

WEST *Newsletter*

WEST aim to support people with Learning Disabilities living in Wiltshire find and sustain paid employment with local employers.

Introducing Diana. . . .

Diana Hunt started with WEST as a job coach on 10th August 09. She has recently moved to the area and will be covering areas including, Wooten Bassett, Ashton Keynes and Trowbridge. We would like to welcome her to the team.



**West
Administration
Office:
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Do you know about . . .

The 104 week benefit linking rule?

This rule protects benefit rates when you start work of more than 16 hours.

If your job doesn't work out within 104 weeks (2 years), you can claim benefits at the same rates as before.

What benefits are protected by the 104 week linking rule?

The linking rule protects the amount you are being paid as:

- Incapacity Benefit (IB)
- Severe Disablement Allowance (SDA)
- Income Support (Because of ill-health or disability)

If you claim one of the above benefits, the rule also protects:

- Housing Benefit or local Housing Allowance
- Council Tax Benefit

When you start work, you must let the Jobcentre Plus office that pays your benefits know so that your benefits are stopped (**Your job coach can help you with this**) Providing you have been on incapacity based benefits for 28 weeks or more and the time between leaving benefits and starting the work or training is less than one month you are automatically entitled to use the 104 week linking rule.

Meet Chris. . . .

Chris registered with WEST in December of 2007 and spent time with his job coach outlining his skills and what he wanted out of working.



With the support of his job Coach Chris was offered a job with Ruby Roofing in Salisbury. He started there in February 2009, he works for 3 hours per week and has one-to-one support provided by MENCAP.



His duties include: Keeping the shelves stocked and tidy, sweeping the yard and shop floor and helping with deliveries of roofing supplies and putting the stock away.

Ruby Roofing is really impressed with Chris and his excellent attitude to work, everybody who works with him looks forward to him coming to work. They say he cheers everybody up 'He is like a breath of fresh air'.

It is a compliment to Ruby Roofing for taking the time to work with us on this employment opportunity and carving a job that meets both their and Chris's needs. Companies with this attitude are very refreshing.



Chris has recently featured in the new WEST promotional DVD. His employer said 'It's an absolute pleasure to have Chris working here'

Debra Mauchline



On 31 July WEST had a visit from Carlton Brand, Director of Resources, Wiltshire Council. He was on his 'Back to the Floor' day; he gave WEST some really good feedback He said;

"Well I was really buzzing when I got home - it was inspiring to be with people with such passion, pride and expertise in their work and a real privilege to meet some of our service users all of whom share the same passion".

He went on to say "Of course finding work is difficult in any circumstances, but in a recession it is doubly hard so it was fascinating to understand some of the techniques our staff use to address this". (Excerpt from Carlton Brand's BlogSpot 06.08.09.)

Thank you

Debbie

This is a quarterly Newsletter

Look out for the next edition in December 2009