

Back to Work Benefits – Leaflet 11

This leaflet tells you about the help which is available for people who want to get back to work. If you do not understand any of the information given please call the Department on 732500.

The leaflet is for guidance only and should not be treated as a complete and authoritative statement of the law.

Back to Work Benefits

General

Back to work benefits may be provided at the discretion of the Department on the recommendation of the Administrator and are aimed at people who are getting **Sickness Benefit, Invalidity Benefit, Industrial Injury Benefit, Industrial Disablement Benefit, Unemployment Benefit** or **Supplementary Benefit** and would like some help in getting back to work.

Helpline Numbers

Incapacity Benefits 732507

Employment Benefits 732511

Supplementary Benefit 732508

Job Centre 732516

Short-term training

What is it?

This is training which the Department agrees a person can undertake while they are unemployed or recovering from a long term illness.

Can I do it?

If you have been unemployed or off work sick you can ask for the Department's agreement to start some training. You should not start training without the Department knowing.

Who pays?

If you need training before you can do any type of work, or re-training following an accident at work, the Department may also cover the cost if a grant or funding is not available from any other source.

How can I find out more?

If you are unemployed please call the Employment Benefits helpline on 732511.

If you are off work sick please call the Incapacity Benefits helpline on 732507.

If you are not in work and claiming Supplementary Benefit please call 732508

Basic skills training

What is it?

Basic Skills Training is a way for people on benefit to get help with basic I.T., reading and number skills to improve their chances of finding work.

How does it work?

The Department can make arrangements to refer you to the Guernsey College of Further Education for help. The training is provided in a relaxed and friendly manner.

Who Pays?

If you need Basic Skills Training and you are on benefit the Department can pay for it.

How can I find out more?

If you are unemployed please call the Employment Benefits helpline on 732511.

If you are off work sick please call the Incapacity Benefits helpline on 732507.

If you are not in work and claiming Supplementary Benefit please call 732508

Voluntary work

What is it?

While you are still claiming an incapacity benefit your doctor may suggest that you undertake a small amount of work to assist with your recovery. Voluntary work is unpaid work which you can do to assist your recovery from long-term

illness. You can also do voluntary work while you are signing on as unemployed. But if you are signing on you must be prepared to give this work up in favour of paid employment if a job opportunity arises.

How does it work?

If you are recovering from an illness and wish to do some voluntary work you must get the Department's agreement and obtain your doctor's agreement before you start. If you are signing on as unemployed you must discuss your plan to do voluntary work with the Employment Benefits section staff before you start.

How long can I do it for?

If you are recovering from an illness the purpose of allowing you to do voluntary work is to help you get one step closer to some form of paid work. If you are signing on as unemployed the Department would not expect you to carry on with voluntary work if it interferes with your job seeking or prevents you from starting paid work.

How can I find out more?

If you are unemployed please call the Employment Benefits helpline on 732511.

If you are off work sick please call the Incapacity Benefits helpline on 732507.

If you are not in work and claiming Supplementary Benefit please call 732508

Therapeutic work

What is it?

Therapeutic work is work which you can do if it forms part of a treatment plan designed to improve your health or increase your capacity for paid employment following long-term illness.

How does it work?

You must get the Department's agreement and also your doctor's support for this before you start. There are strict rules about therapeutic work and the Department considers each case on its own merits as the purpose of this would be to allow you to use the opportunity as a stepping stone to permanent paid employment; the expectation is that the therapeutic work will be unpaid.

In certain very restricted situations it is possible to receive limited earnings without it affecting your claim for sickness benefit, industrial injuries benefit or invalidity benefit. The current limit is less than half of the Lower Earnings Limit

which is set out in Leaflet 50 (Benefit Payment & Contribution Rates). If you are in receipt of Supplementary Benefit which is means tested, this may affect the earnings disregard level or may mean you exceed the benefit limitations. This is something that would need to be discussed with the Department before you start.

How long can I do it for?

An action plan would be agreed with you before the start date. Depending on your progress some changes to the benefit arrangements may be required once the therapeutic work is underway.

How can I find out more?

If you are off work sick please call the Incapacity Benefits helpline on 732507.

If you are off work and claiming Supplementary Benefit please call 732508

Work trial

What is it?

When a job vacancy exists, a work trial is a way for you to show an employer what you can do without having to close your claim for benefit.

Can I do it?

If you have been unemployed or off work sick for at least 8 weeks you can do a work trial. But you must get the Department's agreement before you start.

How does it work?

A work trial would normally last for up to 4 working weeks. It gives an employer the chance to try you out in a particular job before deciding whether to employ you. It also gives you the chance to show an employer what you can do.

What if the work trial is unpaid?

If the work trial is unpaid you can still receive your benefit. But if the employer takes you on after the trial, the payment of benefit will end. If you need help until you get your first wage you should call one of the helpline numbers at the front of this leaflet.

How can I find out more?

If you are unemployed please call the Employment Benefits helpline on 732511.

If you are off work sick please call the Incapacity Benefits helpline on 732507.

If you are off work and claiming Supplementary Benefit please call 732508

Gradual Return to Work

What is it?

This is a scheme aimed at helping you return to either your current job or a new job if you have been off work sick and claiming an incapacity benefit for at least 8 weeks.

Can I do it?

If you have been off work sick for 8 weeks or longer and you have your doctor's support, you can try a Gradual Return to Work. But you must get the Department's agreement before you start. You will also have to get the employer's agreement.

How does it work?

A member of the Department's staff will discuss the circumstances of the proposed gradual return to work with you beforehand and, where appropriate, you may be offered either of the following:

Option 1 – for employees

Over a period of up to 8 weeks, you may do some paid work. Any day you work will not be counted as a day of incapacity. Any day on which you do not work can be counted as a day of incapacity and benefit may be payable.

Option 2 – for self-employed people and certain categories of employees

Over a period of up to 13 weeks you may start some paid work on a gradually increasing basis. While you build up your hours, your benefit stays in payment but will cease when either the hours worked exceed 18 hours per week or after the expiry of the 13 weeks – whichever occurs first. You will be asked to keep a formal record of hours worked and the tasks carried out.

Do I still need a sick note?

If you are going to try a Gradual Return to Work and you want the Department to carry on paying you some incapacity benefit, you should still submit medical certificates during the return to work period.

What if my Gradual Return to Work fails?

If your Gradual Return to Work fails due to your ongoing health problems, the full payment of benefit should be reinstated straight away. But if the job comes to an end for any other reason you may have to make a new claim for benefit.

How can I find out more?

Please call the Incapacity Benefits helpline on 732507

Return to Work Plan

What is it?

A Return to Work Plan is a form which a member of staff will fill in during a meeting with you. It is the formal agreement between you and the Department which will record any training or any work you are going to do to help you back into employment.

You do not need to fill in a Return to Work Plan if you are already signing on as unemployed at the Job Centre. If you start work just fill in your orange card and return it to the Job Centre.

Who else will see my Return to Work Plan?

If you are hoping to start some work your doctor may need to read the Plan and agree it before you start. Part of your Plan may also be copied to your employer to confirm the agreement for you to start some work.

Weekly work log

What is it?

A work log is a weekly record which the Department will ask a person carrying out a gradual return to work plan to complete on a weekly basis. It applies for the agreed period the person is engaged in a return to work. It records exactly what work is done every day and how much time it has taken. It has to be signed and given back to the Department each week before any benefit can be paid.

What is the log used for?

The work log is used by the Department to monitor the progress being made. It contains a signed declaration that no other work has been carried out. It also contains a warning that a person may be prosecuted if they knowingly provide false information.

Back to Work Bonus

What is it?

A Back to Work Bonus is a lump sum of money paid to you when your claim ends because you have started a new job.

Will I get it?

If you have returned to a new job after being sick or unemployed for 6 months or longer, you may qualify for the Back to Work Bonus. But you must be in paid work for at least 15 hours per week and you can only receive 1 bonus payment in any period of 12 months.

Who won't get it?

A person going back to a job which has been held open for them will not be able to get the bonus. Nor will a self-employed person returning to an employment or a business which has continued to operate during their absence. A person starting work on the Community & Environmental Projects Scheme, Kick Start or any other such Sates funded work schemes will not be able to get the bonus.

When will I get it?

Normally the Back to Work Bonus is payable once you have been working for at least 15 hours per week for 4 weeks. All you have to do is complete a simple claim form which you can get by calling one of the helpline numbers at the front of this leaflet.

How much is it?

If you return to work for more than 25 hours per week you will be able to claim the full Back to Work Bonus of £500. If you are working between 15 and 25 hours per week you will be able to claim a reduced Back to Work Bonus of £300.

When should I claim?

You cannot claim before you have been back at work for 4 weeks. But you should claim within 4 months of starting the new job or you may lose out.

How can I find out more?

If you were unemployed or claiming supplementary benefit please call the Employment Benefits helpline on 732511.

If you were off work sick please call the Incapacity Benefits helpline on 732507.

Recruitment Grant for employers

This is available to an employer. If the employer recruits someone who has been claiming an incapacity or job seeking benefit for more than 6 months, a Recruitment Grant may be payable. The employer can contact the Department directly for assistance and information about how to make a claim by contacting the Job Centre helpline on 732516 or the Incapacity Benefits helpline on 732507.

Job start expenses

What is it?

If you have been out of work or in receipt of benefit for a long time you may need help with some of the costs connected with getting back into work. Each request is decided on its own merits. The Department may agree to pay some or all of the costs involved or turn down your request altogether.

How can I find out more?

If you are unemployed please call the Employment Benefits helpline on 732511.

If you are off work sick please call the Incapacity Benefits helpline on 732507

Community & Environmental Projects Scheme (CEPS)

What is it?

CEPS is a scheme which exists to provide a paid work opportunity for unemployed people and anyone trying to get back into work following a long-term illness. Fit and able bodied people are given the more physically demanding jobs. Less fit people or those recovering from long-term illness are given jobs more suited to their current ability. The work carried out is of benefit to the island.

How can I find out more?

If you are unemployed please call the Employment Benefits helpline on 732511.

If you are off work sick please call the Incapacity Benefits helpline on 732507.

Supported Employment Service (SES)

What is it?

The SES is run by the Health & Social Services Department. Its aim is to help people who have difficulty finding and maintaining work because of a learning, physical or sensory disability or suffer from a mental health problem, or on the autistic spectrum. It is also available to people who have acquired an injury through a head injury stroke or neurological impairment. But before the scheme can consider helping you a formal application to the service will be required and your doctor or relevant medical professional involved with your care may be asked to support your application. If you think the Supported Employment Services might be right for you please ask for more details by calling the Supported Employment Service on telephone number 701032.

The Department can also make arrangements to refer your case to the scheme.

How can I find out more?

If you are unemployed please call the Employments Benefits helpline on 732511.

If you are off work sick please call the Incapacity Benefits helpline on 732507

Other help

The Department also provides other help for people wishing to make a return to work such as a referral to a Work Rehabilitation Officer.

The Work Rehabilitation team provides one to one assistance for people who are no longer able to return to their previous employment. They can help provide support and guidance to those who have been out of employment for some time, whether through illness, redundancy or personal circumstances. In certain circumstances this may also include support such as job coaching, working alongside the person for an agreed period of time to help them settle into their new job.

How can I find out more?

If you are unemployed please call the Employment Benefit helpline on 732511.

If you are off work sick please call the Incapacity Benefits helpline on 732507.

If you are not in work and claiming Supplementary Benefit please call 732508

How do I make a complaint?

If you are dissatisfied with any aspect of our service please let a member of staff know at the time so that we can try to resolve the issue immediately. If you wish to make a formal complaint to the Department, please contact us and ask for a complaints leaflet or download a leaflet from the States website www.gov.gg (follow the links to 'Social Security', 'Complaints & Appeals', 'Customer Service Complaints') and return the completed complaints form to the Chief Officer, Social Security Department, Edward T Wheadon House, Le Truchot, St Peter Port, Guernsey GY1 3WH. Alternatively you can scan and email the completed form to us at ssd-complaints@gov.gg. A senior officer will then investigate your complaint in accordance with the Department's Complaints Policy.