



UK Government

# CONNECT TO WORK

in Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent

Information for stakeholders, referring  
agencies and partners



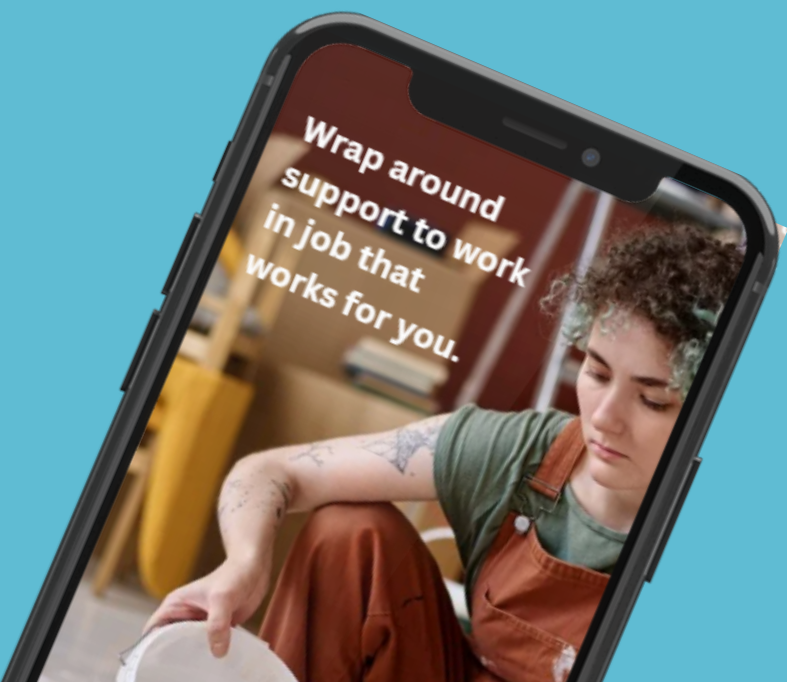
# ABOUT AND CONTENTS

## ANY QUESTIONS?

Don't hesitate to contact us



[connecttowork@staffordshire.gov.uk](mailto:connecttowork@staffordshire.gov.uk)



## ABOUT

This pack is designed to support stakeholder and partner understanding of the Connect to Work programme in the context of the wider Get Britain Working plan.

We hope you find this document helpful to understand the eligibility criteria for Connect to Work as well as the wider employment landscape, and to answer many of your questions.

This is the first stakeholder pack. The second pack will be released in February when:

- we'll answer any of your questions that have been raised in the meantime
- professionally designed promotional materials will be available.

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# FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

A free service

Intensive support for people with  
barriers

Part of a system-wide approach

For people in and out of work

## Question – What is Connect to Work?

- Connect to Work is a free, voluntary service available across England and Wales that helps working age adults get jobs and keep jobs.
- Connect to Work is an intensive supported employment programme which aims to help individuals with disabilities, long-term health conditions and a variety of other 'barriers' to achieve sustained and meaningful employment.
- It is funded by the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) to help people access supported employment based on their needs and circumstances.
- The programme aims to help people:
  - who are out of work due to a disability, long-term health conditions or other circumstances, with support available up to a period of 12 months.
  - who are in work but at risk of losing their jobs, with support provided for up to four months .

# FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

## CONTINUED

Co-ordinated

Extended time period

Achieving paid work

Doesn't stop when work achieved

Motivated individuals

## Question – What is Connect to Work? (continued)

- Led by Staffordshire County Council in partnership with Stoke-on-Trent City Council and commissioned delivery partners.
- The programme is due to run until March 2030.
- Connect to work aims to achieve paid employment.
- The scheme also provides in-work support, which includes coaching and training once the individual has secured paid employment.
- Connect to Work is there for individuals who want to work.

# FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

## CONTINUED

### Personalised support and training

### Five stage approach

## Question - What is supported employment?

- Supported employment is a model designed to help individuals with disabilities or other challenges, find and maintain paid employment through personalised support and training.
- It uses a 5-stage tailored and continuous approach to employment support tailored to individuals and employer needs.

The five stages are:

1. Jobseeker engagement
2. Vocational profiling
3. Employer engagement
4. Job matching
5. In-work support

# FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

## CONTINUED

Two different kinds of supported employment



For different populations

The best form of supported employment will be identified

## Question – What is supported employment? (continued)

- Connect to Work will offer two types of supported employment:

### Individual Placement & Support (IPS)

Integrates employment support alongside primary and secondary health services, and other support services.

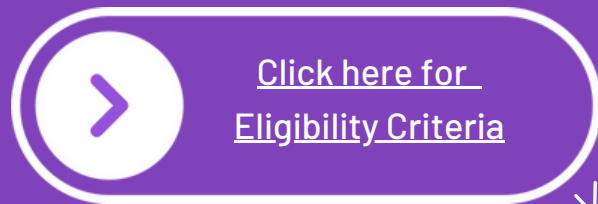
### Supported Employment Quality Employment (SEQF)

SEQF is (as required) a more intensive intervention and is oriented most usually around supporting adults with a learning disability or neurodivergence, as well as others with complex support needs where clinical integration is not needed or appropriate.

- Both IPS and SEQF are both valuable frameworks for supporting individuals with disabilities or health conditions. However, they cater to different populations.
- When signposting someone to the Connect to Work framework, the information in the Expression of Interest form will help staff to identify which supported employment programme is best suited to them.

# FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

## CONTINUED



ELIGIBILITY  
CRITERIA



plus ADDITIONAL  
ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA



plus SUITABILITY  
CRITERIA

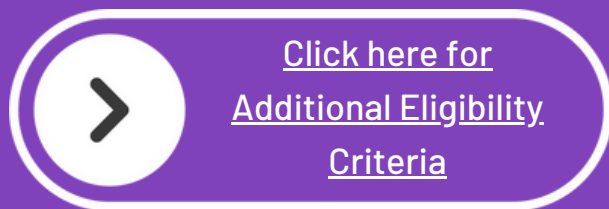
## Question – Who is Connect to Work for?

- To be eligible for enrolment on the Connect to Work programme, potential participants must meet the following Eligibility and Suitability Criteria, stipulated by DWP in their [Connect to Work: Grant Guidance for England](#).
- Connect to Work will provide support to eligible participants living with a disability as defined in Section 6 of the Equality Act (2010) or the Social Model of Disability, those with long-term health conditions and those belonging to one of the following groups identified by DWP as posing a barrier to work:
  - an offender (someone who is serving a community service) or ex-offender (someone who has completed a custodial or community sentence)
  - a carer
  - an ex-carer
  - a homeless person
  - a former member of His Majesty's (HM) Armed Forces (AF), a member of HM AF reserves, or a partner of current or former Armed Forces personnel
  - a person for whom a drug or alcohol dependency, including a history of dependency, presents a significant barrier to employment
  - care experienced young person or a care leaver
  - a refugee, a resettled Afghan
  - a person on the Ukrainian scheme
  - a victim/survivor of domestic abuse
  - young people identified as being involved or at risk of being involved in serious violence
  - a victim of modern slavery.



# FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

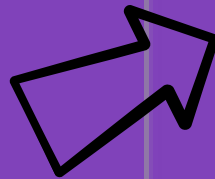
## CONTINUED



ELIGIBILITY  
CRITERIA



plus ADDITIONAL  
ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA



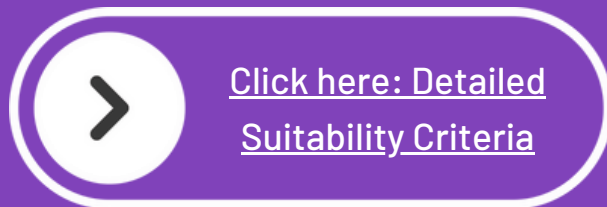
plus SUITABILITY  
CRITERIA

## Question – Who is Connect to Work for? (Continued)

- In addition to belonging to one of the participant groups noted in the Eligibility Criteria, potential participants must also meet the following Additional Eligibility Criteria:
  - they must not currently be doing any paid work and would be available to start a suitable job (applies only to participants who are not working), or are at risk of losing work (retention participants only)
  - they should have been employed continually for at least 3 months before starting Connect to Work, (retention participants only)
  - they must be of Working Age, aged 18 or over – with 16–17-year-olds considered in exceptional circumstances, such as being on Universal Credit, or where efforts to engage them in education or training options have not proved fruitful
  - they must have the right to work in the United Kingdom
  - they must have the right to live in the United Kingdom and are resident in England or Wales
  - they do not belong to a group which has no entitlement to public funds
  - they are not on another DWP employment programme
  - they must be a resident of Staffordshire.



## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (CONTINUED)



ELIGIBILITY  
CRITERIA



plus ADDITIONAL  
ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA



plus SUITABILITY  
CRITERIA



## Question - Who is Connect to Work for? (Continued)

- If all the eligibility and additional criteria are met, the potential participant must **also meet "suitability criteria"**



At least one "employment situation"

At least one "would benefit from  
Connect to Work situations"

- Being motivated to work
- Understand the offer and willing to engage

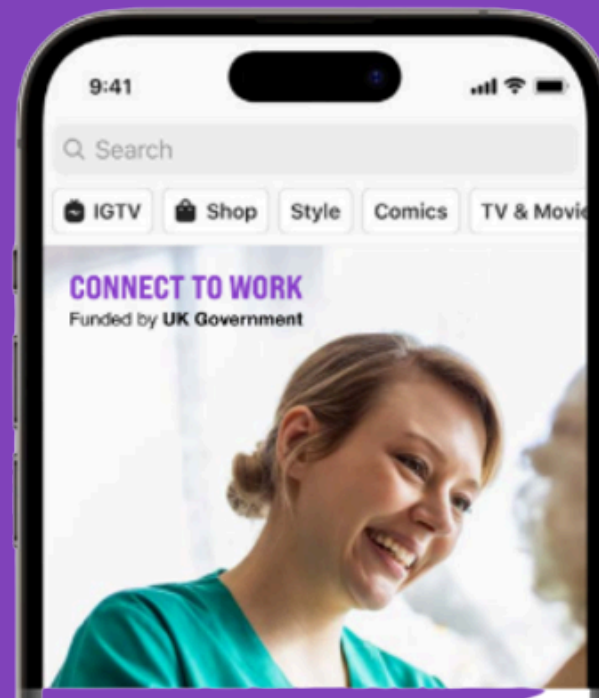
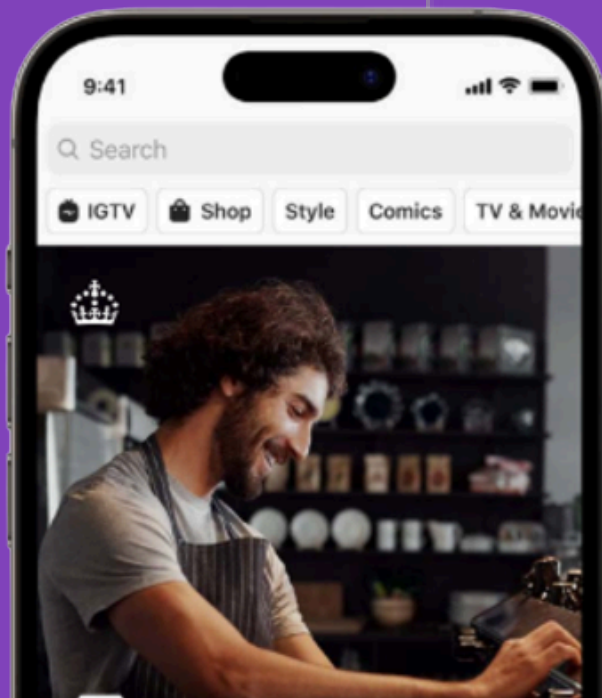


# FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS CONTINUED

Making sure the individual is not worse  
off from being on Connect to Work

Question – Can someone still access the programme  
if they are receiving some form of benefit?

- Yes. Individuals can still access the programme if they are in receipt of benefits.
- A financial calculation is also done as part of the support available to ensure that individuals are not worse off financially as a result of securing paid employment.



# FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

## CONTINUED

### Equal partners

#### Question - How are employers involved in the supported employment process?

- Employers are treated as equal partners throughout the supported employment process, with employer engagement being a fundamental key to the success of the individual's journey.
- Staff delivering Connect to Work will work with the individual and will ensure that the employer can be matched with the right candidates for the right roles. This will also include any guidance and signposting required to ensure that the employer can effectively support those candidates within their workplace.

### Part of the Get Britain Working programme

#### Question - How does Connect to Work fit into other work programmes and how is it different?

- Funding for Connect to Work was announced as part of the Get Britain Working White Paper (2024). It is one of the first initiatives within the local Get Britain Working Plan for Staffordshire and Stoke on Trent, which aims to take a system-wide approach to employability and achieve an 80% employment rate for the county and city.
- Other employment support or supported employment services you may have heard of, such as Restart, the Staffordshire Jobs and Careers brokerage service, the JET team or IPS within mental health, are all part of a wider employability offer across Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent. When someone expresses an interest in being enrolled into the Connect to Work programme, staff will do their best to consider what service is most suited to them and help individuals find out more.

### Joined up approach of the best service for that individual

- There isn't a guarantee of a paid job through Connect to Work.
- Connect to Work is different to other employment support programmes because it follows an evidence-based quality framework and is available to a broad range of individuals.

### Evidence based and focused

# FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

## CONTINUED

### Provided by commissioned Delivery Partners

## Question – How is Connect to Work being delivered?

- Connect to Work will be available across all of Staffordshire (inc. Stoke on Trent).
- Staffordshire County Council is responsible for the management and delivery of the programme.
- Connect to Work is being provided via commissioned Delivery Partners who have strong experience in delivering supported employment. They are:

[The Growth Company](#)



[Intuitive Thinking Skills](#)



[Mencap](#)



[Stoke-on-Trent City Council](#)



The Growth Company



Mencap



Intuitive Thinking Skills



City of  
**Stoke-on-Trent**

Jobs, Enterprise and  
Training Service (JET)

## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS CONTINUED

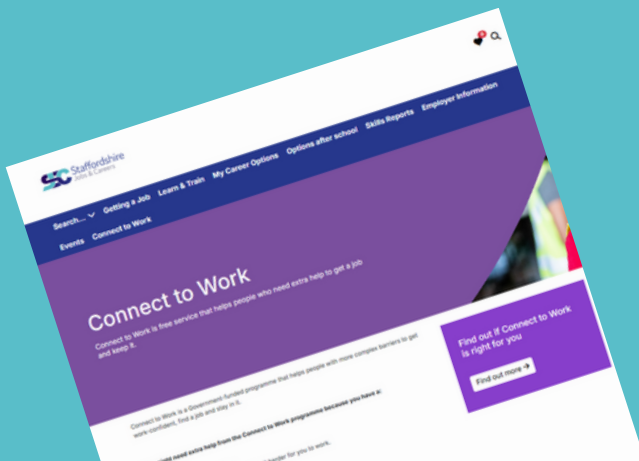
[www.staffsjobs Careers.com/c2w/  
connect-to-work/](http://www.staffsjobs Careers.com/c2w/connect-to-work/)



Click here: Expression  
of Interest form



Click here: Ask a  
question



### Question – How can people find out more and make an expression of interest?

- Visit our dedicated Connect to Work webpages available on the [Staffordshire Jobs and Careers webpages](#)
- These webpages hold lots of information about the programme, how it works and what people can expect.
- Information is also available for potential participants, as well as referring organisations and employers.
- [Expressions of Interest](#) can be made via the Connect to Work webpages
- It is also possible to '[Ask a question](#)'

### Question – Is the expression of interest form available in alternative formats?

- Currently, the expression of interest form is only available online. However, we can help people to access a paper copy by contacting us.



[connecttowork@staffordshire.gov.uk](mailto:connecttowork@staffordshire.gov.uk)

# FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

## CONTINUED



### Question – How can referring agencies help?

- Familiarise yourself with the eligibility and suitability criteria before signposting people to Connect to Work
- Help individuals (who may need it) to complete the Expression of Interest form
- Ask us any question!



[connecttowork@staffordshire.gov.uk](mailto:connecttowork@staffordshire.gov.uk)

- Watch this video for more



I work with people that want to work and I'm looking for support I can trust to help them

# PROMOTIONAL COPY

Embargo: Please use this official press release on your websites and other communications channels but only after 10am on FRIDAY 30 JANUARY

## People in Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent can now Connect to Work through new support programme

People in Staffordshire who may struggle to work due to health conditions or other barriers can now access the support they need through a County Council-run supported employment programme.

The five-year Connect to Work programme will support eligible residents to gain sustainable paid employment outcomes, developing personal and vocational skills, and providing tailored support that enables them to thrive in the workplace. It will also help to connect employers with jobseekers who can fulfil their business needs, offering ongoing support with inclusive recruitment and workplace adjustments.

It joins up local health and employment support so that people have a better chance of finding work and retaining their position. The programme is funded by the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) and delivered by Staffordshire County Council, in partnership with Stoke-on-Trent City Council and expert providers across the county.

The County Council has appointed specialist organisations to deliver these services to participants and employers. They include Intuitive Thinking Skills, The Growth Company, Mencap and Stoke-on-Trent City Council, which will run the programme across the city.

A new webpage is live which provides all the information about the programme which will support people looking for work, an organisation working with eligible people who could benefit or a business looking to fill positions with dedicated employees. It can be found at the [Staffordshire Jobs and Careers service website](#).



Eligible residents who are out-of-work can receive intensive employment support for up to 12 months, whilst residents who are in-work, but who are at risk of losing their job can receive up to 4 months of support.

Help includes early access to jobs based on people's preferences, job and skills matching, on the job training and help to sustain employment – which might include job coaching at work, training, support from a workplace mentor and regular workplace reviews.

Support will also be provided to employers as well as tailored self-employment support where appropriate.

Martin Murray, Staffordshire County Council's deputy leader and cabinet member for economy and skills said: "Everyone in our county should have the right to access meaningful employment, whatever their circumstances."

"Many people with perceived barriers to work are determined to overcome them and gain employment that is matched to their needs."

"This can boost their self-confidence, skills development and future life chances. And the programme can help county employers to find candidates for their growing opportunities, supported by our providers."

"The programme is now live, so we'd urge interested people to visit the website, find out more and take the first steps."

"As a county council we're committed to fulfilling the potential of all our residents, improving lives and communities here at the beating heart of the country."

Councillor Jane Ashworth, leader of Stoke-on-Trent City Council and cabinet member for economic development, said:

"We are proud to be a partner for the Connect to Work programme, working with Staffordshire County Council and DWP to deliver the service across our city and the county."

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"In Stoke-on-Trent, the programme will build on the fantastic work of our JET (Jobs, Enterprise and Training) service, which has supported more than 10,000 residents with employment advice since it was established in 2009."

"Specifically, this five-year programme - set up with Government funding - will have a real focus on helping people break down barriers and inequalities that have made it difficult for them to find work. It also ties into our vision to strive to be a healthier, wealthier and fairer city. "

There is a total investment of £19million in the programme across Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent over five years.

Connect to Work is one the key programmes to deliver the broader Get Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent Working Plan which aims to increase employment, tackle economic inactivity and create opportunities for all residents.

# PROMOTIONAL MATERIALS/MARKETING COLLATERAL

All partners will have access to professional designed promotional materials and social media posts in the next stakeholder pack which will be distributed mid-February.

Access to temporary materials and the [Connect To Work Brand Guidelines can be found here](#)

Please contact Clare Abbotts for any promotional support in the meantime.



Clare.Abbotts@staffordshire.gov.uk  
07875 238555



[Click here: Brand guidelines  
and temporary promotional  
materials](#)



# CONNECT TO WORK

Funded by **UK Government**

**Find out more at**

[www.staffsjobs Careers.co.uk/ConnectToWork](http://www.staffsjobs Careers.co.uk/ConnectToWork)

**Email us at**

[ConnectToWork@staffordshire.gov.uk](mailto:ConnectToWork@staffordshire.gov.uk)