



# Going Back to Work

*Information on New Deal for Lone Parents and other support available when returning to work*

## **The New Deal for Lone Parents (NDLP)**

The New Deal for Lone Parents provides assistance for any lone parent who wishes to move from welfare benefits into employment. A specialist adviser helps put together a personal action plan for returning to employment or education. Participation in the New Deal is voluntary, and any lone parent who is not working or working less than 16 hours per week with a child under 16 years can ask to take part.

The specialist adviser can provide the following help:

- Access to local job vacancies
- Help applying for jobs, Curriculum Vitae and interview preparation
- Advice on in-work benefits, tax credits and a better-off in-work calculation
- Help with submitting job applications
- Updating of skills through education or training
- Information on local childcare services
- Fast tracking of Working Tax Credit applications
- Approved expenses for travel to interview
- Expenses for registered childcare costs for approved training
- Registered childcare in first year of working less than 16 hours per week while on Income Support (IS)
- An extra £15 per week can be paid for up to one year for lone parents who take up approved work-related training

## **Personal Adviser Meetings**

All lone parents in receipt of IS will be required to attend Personal Adviser meetings and complete an Action Plan. Lone parents must attend and take part in the interview. There is no requirement for you to seek work if your child is under 7 years of age (from October 2010), only to attend the meeting.

Lone parents will need to attend an interview every 3 months once their youngest child has reached between 7 and 9 years old.

If your youngest child is aged 10 or over, or 7 from October this year, then you are not eligible for IS and will have to claim Jobseeker's Allowance. (See Factsheet 2 Jobseeker's Allowance.)

## **Pre-Employment Support**

A range of measures is available, through Jobcentre Plus to help lone parents move from benefits into work. The support offered will vary

so lone parents need to ask at their local Jobcentre Plus what help is available.

## **Options and Choices Events**

Lone parents whose youngest child is 6 or over will be invited to group sessions that will help them prepare to return to work, develop their skills and understand how the local labour market works.

## **Job Interview Guarantee**

Jobcentre Plus will aim, where possible, to guarantee lone parents who are willing and able to work, a job interview with an employer.

## **Integrated Employment and Skills Service**

After 6 months on JSA lone parents will be able to work with a Careers Adviser from the Careers Service to look at the skills they have and how they relate to employment. Training or voluntary work may be recommended or offered to improve skills.

## **Local Employment Partnerships**

Some Jobcentre Plus offices work in partnership with local employers who offer training or permanent work to JSA claimants referred to them by Jobcentre Plus.

## **Work Focused Interviews (WFI)**

Quarterly work focused interviews will be introduced for lone parents in the last year before their child reaches the age where they lose eligibility to IS. Lone parents who have been claiming JSA for 3 months or more may be asked to attend weekly meetings with their adviser as well as the WFI. During these meetings, help with completing CVs and job applications will be given. JSA claimants may be expected to attend a WFI every month if they have been claiming benefit for 6 months or more.

Lone parents with a child under the age of 1 year will not be required to attend WFIs, however lone parents with children aged 3 to 6 will be expected to attend interviews and undertake some work-related activity.

## **Flexible New Deal (FND)**

Lone parents who have been in receipt of JSA for 1 year or more will be required to take part in the FND programme. Intensive support will be provided by public, private or voluntary sector services to help people into work. FND lasts for 1 year and includes a 4 week mandatory work related activity. This could be a work placement

or training. Parents will still have to sign on fortnightly at their local Jobcentre Plus in addition to taking part in FND.

## **Adviser Discretionary Fund**

A grant of up to £100 is available at the NDLP Adviser's discretion to assist lone parents back into employment. More money may be available (up to £300 in total) if the NDLP Adviser feels it appropriate. Grants can be given for costs such as driving lessons, up-front childcare payments or work clothes.

## **Support Starting Work**

### **In-Work Emergency Discretionary Fund**

This is designed to provide in-work financial help to overcome unexpected financial barriers which otherwise may make it difficult for a lone parent to remain in employment. The Personal Adviser will determine the severity of the circumstances but these could include: a sudden childcare emergency, a minor domestic crisis, a disruption of travel arrangements, the essential emergency repair of a motor vehicle or payments to reduce hardship if Working Tax Credit is not in payment.

The limit is £300 but, in exceptional circumstances, a one off payment above this amount might be given. In this situation a business case would have to be made by the NDLP Adviser.

**NB: Both the In-Work Emergency Discretionary Fund and the Adviser Discretionary Fund will only be awarded if the adviser deems it appropriate. They are not generally advertised by Jobcentre Plus, but be sure to check to see if you are eligible.**

### **Job Grant**

Lone parents starting work of 16 hours or more per week receive a £250 Job Grant. This is intended to alleviate some of the financial hardship faced while waiting to be paid. To qualify, lone parents must have been on IS or JSA for 26 weeks prior to starting work.

### **Extended Payments of Housing and Council Tax Benefits**

Lone parents who receive the Job Grant will automatically receive an extra 4 weeks Housing/Council Tax Benefits. Lone parents with a mortgage who move into work could be eligible for 4 weeks IS Mortgage Interest run-on. If a

parent returns to benefit within a year they will still be entitled to help with mortgage costs.

#### **In-Work Credit**

Lone parents who have been on IS for 1 year or more will receive a £40 In-Work Credit per week on top of other income. This is payable for up to 52 weeks, once working 16 hours per week or more.

#### **Self Employment Credit**

Lone parents who have been on JSA for 6 months and who want to become self-employed (at least 16 hours per week) may be entitled to a self-employment credit of £50 per week for 16 weeks. Their work must be expected to last at least 5 weeks and they must stop claiming JSA.

#### **Help with moving into self-employment**

Lone parents can receive additional help with moving into self-employment through the NDLP. To qualify they usually have to have been in receipt of IS for over 18 months. A training course will be provided followed by a 6 month "training for work" period where individuals can remain on IS and receive help with childcare costs.

#### **Work Trial**

Lone parents can take part in a Work Trial for up to 6 weeks to enable an employer to assess the lone parent before offering permanent work. The lone parent is able to walk away from the trial at any stage if they are not comfortable with the arrangements put in place.

#### **Tax**

Lone parents are entitled to the basic personal allowance of £6475.