

Work Choice – supporting information

This document has been produced to support the WORKSTEP Support Adviser conducting one-to-one discussions with WORKSTEP employees.

What is Work Choice?

From 25 October 2010 a new supported employment programme called Work Choice will replace the existing WORKSTEP and Work Preparation programmes and the Job Introduction Scheme.

Work Choice supports disabled people who have more complex needs, primarily those who are likely to need more intensive specialised support to find employment or to retain their position when they have entered work.

Why is a new programme being introduced?

To ensure disabled people get the same opportunities to benefit from work as everyone else.

To ensure employers, get the support and encouragement they may need to enable them to employ more disabled people.

Work Choice further develops provision for disabled people. It will be tailored to meet the individual needs of disabled people and will have a greater focus on supporting them to achieve their full potential and move towards being more independent.

What will the new programme look like?

Work Choice support is delivered within modules, each providing a flexible support service that is responsive to an individual's employment needs whatever their disability.

Module one will last for up to six months, the length of time will vary depending on the needs of the individual customer. In exceptional circumstances a three month extension could be possible.

Activities within this module will include vocational guidance, confidence building, job search advice, job application support, job retention skills and light touch employment support.

Module two will last for up to two years and provides support once a customer is employed. The service provider will work with the employer and their new employee to identify and agree the support required.

There will be regular contact with and intensive support for the employee, this could be daily, weekly or monthly depending on individual circumstances. Action and development plans will be reviewed to ensure the employee is developing the necessary skills/knowledge to move to unsupported

employment (where appropriate) or identify where longer-term support would be more beneficial.

Module three will provide longer-term supported employment and will have a clear focus on the ongoing development of the employee through their career.

Action and development plans will continue to be reviewed on a regular basis as circumstances can change. As with modules one and two, any changes to support needs will be identified and agreed and necessary action taken to ensure these are met.

There will be a continued emphasis to help individuals to develop and move into unsupported employment, but with the recognition that for some, a certain level of additional support may always be required.

Questions you may be asked

Will my job or place of work change?

We don't expect your job or place of work to change. If there are to be any changes your WORKSTEP Support Adviser will discuss these with you before they happen. Your employment support will continue and there will be the opportunity to review your support needs on a regular basis.

Will my working hours change?

No, your current arrangements will continue to apply*

Will my support adviser change?

You will continue to be supported by your current WORKSTEP Support Adviser for now. You will be informed if there are to be any changes as soon as they are known.

Which module will I go into?

For those in work, you will go into either module two or module three. You will discuss this with your WORKSTEP Support Adviser.

Do I need to do anything?

You don't need to do anything at the moment. Your WORKSTEP Support Adviser will keep you informed about what is happening and when.

When will we know who the new providers are?

We expect contracts to be awarded at the end of April 2010.

Do I have to fill in any forms?

You won't have to fill in any forms. We will ask you to allow us to supply relevant information where required to new providers and DWP - your WORKSTEP Support Adviser will explain this to you.

* It should be noted that some customers who began work under the Supported/Sheltered Employment Programme (the predecessor programme to WORKSTEP) and who are working fewer than 16 hours may transfer to Work Choice and continue to receive support. Provided their support needs remain unchanged, they will not be required to increase their hours to 16 or more.

Do I have to transfer to Work Choice?

No, you don't have to transfer to Work Choice. However, the current WORKSTEP programme will end in October 2010 and if you wish to continue to receive your current level of support you will need to transfer to the new programme.

Your existing WORKSTEP Support Adviser will give you full details of the new programme and the continued support this will offer to help you make an informed decision about transferring to Work Choice.

What information are you going to ask for and who will you share it with?

You will be asked to confirm your personal details for DWP and the Work Choice provider. Your support requirements will also need to be confirmed to ensure you are given all the necessary help to either secure or retain employment. You will be asked for your permission to share this information.

I work for a Government Department, what do these changes mean to me?

DWP are checking a list of WORKSTEP customers who are currently working within Government Departments and Agencies. In addition to the information available through existing providers, further details on what the changes will mean for those people will be sent out via their Human Resources teams and line managers in due course.