

If you are unable to return to work immediately

- Are you eligible for statutory and employers sick pay? Ask your employer.
- Fit note? Liaise with ward doctors or your GP.
- Are you self employed? For relevant information contact your local Citizens Advice Bureau.

If unable to return to work you may be entitled to claim:

- Employment Support Allowance (ESA)
- Job Seekers Allowance (JSA)
- Universal Credit

Contact Citizens Advice Bureau or visit:
www.adviceuk.org.uk/looking-for-advice/other-sources-of-advice/benefits-advice/

Access to work

There is government grant available for practical support to help you stay in work if you have a disability. This can assist with funding of equipment, support workers, taxis to work. Visit www.gov.uk/access-to-work

Specialist Employability Support (SES)

Specialist Employability Support is intensive support and training to help you into work if you're disabled.

Contact your local Job Centre Plus to apply. You'll be assessed by a provider who will tell you when your support starts and how long

you'll get it for.

Visit: <https://www.gov.uk/specialist-employability-support>

Also consider voluntary work, home study or adult education courses to assist with preparing for work.

Financial advice and support

Citizens Advice Bureau:

- **Reading** – 03444 111 306
<http://rcab.org.uk/>
- **Wokingham** – 0300 330 1189
<http://citizensadvicewokingham.org.uk/>
- **Bracknell** – 03444 111 306
www.citizensadvicebracknell.org.uk/
- **Henley** – 03444 111 444
www.caox.org.uk/

Disabilities Benefits Centre:

www.gov.uk/disability-benefits-helpline

Disability Law Service:

<http://www.dls.org.uk/>

Headway: Information and support for people following brain injury. 01491 411469

www.headway.org.uk/

Royal Berkshire NHS Foundation Trust
London Road, Reading RG1 5AN
Telephone 0118 322 5111
www.royalberkshire.nhs.uk

Occupational Therapy/Acute Stroke Unit,
August 2018. Review due: August 2020

Returning to work after a stroke

Information for patients

The aim of this leaflet is to provide general advice and tips on returning to work following a stroke.

Strokes affect people in different ways depending on which area of the brain has been affected and the extent of damaged caused.

1 in 4 of strokes in the UK occurs in people under 65¹.

Impact of stroke on work life

Fatigue: Feeling tired, lack of energy, no motivation, unable to keep up with normal routine

Cognitive / thinking skills: Difficulty concentrating, poor memory and finding it more challenging to plan and organise tasks that were previously effortless

Physical ability: Weakness in arms and legs, reduced mobility, reduced balance, handwriting difficulty

Changes in your vision: Blurred vision, double vision, difficulty focusing, inattention, and visual field loss.

1. Health and social care information centre, 2015, bespoke requested data.

How can you prepare to go back to work?

- Structure your day and restore work related routines.
- Build up attention, work/study tolerance and stamina.
- Develop skills necessary for work/studies.

When is the right time?

Things to consider:

- Physical demands of the job – what will you be doing on a daily basis? Can you continue to meet the demands of the job? Is the workplace suitable for your needs?
- Cognitive demands. Can you concentrate on all aspects of job requirements? Do you have skills for planning/ organising/ problem solving?
- Emotions – controlling feelings in the workplace, maintaining appropriate professional relationships with colleagues.
- Transport – how do you get to and from work? Does your job involve driving? You will not be able to drive for one month following a stroke.

If you have any questions about this leaflet and returning to work, please ask your occupational therapist.

When you're ready to consider returning to work:

- Discuss a return to work plan with your employers.
- If your workplace has an Occupational Health Department, contact them as they can provide you with appropriate support and advice

Graded return

- Reduce work hours.
- Consider working from home one/two days.
- Only complete essential roles of a job and gradually introduce other roles.
- Build upon this to gradually return to 'normal' routine.

Coping with post-stroke fatigue:

- Monitor levels of tiredness. Are you more tired in morning or afternoon?
- Pace. Break down 'heavy' tasks into smaller ones and spread them out during the day.
- Prioritise. Identify the most important tasks and complete these first.
- Plan. Think ahead, organise your day/week.