



Self-employment after brain injury

Headway's publications are all available to freely download from the [information library](#) on the charity's website, while individuals and families can request hard copies of the booklets via the [helpline](#).

Please help us to continue to provide free information to people affected by brain injury by making a donation at www.headway.org.uk/donate. Thank you.

Introduction

Self-employment can be a hugely rewarding and empowering way of making a living. However, it can also be very demanding and requires high levels of motivation, organisation, planning and thinking skills that can often be impacted by a brain injury. For this reason, it would be a good idea to seek advice and be familiar with sources of support if you decide that you do wish to explore the prospect of self-employment.

This factsheet aims to offer information that can help with making a decision about whether self-employment is the right option for you, and if so, how to start off and where to get support from.

Seeking initial advice about self-employment

Families, friends, GP

You should start off by speaking with family, close friends and your GP or therapist about the idea of self-employment. These will be people who know you personally and so they will be able to offer you realistic, honest advice and ongoing support.

Disability Employment Advisor (DEAs)

Your local Jobcentre is a good place to discuss any matters relating to employment, including self-employment. Some Jobcentres have Disability Employment Advisors (DEAs), who can specifically offer information and support on employment and disability.

Occupational therapist

OTs are professionals that offer support with redeveloping the skills necessary for daily living. You may already have access to an occupational therapist as part of a brain injury rehabilitation team, so they may be able to advise you on whether self-employment is an achievable undertaking.

The UK Government website

The UK Government website has a lot of practical information about setting up your own business, such as how to research ideas beforehand and where to access financial



support. You can find this information from the following link: www.gov.uk/starting-up-a-business. There is also a Business Support Helpline that you can contact on 0300 456 3565, or enquiries@businesssupporthelpline.org.

Other relevant schemes/ services

There are a number of different services and schemes around the UK that are in place to offer support to people considering self-employment. Details of some of these are provided below.

It is important to note that not all of these services are experienced in offering support to people with a disability, and so they may not understand how brain injury can have an impact on employment related skills.

Start Your Own Business

This website offers a wide range of information on starting a new business. There are also downloadable resources available, such as a business start-up pack that consists of local contacts and template documents. For more information, visit www.syob.net/uk.

Association of Disabled Professionals

This is a registered charity that has been established to support disabled individuals in work, with a section on 'Running your own business'. For more information, visit www.adp.org.uk.

Prince's Trust

This is a registered charity that offers support to 18 to 30 year olds across the UK with starting a business and securing work through the Enterprise programme. There is also a helpline that you can contact on 0800 842 842. For more information, visit the 'Support for starting a business' section of the website at www.princes-trust.org.uk/help-for-young-people/support-starting-business.

Local Enterprise agencies (England only)

This is a network of Local Enterprise Partnerships that offer general advice and support to small businesses through a network of Growth Hubs across England. To locate your nearest Growth Hub, visit the following link: www.lepnetwork.net/growth-hubs. There is also a Business Support Helpline that you can contact on 0300 456 3565.

The British Library's Business and IP Centre

The Business and IP Centre of the British Library offers online information on starting your own business. For more information, visit www.bl.uk/business-and-ip-centre/start-your-business. Although the British Library is located in London, there are National Network sites across England as well.



Business Wales

This is a government service that offers information and support with setting up a business in Wales. For more information, visit businesswales.gov.wales or call the Business Wales helpline on 0300 060 3000.

Careers Wales

This service offers useful information about starting your own business in Wales. For more information visit www.careerswales.com/en/jobs-and-training/working-for-yourself/starting-your-own-business or call 0800 028 4844.

Business Gateway (Scotland only)

This service offers free information and support with setting up a business in Scotland, including online support and workshops. For more information, visit www.bgateway.com or call 0300 013 4753.

Firstport (Scotland only)

This agency offers information and support with setting up a business in Scotland, including seed funding, business advice and practical resources. For more information, visit www.firstport.org.uk/about-firstport.

Invest (Northern Ireland)

This agency offers information and support with setting up a business in Northern Ireland. For more information, visit www.investni.com or call 0800 181 4422.

Northern Ireland Business Info

This website has a section on starting a business, and offers information in the form of e-learning and videos. For more information, visit www.nibusinessinfo.co.uk/start.

The Guernsey Employment Trust

This service offers employment support to people with a disability in Guernsey. For more information, visit base-uk.org/about/members/guernsey-employment-trust.

Start Up (Guernsey)

This organisation offers advisors and information about starting a business in Guernsey. For more information, visit www.startup.gg/articles/planning-your-business.

The Jersey Government website

The Jersey Government website offers lots of information about the support that is available with setting up a new business. For more information, visit www.gov.je/Working/StartBusiness/Pages/SettingUpBusiness.aspx.



Other suggestions

- Start off by doing plenty of research and discussing your ideas with family and close friends.
- Starting your own business and being self-employed requires a lot of planning and organisation. Have a separate, designated folder for all of your self-employment related paperwork.
- Undertake work that you are genuinely interested in or already have experience in. This can help to keep you engaged with the work and can make long working hours easier to manage.
- Be willing to recognise how your brain injury has affected your ability to work. Plan and identify strategies that will help you to cope if things get difficult. You can find tips and coping strategies in Headway's publications, available from www.headway.org.uk/information-library.
- Familiarise yourself with matters such as pension laws and tax, as you will be responsible for managing these things yourself
- Don't overlook the importance of financial management, this will be important at all stages of self-employment. Citizen's Advice have an online budgeting tool that can help with managing money, available at www.citizensadvice.org.uk/debt-and-money/budgeting/budgeting/work-out-your-budget/.

More information on other aspects of returning to work is available in the following Headway factsheets from www.headway.org.uk/information-library:

- Adaptations to the workplace - a guide for employers
- Financial support when returning to work
- Making a complaint about treatment at work after brain injury
- Returning to work after brain injury
- Returning to education after brain injury
- A guide to the Equality Act 2010
- Voluntary work after brain injury

To discuss any issues raised in this factsheet, or to find details of our local groups and branches, please contact the Headway helpline free of charge on 0808 800 2244 (Monday - Friday, 9am-5pm) or by email at helpline@headway.org.uk.

You can also find more information and contact details of groups and branches on our website at www.headway.org.uk/supporting-you.