

# Vocational Rehabilitation Service

Helping you get back to work after a stroke



# About the service

## Our Stroke Vocational Rehabilitation Service can help you return to work after a stroke.

Some stroke symptoms improve quickly, but some may last several months or longer. Going back to work can be difficult if your stroke has caused changes in your physical abilities, your thinking skills, your speech, or your energy levels.

If your stroke caused only mild symptoms, you might go back to work soon after the stroke. Sometimes this goes smoothly, but sometimes even mild symptoms can pose challenges. Our team can help you anticipate difficulties in advance, and make a plan for managing them.

If you're already back at work and noticing any difficulties, we can seek solutions together.

On the other hand, with most strokes, people need significant recovery time before returning to work. If you're not ready to return to work yet, but think you might be ready within the next few months, we can help you prepare. We can help with recovery of work-related skills and help you make a plan with your employer.

Sessions may be with an occupational therapist, speech and language therapist, psychologist, or in a group depending on your needs.



If you are interested, the next step is learning whether your situation meets the criteria for our team. Please discuss it with your rehab therapists or your doctor, or contact us at [epunft.hwevocationalrehab@nhs.net](mailto:epunft.hwevocationalrehab@nhs.net)



# How we can help

- Suggest work task simulations, to help you learn more about your current abilities before returning to work
- Support you to practice skills specific to your work. These could be physical, cognitive, or communication skills
- Help you determine the right timing for returning to work
- Help you decide what to tell your employer and help you understand your rights
- Meet with you and your employer together to plan your return to work
- Educate your employer about stroke and any adjustments that could help you succeed at work
- Help you develop a plan for a gradual return to work, starting with reduced hours or reduced responsibilities
- Discuss adjustments you may need, such as equipment you may need or adaptations to the way you work
- Recommend strategies to make communication easier at work, if you find it harder to listen, speak, read or write
- Give you ideas to compensate for any changes in your thinking abilities—such as using phone alerts to help you remember things or headphones to help you focus
- Discuss ways to pace your day and manage fatigue
- Provide emotional support for changes in role or identity, low mood, or anxiety
- Discuss strategies for stress management, speaking up for yourself, and boundary-setting at work
- Explore difficult work relationships and strategies for managing them
- Explore alternatives where current work is not feasible or cannot be sustained



# Success stories

## Feedback and advice from stroke survivors who have returned to work



“Don’t rush back - you’ve got to give yourself, your body and your brain, time to heal.”

“Schedule regular wellness meetings with your manager, maybe every two weeks a one hour chat to discuss wellness, not business. Because once you are back in work, time goes super quick, especially when on

reduced hours so it is important to book this time in your diary.”

“[The Return to Work Peer Support Group] helps you open up, when you hear what that other people are going through things similar to what you’re going through ... This has been really reassuring.



## Useful resources

### Access to Work

Help with job interviews, transport costs for getting to work, mental health support, and adaptive equipment costs  
[www.gov.uk/access-to-work](http://www.gov.uk/access-to-work)  
**0800 121 7479**

### ACAS

Offers free advice on workplace rights, rules, and best practices  
[www.acas.org.uk](http://www.acas.org.uk)  
**0300 123 1100**

### Citizens Advice

Offers online or phone advice on employment or financial issues  
[www.citizensadvice.org.uk](http://www.citizensadvice.org.uk)  
**0800 144 8848**

### Stroke Association

Provides information and support for rebuilding life after a stroke, including connecting you with local groups and resources  
[www.stroke.org.uk](http://www.stroke.org.uk)  
**0303 3033 100**

