under 25 or a care leaver on certain benefits.

Social Security Scotland treat people with dignity, fairness and respect and believe social security is a human right. They aim to be accessible, helpful, and want to ensure people get the support they are entitled to.

For a full list of Social Security Scotland benefits and to find out how to apply, please visit: www.socialsecurity.gov.scot/benefits

Contact details and next steps

Phone and webchat

You can contact Social Security Scotland by phone or webchat between 8am to 5pm, Monday to Friday.

Freephone: 0800 182 2222

Webchat: <https://chat.socialsecurity.gov.scot/>

In-person appointments across Scotland

There are teams of specialist advisers based in communities all across Scotland in every local council area, who can meet people at convenient places in their local community. Get in touch using the contact details above if you'd like an appointment.

Drop-in service, Dundee

Agnes Husband House, 2 Greenmarket, Dundee, DD1 4QB

You can also access a drop-in service at Social Security Scotland's Head Office in Dundee, which is available **Monday to Friday, 8am - 6pm**. You don't need an appointment to access this service.

Local Council financial support

Some benefits and financial support is delivered directly by local councils. The support available will depend on which council area you live in, but can include payments such as:

- Crisis and community care grants
- Discretionary Housing Payments
- Free travel passes

Your local council may also be able to signpost you to other support that's available in your area.

Find out more

Each council will provide contact details and information about the support available on their website.

You can find the website for your local council here:

www.mygov.scot/contact-local-council

If you're unsure which local council you're in, you can search by postcode at: www.gov.uk/find-local-council

Local employment support

There are support services across Scotland that can provide flexible support to help you to reach your employment goals.

Next steps

To find out what's available where you live, visit:

www.employabilityinscotland.com/local-employability-services/

Childcare support

There's a range of financial support available to help pay for childcare costs – a summary of this is below but further information can be found at the Parent Club website: www.parentclub.scot/topics/childcare

Free early learning and childcare in Scotland

All 3 and 4 year olds, and around a quarter of 2 year olds, can access 1140 hours of early learning and childcare, funded by the Scottish Government. That works out at about 30 hours a week if you use it during term-time, or around 22 hours a week if you use it year round.

Universal Credit for childcare

If you have a child aged 16 or under and you're on Universal Credit, you can reclaim up to 85% of your childcare costs if you pay for registered childcare while you go to work. This includes nurseries, childminders, registered holiday clubs, after school clubs and breakfast clubs. You can [find out more on the gov.uk website](https://www.gov.uk).

If you are starting work or increasing your hours and can't afford the upfront costs of childcare, funding to pay these upfront costs may be available.

Other support

- If you are accessing employment support through your local council or Jobcentre, you can speak to them about any other support that may be available.
- The UK Government website provides a step-by-step guide on getting childcare support depending on your circumstances: www.gov.uk/get-childcare

Training and Job Programmes

Bright Future Cooperative

Bright Future Co-operative is a fast-tracked, safe and stable employment programme which helps support adults with a range of backgrounds, in particular, individuals recovering from forms of exploitation, to build their new lives in a variety of industries, including retail, administration, childcare, and construction.

No prior experience is needed, and the aim of the programme is to make the transition back into employment easier for people who may find the process daunting.

Individuals are matched with a participating company, and offered a four-week supported placement, with the opportunity to accept a full-time role.

There is no formal interview or application process, and throughout the placement, you are offered additional support from Bright Future Co-operative and your new employer, to navigate the new environment.

Contact details and next steps

Usually the first step towards a placement with Bright Future is to be referred through one of their charity partners. If you would like more information about this or to understand if you might be eligible, you can get in touch through email below.

Email: info@brightfuture.coop

Website: brightfuture.coop

Apprenticeships

Apprenticeships are a type of paid training offered by employers that combine employment and study. As an apprentice you can learn new skills, work towards a qualification, and get paid at the same time.

Find out more

Visit www.apprenticeships.scot/ to learn more about apprenticeships and find an opportunity that suits you.

Business support resources

If you have an interest in starting your own business, there are services to help you including:

- **Firstport:** Firstport is a charity that provides flexible, tailored advice to people who would like to start and grow their own business. If you'd like to find out more, you can visit: www.firstport.org.uk/about/how-we-work-with-you
- **Business Gateway:** Business Gateway is a publicly funded service that provides free business support to anyone in Scotland. You can find out more at www.bgateway.com.
- The **Find Business Support** website is a central directory for public sector business support across Scotland. You can browse available support at: findbusinesssupport.gov.scot
- The **Women's Business Centre** website provides free resources and guidance for women who would like to start their own business: womensbusinesscentre.com

Education Opportunities

Student Information Scotland

Student Information Scotland supports new and current students make informed choices about their education. Their website provides information on various topics such as courses, funding, finance, and student life.

Contact details and next steps

Website: <https://www.studentinformation.gov.scot>

Open University

The Open University (OU) provides both full and part-time higher education, and is the largest provider of part-time higher education in Scotland. It offers flexible distance learning opportunities, and there are a range of course options that allow you to develop your knowledge and skills, whatever your study goal, and you will have the flexibility to study when and where you want. Most OU programmes have no entry requirements, and most students in Scotland study for free with a part-time fee grant and top-up funding from the OU.

Contact details and next steps

Website: www.open.ac.uk.

Contact: www.open.ac.uk/contact

You can use the OU's finance finder to see what funding you might be eligible for: www.open.ac.uk/courses/fees-and-funding/finance-finder.

Scottish Wider Access Programme

The Scottish Wider Access Programme (SWAP) supports access to higher education for adult learners. SWAP access programmes run at colleges across Scotland and are a proven route into hundreds of degree courses at partner universities. Their programmes are specifically designed for adults who are returning to education after a gap, and who have the motivation and ability to go on to study at university or for a higher level qualification (HNC) at college.

Contact details and next steps

There are two SWAP teams depending on where in Scotland you live. You can find full contact information and further details on the SWAP website: www.scottishwideraccess.org/home

Other helpful starting points

- **Finding courses:** If you would like to find out more about what learning opportunities are available in your area you can use My World of Work's search tool: <https://www.myworldofwork.co.uk/search-courses>
- **Discover Uni:** Discover Uni has information to help you decide if university is right for you, and to find and compare courses: <https://discoveruni.gov.uk>
- **Funding:** Further information on the types and amounts of funding available and how to apply for these can be found on the Student Awards Agency Scotland (SAAS) website: www.saas.co.uk

Other Support & Information

Smart Works

Smart Works Scotland is a women's employment charity. They provide a free coaching and dressing service to help unemployed women succeed at interview and secure a job.

Their friendly, expert coaches can support you with your CV, career guidance, applications, interview preparation and confidence. You can also access a high-quality interview outfit to ensure you look and feel your best ready for a job interview.

To access a Smart Works appointment, you should request a referral from somebody already supporting you, such as Jobcentre Plus or charity/support organisation. If you're not sure who to reach out to for your referral, please get in touch with Smart Works and they will be happy to help.

Contact details and next steps

Website: <https://scotland.smartworks.org.uk>

Email: Scotland@smartworks.org.uk

Phone: 0300 373 0955, Monday to Friday 9am - 5pm.

This section of the Smart Works website explains how you can access support:

<https://scotland.smartworks.org.uk/what-we-do/get-support>

Disclosure Scotland

As part of the recruitment process, organisations can ask anyone to apply for a disclosure so they can see a record of any relevant previous convictions. Though this can feel daunting, please be assured that is a normal part of the process. If you have previous convictions, this does not mean you will be prevented from securing a job, and there is advice and support available.

There are different disclosure levels depending on the kind of role you're applying for, and everyone applying for a given role will be subject to the same checks.

Scotland Works for You

Disclosure Scotland leads the Scotland Works for You group, which offers advice and practical support to improve job opportunities for people with convictions. If you would like advice or support in relation to disclosures, you can email ScotlandWorksforYou@gov.scot.

Further info and support

It's important to note that not all previous convictions will appear on a disclosure certificate (for example some may be 'spent' convictions). You can find out more about disclosure levels at www.mygov.scot/disclosure-levels.

You can find further information and links to other support organisations at www.mygov.scot/find-a-job-with-a-conviction.

