



Keep informed on your journey through education, training and work

National Careers Service

New hub

The National Careers Service has launched a **new hub** aimed at helping parents, carers and guardians to help young people make education and career choices. The hub page has information on how you can help a young person to assess their skills and interests, working out what options are available to them and much more.

Helping young people make education and career choices



Special educational needs (SEND) advice

The national Careers Service provides education advice for young people who are disabled or have special educational needs. It may help them choose what they'd like to do next.

Getting the conversation started

Talking Futures have designed conversation cards to help you and your young person build a picture of the sectors and careers that interest them.

Help with exam results

Our exam results service provides help and support for young people after they've got their results.

We've also got a parent's guide to exam results which outlines how they can support young people during the exam results

Connect and network with other apprentices!

Connect and Network with other Apprentices gives Information and useful tips on how to connect with other apprentices and how it can help with your apprenticeship.

Being able to connect with other apprentices can be an important part of the apprenticeship experience. You can share experiences, learn from other apprentices, and discuss and get support with any concerns or issues you might have.

Why become part of a Network?

Whether you are the only apprentice at your employer or part of a bigger group, you can sometimes feel isolated. Being part of a network is a great way to join in and develop those links and can even lead to long-term friendships. It can also help you build your confidence and provides opportunities to develop skills like presenting or chairing meetings.



It might be you decide to work with your employer and other apprentices where you work to build your own network. Encouraging other apprentices to get involved will help make them feel part of the team and is a brilliant way to share your experiences and to support anyone who has any questions or concerns.

Apprentice Networks

There are many other different types of networks. Here are some you might decide to contact or become part of.

- **Apprenticeship Ambassador Network**
- **Association of Apprentices**
- **Disabled Apprentice Network**
- Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education (IfATE) - **Apprentice Panel**
- **Youth Employment UK**

Need further help or support?

Contact the Apprenticeship helpline for advice and guidance

- **helpdesk@manage-apprenticeships.service.gov.uk**
- Telephone: 0800 0150 400
- Monday to Friday, 8am to 8pm

Support for Disabled apprentices and students

Find information on apprenticeships and support that is available for Disabled apprentices on the [UCAS website](#).

See the [video of Vicky](#) who is one of our DAN members.

A Reminder From UCAS:

Disability information will never be used to make a decision on an application for an apprenticeship or a university place – this is protected under the Equality Act 2012. It's only to make sure that you get the reasonable adjustments you are entitled to.

Information on student finance and funding from DR UK

Listen to our Education Officer Rundip Thind speak about student finance and funding on Tik Tok [@DisRightsUK](#) and our podcast.

[You can listen to the podcast to find out more about our work on this website.](#)

Disabled Apprentice Network



Are you doing an apprenticeship or recently finished your apprenticeship, then join us and become part of our leadership group.

[The Disabled Apprentice Network](#) (DAN) brings together Disabled apprentices and those who have finished their apprenticeship.

The Network is a lively and friendly forum for Disabled apprentices, to share their experiences and to offer views and proposals on what could improve apprenticeships for Disabled people.

Watch DAN members talk about their apprenticeships on the [DAN video](#) and on Tik Tok [@DisRightsUK](#)

To join the group contact: rabia.lemahieu@disabilityrightsuk.org

Association of Apprentices (AoA)

The Disabled Apprentice Network has a platform on the [Association of Apprentices](#) website. To join, register with AoA and go to AoA Connect or use this [Link to DAN](#)

The Hiring Chain

By hiring someone with Down syndrome, you start a virtuous chain: the more that people with Down Syndrome are seen at work, the more they'll be recognized as valuable employees, and the more they'll be hired. Do your part, start the Hiring Chain today.

Watch the [Hiring Chain video](#) performed by Sting.

New guidance for employers ‘will boost confidence’ of employers who want to recruit disabled people



ACAS has produced a **new guidance for employers**, explaining that employers are allowed to reserve jobs for Disabled people and making it clear that they can “specifically advertise for and recruit a Disabled person without the risk of disability discrimination”.

When recruiting, in some circumstances you can use protected characteristics to help a disadvantaged or an underrepresented group. This can also help your organisation to be more diverse and representative, as well as widening the talent pool you recruit from.

Read the **new guidance on reasonable adjustments for mental health at work** for both employers and workers.

Access to Work online claims service now available online

A new **Access to Work online claims service** is now available for all users on **GOV.UK**

This service enables users to:

- submit claims online
- see how much of their grant is left
- view previously submitted claim
- report some changes of circumstance

In order to access the service for the first time, users will need to verify their identity. As part of this process they will also create a username and password. They can then use these to simply log into the service without the need to verify their identity each time.

Guidance on what people will need in order to verify their identity can be found on our **GOV.UK** pages and in the service itself.

If you, or people you support, do encounter any issues using the service please contact the Access to Work service centre:

Telephone: 0800 121 7479

Textphone: 0800 121 7579

Relay UK (if you cannot hear or speak on the phone): 18001 then 0800 121 7479

British Sign Language (BSL) **video relay service** if you're on a computer - find out how to **use the service on mobile or tablet**

Monday to Friday, 9am to 5pm

If you have any feedback, around issues you've encountered or improvements we could make, you can also email us at **atwonlineclaims@dwp.gov.uk**.

Your stories

Get Ahead shares the unique talents and stories of young people who are doing apprenticeships, traineeships, supported internships, work experience or have done something special they want to share.

You too can get involved! Send your story to Getahead@disabilityrightsuk.org

Annabelle

My work experience

I work at-Teignmouth library.

What I do at my work placement:

- I stamp the new books with the phone number.
- I put books back on the shelves in the alphabetical order.
- I find the books from the reservation list.
- I find the books from the children's library.
- I photocopy pictures for the children's colouring, and I sharpen the pencils.
- I help make the decorations for an event.



What I have learnt at my placement

My work placement was found with the help of the career's office at Oakwood College.

- At the library I have learnt to put the books in alphabetical order and I practice these skills each week.
- I am learning about decimal places and how to sequence these to return the books.
- I am learning to use the bus which I take each week to my job.

I like my job at the library a lot!



My work experience

I work at- Sea change Budleigh Salterton

What I do at my work placement:

I have always liked cleaning; I like helping my Mum who is a cleaner.

I clean my room and when I came to Oakwood College, I help KC my tutor clean the class room. This makes KC very happy.

Dan Milliffe asked me if I would like to get a work placement doing cleaning and I said I would. Thank you very much Dan.

So I now work at Seachange in Budleigh Salterton.

Seachange supports the community by looking after people's health and happiness. They offer easy access to practical support for all generations, young and old, within the area of Exmouth, Woodbury and Budleigh Salterton.



On my work experience day, which is Wednesday, I go to Seachange and say hello to all the staff there.

- I empty the bins and Hoover the offices and the reception.
- I clean the gym and I use the carpet cleaner on the sofas from the day center.
- Sometimes I pressure wash the shelters.

What I have learnt at my placement

At my work placement I have learnt lots of skills.

- I have learnt how to clean professionally. Cleaning is something I have always enjoy doing, as I like to help my Mum. At Oakwood Specialist college, they knew I liked cleaning so found me a placement doing a job enjoy.
- I have learnt to use a pressure washer and how to clean the gym equipment.
- I have learnt how to manage my time by timing each task I do and make sure I am on schedule.
- I am learning to be independent and I am building my confidence at my job.

I love using the jet washer safely.



Danielle

My work Experience

I have worked at Waitrose – Sidmouth

What I do at my work placement

When I started at Oakwood Specialist college, I didn't know what I wanted to do, so my tutor helped me look at my previous knowledge, interests, hobbies, challenges and things I like to do.

Dan (Work Experience Coordinator) helped me find a placement at Waitrose.



The staff at Waitrose were so lovely and really helped me

- on the till
- stocking shelves
- on the Deli counter, getting rid of out-of-date stock

I felt very important with my Waitrose pinny on!

What I have learnt at my placement

- I learned to be clean and tidy,
- to be nice to the customers and staff,
- to learn to keep my voice down on the shop floor,
- to follow instruction and not to run off.



"I am a great advocate for non-speaking people. Non-speaking does not mean non- intelligent."



Disability Rights UK is delighted to work with Murray to raise awareness and understanding about autism and individuals whose voices are often marginalized.

You may already be familiar with Murray through his appearance in a television series on autism alongside Chris Packham. However, Murray's story extends far beyond that, as he possesses a multitude of interests and talents.

As a dedicated advocate for non-speaking individuals, Murray amplifies the often-overlooked voices of those who communicate in alternative ways through his poetry and writing.

Murray's love for the theatre and opera provides an expressive platform where he can further illuminate the struggles and triumphs of the non-speaking autistic community.

My love of theatre by Murray

I have a passion for live theatre, I yearn to be able to pleasantly enjoy an evening at any kind of performance. I panic when I am there and even though I enjoy the show and understand that the people around me are thoroughly engrossed I sometimes wish that my sensory experience was different.

Please ask yourself if you would be able to enjoy a show if you were plagued by incoming distractions. It is painful when all I want to do is enjoy myself the same as the people who do not have sensory impairments.

I yearn to understand how neurotypicals pleasantly have a relaxing evening. For me, I just have to filter out noises and lights and try to kind of really concentrate on the performance I so desperately want to see.

Whether the wondrous faces of stage performers show angst or jest, I still always want to attend a show. I put my sensory and autistic difficulties to the back of my mind and try to focus as much as I can. Theatre makes me happy and I am pining to see more.

I passionately love Opera and one of my favourite performances was Yeoman of the Guard at the Coliseum. I was blown away by the superb, unequalled and stunning performers. Try to catch some Gilbert and Sullivan if you can. Their operas are another world of comedy and silliness with a serious message to humanity where I lose myself in the majesty and music for a wonderful few hours.

Read more articles and poetry from Murray in **[Get Ahead newsletters](#)** 24 and 25.

Overcoming Adversity & Thinking Differently - Our Story!



I guess our story started when my son Zak started to develop slightly differently, around 12 months old. I took him to the Doctors for some advice, as I suspected that he may be Autistic. I certainly wasn't prepared for the response that I received from our GP, who told me "There is nothing wrong with him, you just need to adopt Super Nanny tactics with him. Anyway, if he was Autistic, it's not as if I can give you a pill for it!" I remember feeling a mix of anger and upset, I wasn't expecting a pill, but a bit of compassion, advice and a point in the right direction wouldn't have gone a miss.



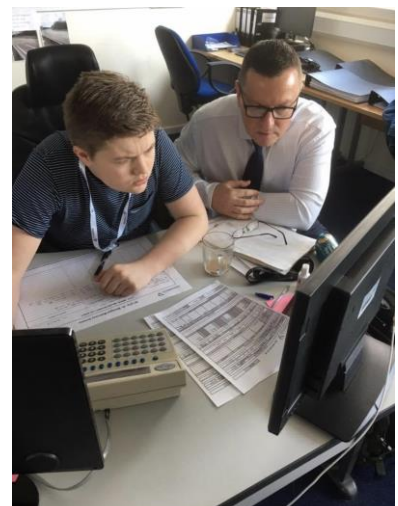
On reflection, my life has been a battle ever since, even the Paediatrician stated "He will never be any good, so get on with your life" when he diagnosed him at 3 years old. I remember feeling totally lost and abandoned. I really didn't know which way to turn. I could no longer continue my career in Telecommunications. More or less overnight I became a Carer. My son needed me, and I somehow needed to find a way through for the both of us.

The paperwork and form filling were endless, my son hardly slept, his behaviour was out of control, and I was totally on my own with it all. Plus the learning curve was ridiculously steep. I knew nothing about disability, let alone Autism.

Looking back, I wonder how we survived. It was tough, Zak didn't fit anywhere, and no one seemed to understand, even family at times. Friends avoided us, some would try to give me advice, but nothing really worked. For years education was a nightmare, Zak spent long periods out of school, Teachers wouldn't listen, and he just couldn't cope. It was totally isolating for us both, and a fight to get Mental Health support, however we did get an amazing psychiatrist at CAMHS, one of the few things that actually went right, during our journey.

Education continued to be a problem, Zak began to have panic attacks and was sick from anxiety. He confessed at 14, that he didn't want to live anymore. The system damaged him so much, he couldn't face another day. It was the worst day of my life, but the start of me taking control, thinking differently, and turning things around. Thank goodness he told me; I know others who haven't been as lucky.

I applied for a Personal Education Budget against his EHCP and built into his week, everything that I felt he needed to thrive. It worked brilliantly. He was getting therapy, exercise, learning and achieving. Most importantly, not a single panic attack, finally he was happy. I even managed to open up some work experience channels for him with Costain PLC, who have supported us for the past five years. They helped me to show what's possible when you care, work together and think differently. With Richard Paddy's help, we are now into several large construction companies, we have also penetrated the power industry, having just spent several days with National Grid.



You see, Zak is a genius, he didn't fit into the standard box, but by thinking differently, I've managed to create an alternative path, working with his special interests. Placing him in-front of the right people, where he can thrive and show off his skills, his hyper vigilance and photographic memory.

Don't get me wrong, it's been another battle, as we lost the personal budget two years ago, so I'm self-funding it to the best of my ability, also with help from the fabulous companies. Yes, the EHCP is a legally binding document, he's entitled to the support by law, but sometimes you need to put your mental health first. I'm fed up of fighting and facing the constant parent blame and scrutiny that accompanies the request for help.

These days I'm known on Twitter as 'SEND Warrior Mum making a difference!' Where I support over 10,000 people and run weekly live support sessions, Friday mornings at 10.30am, with Beth another SEND parent. They're called, Sharing the load as an Unpaid Carer with those who 'Get It'. Come and join us, you'd be most welcome. We have guest speakers joining all the time and we learn from each other. They're recorded too, so you can always catch up later.



Zak and myself also campaign wherever we can and have featured several times in national and regional newspapers. We met and interviewed the children's minister last year and demanded badly needed accountability. I've done a few podcasts too, sharing our journey and giving hope to others, that you can overcome any adversity if you try and do things differently.

So, to summarise, at 19 years old Zak didn't amount to nothing, as I was told back then by our Paediatrician. He's thriving and making an impact wherever he goes and his future is looking bright. He's also taught me what's important in life and we're doing our best to change things for other children and young people like Zak.

Before I sign off, I wanted to leave you with a few thoughts and tips.

- Make sure you find your tribe; they will get you through.
- Keep going! You'll have days when you simply can't take anymore. It won't be easy, but it will be worth it.
- Think outside the box, and remember the law is on your side, use it.
- Believe in yourself, and most importantly,
- Parents are the experts on their own children, don't let anyone tell you otherwise.
- Good luck!



Marie and Zak Martin.

- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?app=desktop&v=DAOI7SQckZg>
- <https://twitter.com/martinimarie/status/1668997697913643011?s=46>
- <https://www.nationalgrid.com/electricity-transmission/hinkley-connection-articles/hinkley-connection-project-hosts-pylon-super>

British Museum events

Saturday 1 July: 8:00-10:00am (families)

Relaxed early morning event: Ancient Egypt

[Link to book](#)

Explore the galleries and take part in sensory-based activities designed to be more accessible for children and adults who are autistic, learning disabled or have mental health conditions.

Selected parts of the Museum (Rooms 4, 61, 62 and 63) will open at 8am until 10am for two hours, before the Museum opens to the public.

Visitors can explore the galleries and take part in sensory-based activities including storytelling and arts and crafts.

We will be joined by a storyteller who will be telling a sensory story about the scribe Nebamun, as well as by artists from the national arts charity.

Generously sponsored by the Lord Leonard and Lady Estelle Wolfson Foundation.

Thursday 20 July: 6:00-8:00pm (adults)

Relaxed evening event: Living and Dying: live sculptural response

[Link to book](#)

Featuring artist Pardip Kapil, this interactive event is designed to be more accessible for adults who are autistic, learning disabled or have mental health conditions.

Artist and performer Pardip Kapil leads a live interactive event in response to the objects in the Living and Dying gallery at the British Museum. Explore Pardip's found and handmade props and costumes within his evolving, site-specific sculptural installation. Create your own sculptural forms alongside the artist and experience Pardip's layered film projections and experimental sound during this high energy live art event.

Derwen College wins Natspec Award for Innovation



Specialist further education college, Derwen College, in Shropshire, has won a national award for forging a partnership which has brought exceptional and innovative experiences to Performing Arts students with special educational needs and disabilities.

Know your rights!

This website is part of Disability Rights UK's Right to Participate project, funded by the Legal Education Foundation. The project aims to increase awareness of the Equality Act, especially the ways it can protect disabled people from discrimination in everyday situations.

Watch Disability Rights UK's **The Right to Participate** Videos on:

- Employment: <https://vimeo.com/294755159/10fe5ce721>
- Out & About: <https://vimeo.com/294755123/351555b11b>
- Education: <https://vimeo.com/294755090/10ece652b1>



Helpline for students, apprentices and trainees

Disability Rights UK runs a **Disabled Students Helpline** which offers information and advice to disabled students, apprentices and trainees by phone and email on a range of topics including:

- applying to college, university and apprenticeships
- telling people about your disability
- financial assistance
- adjustments for disabled students and apprentices
- rights in post -16 education and training under the Equality Act 2010
- how to resolve any disagreements.

The helpline supports disabled students, apprentices, parents and carers and professionals supporting disabled students aged over 16 in England.

- Opening hours: 11am-1pm on Tuesdays and Thursdays.
- Telephone: 0330 995 0414
- Email: students@disabilityrightsuk.org

Contact Us



Email: getahead@disabilityrightsuk.org



Twitter: [@GetAheadDRUK](https://twitter.com/GetAheadDRUK)



Instagram: [@GetAheadDRUK](https://www.instagram.com/GetAheadDRUK)



Videos: [YouTube](https://www.youtube.com/GetAheadDRUK)



Tik Tok: [@DisRightsUK](https://www.tiktok.com/@DisRightsUK)

Get Ahead

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We like to hear from you!

Give us your feedback and contact:

Getahead@disabilityrightsuk.org

For a text-only or large-print version of the Get Ahead newsletter:

email: getahead@disabilityrightsuk.org

Access the Get Ahead newsletters and magazines on our [Get Ahead webpage](#)

To join the Get Ahead mailing list, go to the [Get Ahead webpage](#)

Disability Rights UK

We are Disabled people leading change, and the voice of young Disabled people has to be central to that change.

DISABILITY RIGHTS HANDBOOK

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A guide to benefits and services
for all disabled people, their families,
carers and advisers