

Want2get on?

Career Coaching

Fulfilling your great potential



Want2get on? is a unique career coaching service that offers 1:1 support for those who want to draw upon their Christian faith and apply it in a practical way to their job situation.
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Alternative ways of working



If you are thinking of returning to work there are alternatives to working the average full time day of 9am – 5pm. The following info' sheet provides five different approaches to work, which may help you to enter the job market.

- 1. Be your own boss**
- 2. Homeworking**
- 3. Teleworking**
- 4. Flexi working and work life balance**
- 5. Voluntary work**

Some of the following alternative ways of working could accommodate your specific needs and responsibilities and help you to “juggle” with work and other areas of their life, such as childcare or a disability.

Be your own boss

Becoming your own boss is the chosen option for approx 4.2 million people in the UK. It may sound risky, but if you have a great idea for a business you could always go it alone. In a survey (freelancer.co.uk) 34% of 2000 businesses said they had started up after being made redundant and all of them revealed they did so because starting a business today is easier, saying that costs are lower thanks to being able to start up online.

There are approximately 300,000 small and medium-sized enterprise start-ups each year. Not only does self-employment offer you the chance to support yourself and make a living, it also offers freedom, flexibility and autonomy.

Starting a new business is both exciting and rewarding, but it is also full of challenges. The level of commitment that you will need should not be underestimated!

Benefits include:

- Being your own boss and making your own decisions
- Flexibility, may enable you to “juggle” work and domestic responsibilities
- Allows you to “run with” a long-held desire to run a business
- Entrepreneurs can make a lot of money. The opposite is also true!

Drawbacks may include:

- A significant time and financial commitment
- Difficulty separating home and work life
- You or a book keeper will have to complete tax assessments
- No company pension, sick leave or annual leave
- Possible isolation.

What sort of idea do you have in mind?

You will need either a product you can make and sell, a service that you could provide, or skills to offer. Your first step will be to seek professional advice on a range of issues surrounding the setting up of a business:

- The writing of a business plan
- Financial control
- Advertising and marketing
- Bank loans and funding
- Feasibility and commercially viability of the business.

There are various business start-up organisations offering help and advice to young people. A good place to start is The Prince's Trust.

- www.businesslink.gov.uk (Also includes business start-up advice for disabled people)

- <http://www.start.biz/home.htm>
- www.startups.co.uk
- www.fredericksfoundation.org (Business start-up advice for disabled people. Covers most of Southern England)
- www.adp.org.uk (The Association of disabled Professionals)
- www.fsb.org.uk (Federation of Small Businesses).

Working from Home

A homeworker is anyone who works from home. Many workers arrange with their employers to work some of the week from home and some of the week from the office. A person can perform many kinds of work from home, but many home workers in the UK are employed in manufacturing, making a wide range of items from footwear to car components.

Employment rights

As a home worker, employment rights (e.g. annual leave, pension rights etc) depend on your legal status. There are three main categories: 'workers', 'employees' and 'self employed'. You should be aware that this isn't always the same as your tax status (so you can be self employed for tax purposes but be a 'worker' for employment rights purposes).

Pros and cons of homeworking

Benefits include:

- Ability to combine working and domestic / family responsibilities
- No commute to work – time and financial saving
- Flexibility and convenience

Drawbacks include:

- Many homeworkers are incorrectly classified as self-employed, making them ineligible for employment rights such as sick pay, maternity pay, redundancy, pension rights and rights against unfair dismissal
- Often work with few health and safety precautions
- Often work long hours with low pay
- The possibility of feeling isolated

Be aware of bogus job offers

Some adverts for home working jobs are scams. You should never have to pay to work, so you should *never* send money up front to people or companies who claim they can give work at home.

- A common scam involves adverts about addressing and filling envelopes which ask for a registration fee. If a fee is paid, often all you will receive is advice to place adverts, but no actual work

- Another asks for money for home assembly kits and promises your money back and payment for completed kits. However, the advertiser will pocket any money sent, claiming the kit you assembled didn't meet the required standard.

If you have been the victim of a home working scam, contact your local Trading Standards Department: www.tradingstandards.gov.uk/

Teleworking

With the huge rise in broadband networks, according to the CBI the number of people working from home is on the increase in the UK, A total of 59% of employers who responded to a survey in 2011 were offering teleworking, up from 13% in 2006. Many organisations increasingly permit its workers work at least part of the week from home, which decreases commuter costs and allows a more family friendly environment in which to work.

The main difference between 'homeworking' and 'teleworking' is that teleworkers, who *may* work full-time from home, are usually doing office work rather than practical work. They frequently make use of computers and other electronic devices to do their work and communicate directly with their office base. Some teleworkers spend part of their week working in the office and part working at home. As with homeworking, your rights will depend on your employment status, if you are an employee you will have the same rights as any other employee. Visit the Telework Association for advice and support: www.tca.org.uk

Pros and cons of teleworking

Benefits include:

- More flexibility about the hours you work, allowing you to meet commitments at home, like childcare
- Freeing up time and money that might be spent on travelling
- Helping to reduce stress because of the above reasons.

Drawbacks include:

- The possibility of feeling isolated
- Missing out on office-based learning opportunities
- You may have to sacrifice living space to set up a work station which will satisfy health and safety standards
- Your employer is likely to insist that you must inspect your workstation to make sure it's suitable. Some people may feel having to let an employer into your home is an invasion of privacy.

If you want to work from home

The law says employers must consider requests from parents of young or disabled children and there's often a good case for allowing employees to vary their work patterns. However, unless it says so in the employment contract, your employer doesn't have to agree.

Flexible working and work-life balance

It's important to balance work, home life and any specific needs you may have. The right to ask for flexible working aims to help employers and workers agree on work patterns that suit everyone.

What is it?

'Flexible working' is a phrase that describes any working pattern adapted to suit someone's needs. Common types of flexible working are:

- **Part-time:** working less than the normal hours, perhaps by working fewer days per week
- **Flexi-time:** choosing when to work (there's usually a core period during which you have to work)
- **Annualised hours:** your hours are worked out over a year. Together with the employer you decide when and how you work the hours during the year
- **Compressed hours:** working your agreed hours over fewer days
- **Staggered hours:** different starting, break and finishing times for employees in the same workplace
- **Job sharing:** this is a job designed for one person, shared between two people.

You could combine any of these working patterns to come up with something to suit your circumstances.

Who can you ask for flexible working?

Anyone can ask their employer for flexible work arrangements, but the government has introduced a legal right in order to encourage applications. Provided someone is an employee (but not an agency worker or in the armed forces) and have worked for the employer for 26 weeks continuously before applying, you will have the legal right to ask if you:

- Have a child under six or a disabled child under 18
- Are responsible for the child as a parent/guardian/special guardian/foster parent/private foster carer or as the holder of a residence order
- Are the spouse, partner or civil partner of one of these
- Are applying to care for the child.

Under the law an employer must seriously consider any application someone makes, but they don't have to agree if there's a good business reason not to. A person has the right to ask for flexible working - not the right to *have* it.

Many organisations with an *Investors in People* mark, may well have a commitment to offering flexible working hours to its employees.

Voluntary Work

This is a very well recognised way of returning to work. The following list includes some of the ways that voluntary work can help you find work:

- Develop new skills
- Gain experience
- Receive a job reference
- Get training in new areas of work
- Explore career interests
- Increase your contacts, which could provide job leads
- Build your confidence
- Have fun!

There are many different sorts of voluntary work available. Visit your local Volunteer Centre or visit the following websites for local volunteering opportunities:

- www.volunteering.org.uk (National Website for Volunteer Centres)
- www.do-it.org.uk .

If you receive benefits, voluntary work may affect your benefit payments or credits. Check with your local Jobcentre Plus office before any voluntary begins.

Source: Direct.gov, Business link London
Image by Adamr

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