

Planning your future

CARERS AND WORK OR TRAINING

2010
updated edition





Planning your future

CARERS AND WORK OR TRAINING

This booklet has been produced in response to the Carers Employment (Equal Opportunities) Act 2004. We hope that it will help carers find opportunities, and develop plans for work, training or education courses either now or in the future.

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Planning your future

Section 1

Planning your future

A carer is someone who spends a significant proportion of their time providing unpaid support to a family member, partner or friend who is ill, frail, disabled or has substance misuse problems.

People in the 45–60 age group make up the largest proportion of carers but this also tends to be when they are in the prime of their working lives, so a period of caring will have a very significant impact on their career and earning capacity.

Carers and carers' organisations have campaigned for recognition of the fact that carers are disadvantaged in relation to work and career progress and have fought hard to bring about a new piece of legislation which acknowledges the impact of caring on a person's career and earning potential. This is the Carers (Equal Opportunities) Act 2004.

The Act says that carers' work, training or leisure interests should be considered when local authorities undertake an assessment of their needs.

The National Carer's Strategy was launched in June 2008 entitled 'Carers at the Heart of Twentieth Century Families and Communities'. It included in its vision for the next ten years that "carers will be supported so that they are not forced into financial hardship by their caring role". Support to enter or maintain employment is seen as central to attaining this.

The Leeds Carer's Strategy 2009–2012 contains several initiatives to support carers in work and to raise the awareness of employers as to the importance of supporting carers in the workplace. The up-dating of this booklet is one of these initiatives.

So why does it matter that some carers are unable to fulfil their desire to work or improve their prospects of getting a job?

- It contributes to carer poverty because they may have to rely entirely on benefits
- It contributes to pensioner poverty because carers who don't work or only work small numbers of hours cannot build up a good pension



- It could damage the emotional and physical health and well being of carers if they feel isolated or depressed because of the situation they find themselves in (although for many carers their role is in fact a source of pride and confidence)
- Carers whose work patterns are interrupted may find their skills becoming out of date
- Carers should have the same opportunities to fulfil their potential as everyone else.

Carers' situations are enormously varied. Your ability to take up opportunities for work or study is very reliant on a range of other factors such as the health of the person you care for, availability of alternative care, transport arrangements, flexible employers and your own energy levels. There is no suggestion that you **should** change your work-care balance, but you might like to explore the possibilities open to you.

Planning Your Future brings together useful information about the various agencies and initiatives in Leeds that could help you return to work or learning or to combine work and study with your caring role.

For other advice and information for carers you can contact:

Carers Leeds

- ✉ 6-8 The Headrow, Leeds LS1 6PT
- 📞 0113 246 8338
- ✉ info@carersleeds.org.uk
- 🌐 www.carersleeds.org.uk

Willow Young Carers Service

- ✉ c/o The Anglers Club, 75a Stoney Rock Lane, Burmantofts, Leeds LS9 7TB
- 📞 0113 240 8368
- ✉ via website
- 🌐 www.barnados.org.uk/willow

Carers UK Advice Line

- 📞 0800 808 7777
- ✉ adviceline@carersuk.org
- 🌐 www.carersuk.org

Carers Direct national website

- 🌐 www.nhs.uk/carersdirect

Local website – Caring in Leeds

- 🌐 www.leeds.gov.uk/caringinleeds

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Section 2

Returning to work

If you have not worked for some time, the thought of finding and then holding down a job can be daunting. Whether you have decided to combine your current caring role with some paid work or you are looking for a job after a long career break while you were a full-time carer, you may need support in finding out how best to fit your skills and experience to today's changing job market.

There are sources of information and support which can help you through the process.

Getting Started

Before starting your search for work, spend some time assessing exactly what you want from a job and what you have to offer an employer. Give some thought to the following points:

■ What sort of work would you like to do?

- Do you already have skills, qualifications or experience in this field?
- Do you need to gain any further skills, qualifications or experience?

■ What can you manage?

Think about the hours you can work, whether part-time or full-time and how you will organise your caring responsibilities while you work. Think through the financial implications. You may need to employ a carer while you work and returning to work will affect the benefits you receive. (See Section 6 **Finance Matters** for more information on this.)

■ What skills do you have?

Consider the skills and experience that you have to offer an employer. These may have been gained from work or training that you did before becoming a carer or from other areas of your life. You may have developed a number of skills which are valuable to employers through your caring role, such as communication skills used when liaising with professionals, personal care skills and organisational skills such as managing finances or care timetables.



■ Skills Accounts

By registering for a Skills Account at www.direct.gov.uk/skillsaccounts you will be able to:

- access the online Skills Diagnostic Tool and identify your skills
- identify jobs you are suited to based on your skills and interests
- consult over 700 job profiles to find out what the jobs you are interested in are really like
- develop an action plan for your development and access services to help you make the next step
- choose the right course
- find out if you can get funding to support you.

Gaining confidence

Not everybody feels ready to start work straight away so you may want to start by building your skills and confidence in one of the following ways:

■ Work Focused Support for Carers (WFSC)

If you are caring for someone and want to combine paid work with your caring responsibilities, there is a variety of help available from your local Jobcentre Plus.

WFSC provides help and advice for you to make a successful move into work. It is a voluntary service which you can choose to take part in at any time. You can also stop taking part at any time. Even if you don't feel ready to work now but might like to in the future, you can still take advantage of WFSC.

Your Jobcentre Plus personal adviser can provide:

- help preparing for work
- help to find suitable training
- support in looking for and applying for a job.

You will also receive advice on finding replacement care while you attend appointments with the personal adviser, take part in a training course or attend job interviews. (You do not need to be participating in WFSC to access funding for replacement care.)

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Your personal adviser will be able to tell you about how your benefits might be affected if you start work. They will also help you apply for any benefits or tax credits you might become eligible for when you start working.

WFSC is available to carers who:

- do not work or work less than 16 hours a week
- are aged 18 or over
- are not able to get help from any of the other Jobcentre Plus employment support programmes such as New Deal or Pathways to Work

To find out more arrange an appointment with an adviser at your nearest Jobcentre Plus and visit www.direct.gov.uk/carersemployment

■ Work trials

A work trial gives you the chance to show an employer that you are the right person to fill a job. It is entirely voluntary. To find out if you are eligible, please speak to a Jobcentre Plus adviser. If you decide to take up a work trial:

- you will: get the chance to try out a job
- show the employer that you are the right person to do the job
- continue to receive your benefits and be paid expenses, for example, travel expenses.

Your benefits will not be affected if you want to leave the Work Trial early, or turn down the job if you are offered it at the end of the trial.

If you are offered a job and you decide to accept it, this does not automatically mean that all your benefits will end. Jobcentre Plus will be able to tell you about benefits you may be able to claim while you are working.

If you want to arrange your own work trial, you should ask your nearest Jobcentre Plus office for advice. They will usually give you a copy of the letter 'Work Trials: Try it for yourself', which you can send to the employer(s) with your application form, letter of application or CV. If you are at an interview and the employer seems to have doubts about whether you are the right person for the job, you could always mention work trials. You can then show the employer the letter to let them know that you qualify for a trial.



- 🖥️ www.direct.gov.uk/employment and then click on 'Jobcentre Plus programmes and services' to find the section on 'Work Trials'.

Your first step towards job hunting may be putting together a CV with a covering letter or completing an application form. This is probably your only opportunity to convince an employer that they should meet you for an interview, so it is important to take time and care when preparing these.

It may be useful to seek expert advice or support in writing your CV or completing job applications. (See **Getting Help** at the end of this section for more information on this.)

Getting organised

Your first step towards job hunting may be putting together a CV with a covering letter or completing an application form. This is probably your only opportunity to convince an employer that they should meet you for an interview, so it is important to take time and care when preparing these. It may be useful to seek expert advice or support in writing your CV or completing job applications. (See 'getting help' at the end of this section for more information on this.)

■ CVs and application forms

If you have not written a CV before or if your CV is more than a year old, you will need to write a new one. Consider how to present your time out of paid work, perhaps by listing the skills you have gained instead of your employment history. For tips visit:

- 🖥️ <http://careersadvice.direct.gov.uk/helpwithyourcareer/writetcv>

■ Job search

There are several ways of looking for vacancies, including

- Jobcentre Plus (see below)
- Local newspapers, such as the Yorkshire Post
- Recruitment Agencies (see below)
- Approach employers directly (see below)
- Seek help from organisations who provide Information, Advice and Guidance (IAG), such as the Careers Advice Service and Nextstep, see below
- Online Job Boards (see below).

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Getting help

There are a variety of local services in Leeds, as well as national organisations and helplines, which may provide you with advice or support while you get back to work:

Where to get help	How they can help	Getting in touch
Approach employers directly	Many vacancies are never advertised. They are filled by word of mouth or by jobseekers that show enough initiative to contact companies to see if they have, or are likely to have, anything available. You could use the Yellow Pages and other directories on the internet, together with business directories and databases in the Information Centre at Leeds Central Library to find companies involved in different sectors. Look out for press reports of company expansions or relocations to your area, because these companies may require new staff.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">www.yell.comwww.netparkone.co.ukwww.leeds.gov.uk/weblinks > Business DirectoriesInformation Centre, Central Library, Calverley Street, Leeds LS1 3AB0113 247 8282businessandreference@leedslearning.net
Directgov	Lots of information on looking for work, including writing your CV and filling in an application form, training, benefits and employment rights. You can also search Britain's largest database of job vacancies. The Caring for someone section includes information for carers who are returning to work.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">www.direct.gov.uk/employmenthttp://jobseekers.direct.gov.ukwww.direct.gov.uk/carers



Where to get help	How they can help	Getting in touch
Jobcentre Plus	JCP can support you to get a job. If you are claiming benefits and looking for work, a personal adviser can help you to match your experience, skills and needs to the work available. They can also give advice on writing CVs. JCP advertises jobs and have Britain's largest database of vacancies. This can be accessed in several ways: via the Directgov website, by telephoning JCP, or by using the touchscreen Jobpoints in JCP offices.	<p>☎ 0845 606 0234 (to speak to a JCP advisor who can search for vacancies. Lines open between 8am and 6pm Mon to Fri, and 9am and 1pm Saturdays.)</p> <p>💻 http://jobseekers.direct.gov.uk (to search for vacancies)</p> <p>💻 www.direct.gov.uk/jobseekers (to find your JCP office – this depends on your postcode)</p>
Careers Advice Service*	The Careers Advice Service is a free telephone and email information service that provides Information, Advice and Guidance, including help with action planning, interview techniques and CV writing. They can also help you find out about courses available in your area.	<p>✉ via website</p> <p>☎ 0800 100 900</p> <p>💻 www.careersadvice.direct.gov.uk</p>
nextstep**	nextstep offers free information and advice on learning and work to help you improve your skills and your job prospects, whether you are in work or not. nextstep can help you understand the job market, advise on ways to progress in your job and career, advise on searching and applying for jobs, developing your CV, improving your interview skills and help you match your skills and interests to a job or career. nextstep can also help you find learning and training opportunities.	<p>☎ 0845 052 1040 (to be referred to a local nextstep provider for an appointment to see an adviser face-to-face)</p> <p>💻 www.nextstepyorkshireandthehumber.org.uk</p>
Jobseekers' Advice Sessions – Leeds Library and Information Service	Free advice sessions are available in the Central Library and in a number of local libraries in the Leeds area as part of nextstep. A trained adviser can help you with applications, CV writing, improving your job search technique, preparing for interviews and finding courses.	<p>☎ 0113 247 8282 (to make an appointment to see a nextstep adviser face-to-face)</p> <p>💻 www.leeds.gov.uk/jobsearch</p> <p>💻 www.jobseekers.btik.com</p>

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Where to get help	How they can help	Getting in touch
<p>Jobshops – Jobs and Skills Service, Leeds City Council</p>	<p>There are Jobshops in communities across the city and they are part of nextstep. They can offer you: information, advice and guidance; help with preparing or updating a CV; help with completing application forms; help with interview skills; internet access for jobsearch; the latest information on local job vacancies. This is a free, impartial, face-to-face service where you can talk in confidence to a fully qualified adviser. They will look at your individual needs and provide you with help to move into work. If they are unable to offer a service to meet your needs, they will signpost you to an organisation which can. This includes help with basic literacy, language and numeracy skills, and access to adult learning classes. There is also a range of employability programmes, for example with the NHS.</p>	<p>☎ 0113 247 5465 (to find your nearest Jobshop)</p> <p>✉ jobsandskills@leeds.gov.uk</p> <p>🌐 www.leeds.gov.uk/jobsearch</p>
<p>Future Pathways</p>	<p>The free nextstep service is also available from Future Pathways at local job centres, community venues and their city centre premises on East Parade.</p>	<p>✉ Coverdale House, 15 East Parade, Leeds LS1 2BH</p> <p>☎ 0808 100 8081</p> <p>🌐 www.igengroup.co.uk</p>
<p>Careergen</p>	<p>Careergen provides a paid-for careers advice and guidance service for adults. The service is tailored to individual needs and can include guidance and support in any area of career change or development. The first consultation is free and charges then depend on the service agreed if you want to take it further.</p>	<p>✉ Coverdale House, 15 East Parade, Leeds LS1 2BH</p> <p>☎ 0845 307 3377</p> <p>✉ enquiries@careergen.com</p> <p>🌐 www.careergen.com</p>



Where to get help	How they can help	Getting in touch
Leeds Library and Information Service	The Information Centre at Leeds Central Library contains a large amount of careers and job search information and college prospectuses. Library members are able to book free computer sessions with internet access at the Central Library and at their local library.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✉ Information Centre, Central Library, Calverley Street, Leeds LS1 3AB ☎ 0113 247 8282 ☎ 0113 247 6016 (computer bookings) 🌐 www.leeds.gov.uk/libraries
Online Job Boards	Search for jobs on lots of different websites e.g. http://jobseekers.direct.gov.uk www.yorkshirejobstoday.co.uk www.myleedsjobs.co.uk www.goyocal.com/leeds or just type 'jobs' into Google.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 🌐 www.leeds.gov.uk/weblinks > Jobs and Careers > Vacancies
Leeds City Council website	The Jobs and Careers section of the website provides information on local providers of Information, Advice and Guidance and links to useful learning and work related websites.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 🌐 www.leeds.gov.uk/jobsearch 🌐 www.leeds.gov.uk/weblinks > Jobs and Careers 🌐 www.jobseekers.btik.com
Recruitment Agencies	To increase your chances of getting a job you could register with recruitment agencies.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 🌐 www.leeds.gov.uk/agencies 🌐 www.rec.uk.com/jobseeker
Leeds Volunteer Centre	Voluntary Action-Leeds runs the Volunteer Centre to help those interested in finding out about volunteering opportunities. It's open Monday to Wednesday 10am–3pm and on Thursdays 10am–2.30pm. No appointment is necessary.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✉ Leeds Volunteer Centre, Enterprise House, 12 St Paul's Street, Leeds LS1 2LE ☎ 0113 395 0405 (for more information) 🌐 www.val.org.uk/framesetvolunteering.htm 🌐 www.do-it.org.uk (national database of volunteering opportunities)

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Where to get help	How they can help	Getting in touch
Sharing the Success	<p>Helps people to take control of their lives by considering self employment or starting a business They offer free, informal workshops so you can think about your talents and skills and if you want to develop an idea; Advisers who'll help you make that idea happen; And have centres where you can base your business with a support network. Low-cost business loans with free advice and coaching. And the opportunity to try out an idea whilst on benefits.</p>	<p>✉ 'Sharing the Success', Enterprise Leeds, White Rose House, 28a York Place, Leeds LS1 2EZ</p> <p>☎ 0800 048 0054</p> <p>✉ support@sharingthesuccess.co.uk</p> <p>🌐 www.sharingthesuccess.co.uk</p>
Federation of Small Business	<p>Supports and represents the interests of small businesses.</p>	<p>☎ 0197 769 0032 (Regional organiser Jenny Sergeant)</p> <p>☎ 0125 233 6000 (Customer helpline)</p> <p>🌐 www.fsb.org.uk/west-yorkshire/branches/leeds</p>

*nextstep and the Careers Advice Service will be reorganised in August 2010. Please consult their websites and www.direct.gov.uk at that time.



Section 3

Staying in work – employer’s support

Getting the support of your employer can make it a lot easier for you to manage your working life alongside your caring role. The law gives you certain rights you can call on if you need them, but many organisations go a step further in the way that they offer support to employees with caring responsibilities.

Your rights as a carer

The leave entitlements introduced by the Employment Relations Act 1999 can benefit carers, these are:

■ ‘Reasonable’ time off for emergencies

Employees have the right to a ‘reasonable’ amount of time off work to deal with an emergency involving a dependant. Whether this is paid or unpaid leave is at the employer’s discretion.

■ Parental leave

Employees with one year’s service are entitled to 13 weeks’ leave to care for a child under 5 years of age. This increases to 18 weeks if the child has disabilities and the entitlement lasts up to the child’s 18th birthday. The time can be taken in blocks of days or weeks up to a maximum of four weeks in a year.

The Work and Families Act 2006 extended the right to request flexible working hours contained in the Employment Relations Act 1999 to carers of adults as well as parents and carers of children.

■ Flexible working

Carers have the right to request flexible working if they have completed 26 weeks of continuous work for their employer at the date they make the application and they are:

- a parent with one or more children under age 6 or a disabled child under 18, or
- a carer who is, or expects to be, caring for a spouse, a partner whom they live with, a civil partner or a relative
- A carer who lives at the same address as an adult who needs care

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“Relative” includes parents, parents-in-law, an adult child, an adopted adult child, siblings (including those who are in-law), uncles, aunts or grandparents and step-relatives.

The kind of flexible working arrangements a worker might ask for are changing working hours, going onto flexitime, term-time working, compressed hours (working all your hours in fewer days) or working from home.

There is no right to be granted flexible working hours and the worker needs to apply to the employer in writing for any permanent change in their hours and can only make a request once a year. If their request is refused, the employer must have a good reason for it and the employee can appeal against the decision.

Some employers, such as Leeds City Council, already offer a flexible working entitlement to any employee who has six months service.

Getting employer support

Providing support is in the interest of employers who want to retain good and reliable employees. It can potentially save money on recruitment and training costs and improve productivity. You should enquire with the personal officer, welfare officer, or union representative at work

Good employers will:

- have special leave arrangements such as paid or unpaid emergency leave (not just for dealing with the emergency), paid or unpaid carers' leave and compassionate leave
- provide supportive managers who are aware of the needs of carers in their teams and can be flexible in responding to carers' requests for help
- have policies and procedures that show employees how their needs will be accommodated if at all possible and providing the organisation's needs can still be met
- enable carers to take a career break with arrangements for them to keep in touch with the workplace so that their return is made easier.



How your manager can help you

Your manager can help you by:

- listening sympathetically to your situation
- giving serious consideration to your requests for different working arrangements
- being flexible and investigating ways of adapting working practices, even if ultimately they have to refuse the request
- allowing carers easy access to a phone and the opportunity to call the cared for person at home
- giving a carer access to parking facilities near to their workplace if needed
- making you to feel that you can talk to them about problems with care arrangements
- encouraging other colleagues to value your contribution
- seeking out information or agencies outside of work to assist carers, or inviting those agencies into the workplace for a surgery, such as a Carers Centre.

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Care arrangements

The biggest single factor which influences whether carers can work, study or take part in leisure activities is the care needs of the person they look after. Whether they can be left at home, for how long and whether they are happy being on their own while carers are at work or college, are all considerations.

If the person you care for needs help and has eligible needs, they can receive a personal budget – this is simply an amount of money from the council which can be spent on the services and support they need to help them live more independently. Personal budgets are very flexible, and can be used to buy support from the council or other providers. The money can be spent creatively, mixing and matching services and tailoring support to suit the person concerned.

People can also choose how they want to receive and manage their budget. If they want to receive a direct payment and organise their support themselves, they can. If they would rather the council, a provider or another person does this for them, that's fine too. The different options will be explained to by a social worker so the person you care for can decide what would work best for them.

The first step to receiving a personal budget is an assessment of needs, which looks at the person's day to day life and what kind of support they need. This is called a self-directed support assessment, as it is led by the person themselves, working with a hospital or community based social work team. As their carer, you will also be involved in this process, and the impact on your ability to continue working will be taken into account and given priority.

To contact Adult Social Care for an assessment in Leeds you should call:

- ① **0113 222 4401 for service for an adult or their carer**
- ② **0113 222 4403 for services for a child or their carer**

Once that is completed, if they are eligible, the person will be told how much their personal budget is likely to be, so they can put together a plan for how they want to use their personal budget – with help from their



social worker, carer and other family and friends if they wish. The council will need to agree the plan when it's finished, before the person can start using their personal budget.

Carers who are providing 'a substantial amount of care on a regular basis' are entitled to an assessment of their own needs as a carer. There is no entitlement to any particular service as a result of this Carer's Assessment. However, the Carers (Equal Opportunities) Act 2004 says that a carer's wish to work or have training should be taken into account when having a Carer's Assessment. The numbers above should be called to request a carer's assessment.

Care options

CARE AT HOME

Care and support services are a key priority for a person if their carer needs to return to work or is unable to continue to work without some outside help. Typically, this might mean having a care worker to help get the person up in the morning, or someone who would call at lunchtime to assist with eating, using toilet etc. These services can be organised through the council or independently.

CARE AWAY FROM HOME

The person may also choose to use their personal budget to have some care provided away from home, for example in a Day Centre, a Resource Centre, or by accessing other services or activities in the community. Depending on what they choose, the duration of these services may not cover a whole working day or a whole working week.

SCHOOL AND COLLEGE HOLIDAYS

People caring for a child or a young person who is at school or college during term-time may encounter problems, or even put their jobs at risk, if they are unable to take leave during holiday periods. There are a wide range of play-schemes and holiday child-care schemes to cater for the special or additional care needs of children with disabilities. To find out more contact:

☎ 0800 731 0640 or 0113 247 4386

🌐 www.thefamilyhubleeds.org

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Where the young person is over 18 and normally at college, their care arrangements may need to be adjusted to so that their carer can continue working. This may require a re-assessment or a review by their social worker to consider whether the amount of their personal budget needs changing.

HOME ALARMS

■ Care Ring

Care Ring consists of a pendant that somebody can press should they have a fall or feel unwell, and an alarm unit that requires a plug socket and a landline telephone point within five feet of each other. This is currently provided at no charge if you meet the following necessary eligibility criteria:

- you are over 60
- you receive care services or community care
- you have equipment or adaptations in your home to assist with day to day living
- you are vulnerable and need access to help quickly.

You can apply direct for this service by phoning: ☎ 0113 224 3485 or download an application form at 📄 www.leeds.gov.uk

■ Telecare

Telecare builds upon the Care Ring emergency alarm service and is the next step for someone who needs more than the pendant alarm. This includes more vulnerable users and is available for both adults and children who may not be able to press a pendant or deal with a situation immediately.

Telecare uses a range of monitors such as falls detectors and gas detectors as well as bed and chair occupancy sensors to help people feel safer in their home.

Telecare aims to assist people who:

- have difficulties maintaining safety in their home
- have some level of confusion or memory impairment
- are prone to falls.



Telecare equipment is only provided following an assessment by a professional. For example an Occupational Therapist, District Nurse or Social Worker.

To request an assessment ring Leeds City Council on:

☎ **0113 222 4401 (Adults)** or ☎ **0113 222 4403 (Children)**

Or speak with your District Nurse or other community health worker.

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Returning to learning

Whether your caring responsibilities are full or part-time, you will find that there are many opportunities for you to combine a caring role at home with learning or education. Colleges and community organisations offer a wide range of flexible learning opportunities that would allow you to fit studying around your other responsibilities and so increase the employment opportunities open to you when you are ready to work.

Returning to learning can be the right route for you if:

- you want to brush up on skills needed for everyday life, such as literacy or maths
- you need to learn new skills, such as using IT
- you have been out of the job market for some time and need to boost your confidence or work related skills before job hunting
- you wish to go in a new direction and train for a new career
- you want to improve your prospects by getting a qualification
- you want to combine your caring time with something to stimulating and challenging.

Fitting learning into your life

HOME-BASED LEARNING

If your caring responsibilities make it difficult for you to leave home and you have a computer with an internet connection, an online course may fit with your lifestyle. There is an increasing range of online learning opportunities on offer, from short hobby-based courses or job skills training to university degrees. Some courses involve contact with a tutor, perhaps based at a local college, whilst others rely entirely on self-study.

Home-based and online learning options include:

■ **myguide**

This website is designed to help you take your first steps with computers and the internet. You can also test your numeracy and literacy skills to determine your next steps.

■ www.myguide.gov.uk



■ **vision2learn courses**

These online courses are eligible for government funding and are normally free to anyone who has lived in the UK for three or more years. They cover a range of practical and work related subjects including computer skills, job skills, life skills and sport skills. Students are assessed and supported via email or telephone by a tutor based at a further education college or training provider local to them.

🌐 www.vision2learn.net

■ **learndirect online courses**

A range of online courses are provided by learndirect at all levels in areas such as IT and business through to skills for life, such as word and number skills, lifestyle and work-based skills, which help to prepare you for getting a job or returning to learning. These courses are completed online and are supported by a tutor via email or phone. They also offers a range of online self-study language courses which do not involve tutor support. There is a charge for learndirect courses.

☎ 0800 101 901

🌐 www.learndirect.co.uk

■ **City & Guilds Learning for Living courses**

City & Guilds has developed a new online learning programme specifically for unpaid carers. It builds on the skills that carers and former carers have developed in their caring roles, helping to build confidence and develop computer skills, and could pave the way for further study or a return to a paid job. The course requires tutor support from an accredited centre and although not currently available in Leeds, students may be able to register with other Yorkshire centres.

🌐 www.learning-for-living.co.uk

■ **National Extension College courses**

The NEC is a not-for-profit organisation that provides distance learning courses to help people of all ages fit learning into their lives. With over 150 home-study courses, it offers a range of nationally recognised qualifications in a wide variety of subjects. Flexible and supported distance learning courses are delivered direct to your door or desktop - allowing you to fit your studies around caring responsibilities. There is a charge for these courses.

Planning your future

☎ 0800 389 2839

✉ info@nec.ac.uk

🌐 www.nec.ac.uk

■ Open University (OU) courses

The OU offers a wide range of supported open learning courses at a variety of levels. Most courses are module based and when completed are awarded points that can be counted towards a certificate, diploma, degree or post-graduate level qualification. Students are able to study part time from home with the support of a tutor or study advisor. The OU uses a variety of methods for distance learning, including written and audio materials, the Internet, disc-based software and television programmes on DVD.

The website includes a section on studying while you care and a downloadable booklet at www3.open.ac.uk/study/explained/studying-as-a-carer.shtml. There is a charge for Open University courses, although there may be some financial support available.

✉ **The Open University in Yorkshire, 2 Trevelyan Square, Boar Lane, Leeds LS1 6ED (visitors by appointment only)**

☎ 0113 244 4431

✉ yorkshire@open.ac.uk

🌐 www.open.ac.uk/yorkshire

Learning part-time or full-time outside your home

If you are able to arrange your caring schedule so that you can attend a local learning centre, there are various types of course available at all levels, ranging from short term, part-time courses which boost your confidence in practical skills, to longer part or full-time work-related and academic courses leading to qualifications.

Learning opportunities available outside the home include:

■ Skills for Life courses

Skills for Life courses are run at a number of Leeds colleges and local learning centres. They cover essential skills in using numbers, reading and writing, IT and English for Speakers of other Languages (ESOL). They



are designed for adults who want to brush up on the skills they need for everyday life or for work. You will be supported by a tutor.

To find out more about Skills for Life courses you can contact a college or learning centre direct or get information on the full range of courses available by telephone from the Careers Advice Service. You can also arrange a face-to-face meeting with a nextstep adviser, or online using the Yorkshire and Humber Training Access Point (YHTAP).

📞 **Careers Advice Service 0800 100 900**

🌐 www.careersadvice.direct.gov.uk

📞 **nextstep 0845 052 1040**

🌐 www.nextstepyorkshireandthehumber.org.uk

🌐 www.yhtap.com

■ **Neighbourhood Learning**

The Neighbourhood Learning Project is part of the Adult Learning Service of Leeds City Council. We understand that as a carer you might have limited time to learn and may prefer to learn in your own community. We have a small team of community development workers who know what is happening in the communities across Leeds. We can meet you to discuss your interests and help you find something suitable whether it is a course, volunteering opportunity, community event or to advise you if there is something you would like to set up yourself. There are no forms to fill in and we can meet in a community venue, Monday to Friday. We also deliver free, local, short skills for jobs courses including computer skills, first aid, mini-bus driver training and food hygiene.

📞 **0113 271 6898**

■ **Learn in the library**

If you would like to learn more about the basics of using computers and the internet the Leeds Library and Information Service can help you to:

- Improve your computer skills and your confidence
- Learn new skills for life and work
- Be creative, enjoy yourself and achieve your goals

Whatever your level and interests, if you want to get the most out of computers and the internet, you'll find a range of sessions designed to suit you.

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All sessions are free, and you can sign up just by contacting the library of your choice.

☎ 0113 247 6016

✉ enquiry.express@leeds.gov.uk

🌐 www.leeds.gov.uk/learning

■ Swarthmore Education Centre

The centre offers various courses including the arts, computers, skills for Life (literacy, numeracy, english for speakers of other languages), counselling, healthy living - Music, drama and dance, foreign languages, family learning and many more! You can also get a qualification or learn for fun.

✉ 2-7 Woodhouse Square, Leeds LS3 1AD

☎ 0113 243 2210

✉ info@swarthmore.org.uk

🌐 www.swarthmore.org.uk

■ Work related learning in further education

Further education colleges in Leeds offer a wide range of part-time and full-time practical vocational courses which lead to recognised qualifications and potentially enhanced job prospects. Courses include health and social care, child care, hairdressing and beauty therapy, catering, business and management, construction, horticulture, motor vehicle work and many more. Entry requirements and the courses offered vary, so it is best to discuss your interests directly with the college. If you are interested in a particular subject, find out which local colleges offer relevant courses by contacting the Careers Advice Service, by arranging a face-to-face meeting with a nextstep adviser, or searching the Yorkshire and Humber Training Access Point (YHTAP) website.

☎ Careers Advice Service 0800 100 900

🌐 www.careersadvice.direct.gov.uk

☎ nextstep 0845 052 1040

🌐 www.nextstepyorkshireandthehumber.org.uk

🌐 www.yhtap.com



■ Higher education

Higher education is university or degree level academic education. There are many routes into higher education other than the traditional route direct from school with A levels and Universities are actively encouraging non traditional and mature students to apply. Whatever your educational background, you can contact the universities directly to find out more information about courses and entry requirements.

See contact details for further and higher education providers in Leeds at the end of this section.

Getting information

There may seem to be a bewildering number of different learning opportunities, types of course and providers available. Fortunately there are some useful sources of help and information to assist you to search for the most appropriate course to meet your needs and lifestyle.

■ Careers Advice Service

The Careers Advice Service provides free telephone information and advice on learning and careers. Advisors can give you details of courses available in your area and help you work out what is suitable for you. Advisors can also be contacted by email via the website and you can also book a time for an advisor to ring you.

☎ 0800 100 900

🌐 www.careersadvice.direct.gov.uk

■ nextstep

Free information and advice on learning and work is offered by nextstep to help you improve your skills and your job prospects, whether you are in work or not. They can help you find learning and training opportunities. nextstep can also help you understand the job market, advise on ways to progress in your job and career, advise on searching and applying for jobs, developing your CV, improving your interview skills and help you match your skills and interests to a job or career. Contact nextstep to be referred to your local nextstep service. (Some local nextstep providers are listed in Section 2).

☎ 0845 052 1040

🌐 www.nextstepyorkshireandthehumber.org.uk

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■ **Yorkshire and Humber Training Access Point (YHTAP)**

This is a database of local courses and training opportunities in the Yorkshire and Humber region. You can search for courses by subject, by location, by mode of study (full time, part time, etc) and by level of qualification.

🌐 www.yhtap.com

■ **Directgov: adult learning and skills**

This website includes sections on your skills, training and learning for work, what to learn, where to learn, english, maths and IT skills as well as financial help for adult learners.

🌐 www.direct.gov.uk/adultlearning

■ **Skills Accounts**

By registering for a Skills Account on the Directgov website you will be able to:

- Access the online Skills Diagnostic Tool and identify your skills
- Find jobs you are suited to based on your skills and interests
- Consult over 700 job profiles to find out what the jobs you are interested in are really like
- Develop an action plan for your development and access services to help you make the next step
- Choose the right course
- Find out if you can get funding to support you.

🌐 www.direct.gov.uk/skillsaccounts

■ **Leeds Central Library**

You can use the comprehensive range of further and higher education directories and prospectuses at the Central Library to search for course information.

✉ **Calverley Street, Leeds LS1 3AB**

📞 **0113 247 8282 (Information Centre)**

📧 businessandresearch@leedslearning.net

■ **UCAS**

UCAS is the central organisation which co-ordinates applications to full time undergraduate courses in the UK. The UCAS website includes information on courses, applications and funding for university study.

🌐 www.ucas.com



Contact details for further and higher education providers in Leeds

Where to learn	What you can learn	Getting in touch
<p>Joseph Priestley College Beeston Campus, Burton Avenue, Leeds LS11 5ER</p>	<p>Further education college based in south Leeds at its Beeston, Morley and Rothwell campuses and at learning venues in the community. It offers a wide range of courses at all levels from 'Back to Study' courses which help you brush up on your maths and english skills, to work-related courses such as hairdressing, IT, business and care.</p>	<p>☎ 0113 307 6111 (course enquires) ✉ info@joseph-priestley.ac.uk 🌐 www.joseph-priestley.ac.uk</p>
<p>Leeds City College Courses are offered at its Horsforth, Keighley, Park Lane, Technology and Thomas Danby Campuses and at 22 College Centres</p>	<p>Offers a wide range of part and full time courses at all levels including entry level programmes, returning to learning, work-related skills and Basic Skills / Skills for Life - Literacy, Numeracy, English for Speakers of other Languages (ESOL). Courses include work related and academic courses. There are also Access courses, designed for those who would like to go on to study in Higher Education but who left school without formal qualifications, such as A Levels.</p>	<p>✉ via website ☎ 0113 216 2199 (Horsforth Campus) ☎ 01535 685 000 (Keighley Campus) ☎ 0845 045 7275 (Park Lane Campus) ☎ 0113 297 6300 (Technology Campus) ☎ 0800 096 2319/ 0113 249 4912 (Thomas Danby Campus) 🌐 www.leedscitycollege.ac.uk</p>
<p>Leeds College of Art and Design Blenheim Walk, Leeds LS2 9AQ</p>	<p>Offers a range of art and design courses at further and higher education levels along with access courses and some community education classes.</p>	<p>✉ info@leeds-art.ac.uk ☎ 0113 202 8111 (course enquiries) 🌐 www.leeds-art.ac.uk</p>
<p>Leeds College of Building North Street, Leeds LS2 7QT</p>	<p>Construction and building courses are available at all levels and range from practical, work related programmes designed to prepare you for work in a variety of construction crafts, to academic courses that will help you prepare for further study.</p>	<p>✉ via website ☎ 0113 222 6000 🌐 www.lcb.ac.uk</p>

Planning your future

Where to learn	What you can learn	Getting in touch
Leeds College of Music 3 Quarry Hill, Leeds LS2 7PD	A specialist music college offering undergraduate and postgraduate courses in jazz, western classical music, popular music and community music. There are also music technology and production courses.	☎ 0113 222 3416 (course enquiries) ✉ enquiries.assistant@lcm.ac.uk 🌐 www.lcm.ac.uk
Leeds Metropolitan University Civic Quarter Leeds LS1 3HE	A wide range of undergraduate and postgraduate courses available at the Headingley, Civic Quarter and Harrogate campuses.	☎ 0113 283 3113 (course enquiries) 🌐 www.lmu.ac.uk
Leeds Trinity University College Brownberrie Lane, Horsforth, Leeds LS18 5HD	Offers degree level courses in arts, social sciences, education, film, television, media, business and marketing, sport, health, leisure and nutrition.	✉ enquiries@leedstrinity.ac.uk ☎ 0113 283 7150 (course enquiries) 🌐 www.leedstrinity.ac.uk
Northern College of Contemporary Dance 98 Chapeltown Road, Leeds LS7 4BH	A higher education college offering full-time dance training at foundation, degree and post-degree levels and NSCD's. The Education and Community Department offers a range of dance activities for adults and children.	✉ info@nscd.ac.uk ☎ 0113 219 3000 🌐 www.nscd.ac.uk
University of Leeds Leeds LS2 9JT	The UK's second largest university offers 560 undergraduate courses and 300 postgraduate courses. The university's Lifelong Learning Centre provides specialist support, courses and modules for those returning to education, part-time students or those who have not followed traditional education routes.	☎ 0113 343 2332 (for a prospectus) 🌐 www.leeds.ac.uk Lifelong Learning Centre: ☎ 0113 343 3212 ✉ part-time@leeds.ac.uk 🌐 www.leeds.ac.uk/ lifelonglearningcentre



Section 6

Finance matters

Benefits

CARER'S ALLOWANCE

This is the main benefit for carers and was formerly called Invalid Carer Allowance.

In order to get it you must

- be over 16
- care for at least 35 hours per week
- be caring for someone who receives Attendance Allowance or the middle or high rate of Disability Living Allowance.

You must not:

- be in full-time education
- earn over a certain threshold (in 2010/11 this is £100 per week) if you are working.

It is a means tested benefit and is particularly useful for people wanting to combine their caring role with a small amount of part-time work or study.

However, there are some benefits which you cannot receive at the same time as Carers Allowance, for example a Retirement Pension or Incapacity Benefit. Nevertheless, by making a claim you may have a Carer Premium or Addition included in any calculation for a means tested benefit.

CARER PREMIUM

Carers on a low income may also benefit from an extra amount of money called a Carer Premium used in the calculation of mean-tested benefits such as Income Support and Housing Benefit. For Pension Credit it is referred to as a carer addition.

HOUSING BENEFIT AND COUNCIL TAX BENEFIT

These are means-tested benefits for people on low incomes with savings of less than £16,000. They both have enhancements for carers through the carer premium.

Planning your future

WORKING TAX CREDIT AND CHILD TAX CREDIT

Child Tax Credit is a means-tested credit to help people with children with childcare costs. You may get extra credit if you have a child with a disability.

Working Tax Credit is a means-tested benefit to help certain workers depending on their age, income and personal circumstances.

Both forms of Tax Credit are claimed from HM Revenue & Customs and are paid by direct credit transfer into your specified bank/building society or Post Office card account.

📞 0845 300 3900 (Tax Credit helpline)

ADVICE AND HELP WITH BENEFIT CLAIMS

📞 0113 246 3883 • Carers Leeds

📞 0113 376 0452 • Leeds City Council Welfare Rights Unit

📞 0808 808 7777 • CarersUK helpline

💻 www.citizenadvice.org.uk • to find your local Citizens Advice Bureau

Protecting your future pension entitlement

CARER'S CREDIT

Carer's Credit was introduced on the 6th April 2010. It is a National Insurance credit which helps carers build up qualifying years for the basic state pension and additional state pension.

To qualify for Carer's Credit you must care for one or more disabled people for a total of 20 hours or more per week. Each person you care for must receive:

- Disability Living Allowance care component at the middle or highest rate; or
- Attendance Allowance at any rate; or
- Constant Attendance Allowance at any rate

Where a person being cared for does not receive an appropriate qualifying benefit, Carer's Credit can still be awarded if you supply a Care Certificate. This will need to be signed by a health or social care professional.



CARE CERTIFICATE

If the person being cared for does not receive one of these benefits, you must provide a Care Certificate signed by a health or social care professional. A Care Certificate is supplied with each application pack.

The application pack contains:

- The form
- Detailed notes on who is eligible and what you need to do
- A Care Certificate

If you have any questions about Carer's Credit, contact the Carer's Allowance Unit:

☎ 0845 608 4321 Textphone: 0845 604 5312

Funding for study

FURTHER EDUCATION AND ADULT EDUCATION

Most 'basic' courses are free at colleges and Leeds City Council Learning Centres, for example IT courses such as the European Computer Driving Licence, English and maths classes. There are many "taster" courses which provide an introduction to a range of courses and these are also free.

For other courses there are course fees but each College has discretion about whether to subsidise the fees.

ADULT LEARNING GRANT (ALG)

To be eligible you need to be 19 or over, studying 12 hours a week and attending regularly. The grant only covers people doing their first full Level 2 or 3 qualification (including GCSEs, A-Levels and NVQs).

ALG can pay up to £30 a week. For an application form or further details contact the free helpline number) 0800 121 8989 or log on to www.direct.gov.uk/alg

Alternatively ask at College for an application form.

PROFESSIONAL AND CAREER DEVELOPMENT LOAN SCHEME.

Loans of up to £10,000 to help with study, are available from two high street banks, for more information:

☎ 0800 585 505

🌐 www.direct.gov.uk

Planning your future

HIGHER EDUCATION

■ Realise

Realise is an Aim Higher-funded, collaborative partnership between the University of Leeds and Leeds City College to work with adults studying GCSE and equivalent courses at various college community bases in Leeds. The project aims to address the barriers which make it difficult for adults to enter Higher Education (HE) and to encourage more people to consider university as a realistic option.

Project activities aim to support learners in their current studies and to increase awareness of possible routes into HE.

For more information on this and other short-term, part-time and bespoke course and how to apply, contact the Life Long Learning Centre.

☎ 0113 343 3213 (office of part-time education)

🌐 www.leeds.ac.uk/lifelonglearningcentre

HELP WITH THE COST OF FEES

■ The student finance company

This is the only source of financial help with the cost of fees for higher education and any non-mainstream further education course fees.

☎ 08456 077577

🌐 www.studentfinancedirect.co.uk

■ Princess Royal Trust for Carers bursaries

You may be able to apply for a Princess Royal Trust for Carers bursary.

Funds are available for carers who are caring or who have stopped caring in the last six months. They can be used for course fees, books and equipment. The cost of computers or respite care is not covered.

For more information, contact your local Princess Royal Trust for Carers Centre.

☎ 0113 246 8338 Carers Leeds

■ Charitable Trusts

Some charitable Trusts have an interest in supporting mature students.

You can consult the Directory of Grant Making Trusts and an online database called Trustfunding in the Information Centre at Leeds Central Library. You can also search the Funding Directory at:

🌐 www.adviceresources-fundingdirectory.co.uk



Section 7

Young carers

If you are a young person who has been caring for someone in your family, you may have a lot to contend with. Perhaps you feel that along the way you have missed out on friends, education or work or you don't really think that you could fit other things into your life while you are looking after your family member. Perhaps you are worried about telling people what is going on at home.

Getting help

Whatever your circumstances there are sources of help, support and information for young people like you. It is important to find out what is on offer so that you can get the best balance between the caring you do and other parts of your life.

■ Connexions

If you are aged between 13 and 19 (or 25 if you have a learning disability) the best place to go to first is Connexions. Every young person can talk to their own Connexions Personal Adviser (PA) who will be able to give you advice and guidance on any area of your life and help you with choices that you have to make.

Your PA can help you overcome problems, tell you what opportunities are available and help you to claim any benefits or grants that you are entitled to.

Leeds Careers offers advice on employment, training and further education through its work in schools and colleges and also at the Connexions Centre at 1 Eastgate, Leeds, LS2 7LY – you can drop in anytime or call 0113 226 2180 for information or to make an appointment.

- ① 080 010 6699 Leeds Connexions & Careers.
- 🌐 www.leedspathways.org.uk (Leeds Connexions)
- ① 080 800 13219 (free national Connexions helpline)
- 🌐 www.getconnectednow.org (West Yorkshire Connexions)
- 🌐 www.connexions-direct.com (national Connexions website)

Planning your future

■ Intensive Connexions Support

Intensive Connexions Support is delivered by a range of partners and work with young people who need intensive support. All Connexions advisers have skills and experience in supporting young people, and some of them also have specialist expertise in areas such as substance misuse and housing.

☎ 0113 226 2180

🌐 www.igengroup.co.uk/Leeds_Intensive_Connexions_Service

■ Entry to Employment (e2e)

Igen is one of the connexions service providers and also offers e2e – a program aimed at young people aged 16-18 who are not involved in post-16 learning. It develops your motivation and confidence as well as basic and key skills. From e2e, young people can gain the skills they need to progress into further learning, modern apprenticeships or employment.

✉ Igen Ltd. Coverdale House, 15 East Parade, Leeds, LS1 2BH

☎ 0113 225 9000

📧 enquiries@igengroup.co.uk

🌐 www.igengroup.co.uk

■ nextstep

If you are aged 20 or above and you have fewer than 5 GCSEs or an equivalent qualification (such as an NVQ Level 2), the nextstep service can offer you advice and guidance on work or learning to help you decide on the right course of action for you.

🌐 www.nextstepwestyorkshire.org.uk

☎ 0845 052 1040

■ Barnardo's Willow Young Carers Service

Willow is a support service for young carers aged 5 to 17 years living in Leeds. They support children and young people who are caring for or are affected by a family member with a physical illness, disability or mental health illness.

Willow also have a dedicated Connexions PA who can offer intensive support centred around a young person's caring role and provide general information, advice and guidance on education, employment or training opportunities.



- ✉ Willow Young Carers Service, 75a Stoney Rock Lane, Leeds LS9 7TB
- ☎ 0113 240 8368
- 🌐 www.barnardos.org.uk/willow.htm

Options for young carers

SCHOOL

Your caring role at home may have made it difficult for you to manage full-time education at school, but for your own future it is important that you don't miss out. If you are still at school talk to a teacher, nurse or counsellor to explain your situation and they will be able to seek support for you from other agencies.

FURTHER EDUCATION

■ Educational Maintenance Allowances (EMA)

Year 11 school-leavers moving on to full-time further education courses may be eligible for EMA of up to £30 per week. You can get an application form from your school or you can apply on-line and by phone, or contact the Welfare team (link to Student Services page) at the campus you are applying to.

For details of local colleges see Section 5 Returning to Learning (page 22)

- ☎ EMA helpline 0800 121 8989
- 🌐 www.direct.gov.uk/ema

APPRENTICESHIPS

Apprenticeships give you the chance to work and earn a wage whilst getting training leading to an NVQ qualification at the same time. There are apprenticeships in lots of different work areas. Talk to your Connexions Personal Adviser to find out if an apprenticeship could be for you.

- 🌐 www.apprenticeships.org.uk/youngpeople

Information on apprenticeships and vacancies can be found at:

- 🌐 www.leedspathways.org.uk

Planning your future

WORK

You may want to move straight into paid work. If so, you will need to think about how you will be able to combine your caring role with employment. If you are going to need time off work to look after your relative, it is best to be clear with your employer about what you will and won't be able to do. You may be able to reach an agreement about part-time work.

You will be able to find job vacancies suitable for young people at:

 www.leedspathways.org.uk



Useful websites

Website

What it does

www.connexions-direct.com

The national Connexions website for young people with the information and advice you need to help you make decisions in your life.

www.ema.direct.gov.uk

Information about the Education Maintenance Allowance. Find out if you are eligible to receive a weekly payment to help with day-to-day costs while you continue your education after 16.

www.getconnectednow.org

The West Yorkshire Connexions website where you can get advice and guidance from experienced Personal Advisers on a whole host of issues including health, relationships, careers, education, finance and housing.

www.gettrainedgofurther.com

The Learning and Skills Council for West Yorkshire website designed to help you to find out what your options are once you reach 16.

www.ucas.com

UCAS is the organisation that processes applications to full-time undergraduate courses in the UK. The website includes information about courses, applications and student finance.

www.wytap.com

WYTAP is a directory of courses, training and learning opportunities in West Yorkshire. You can search for courses available in your local area.

www.leedspathways.org.uk

Leeds Careers website for young people. It has information on qualifications, jobs and courses as well as lots of links to useful websites. You can also apply for courses, training or jobs.

www.childline.org.uk

Someone to talk to about anything that is worrying you. On line message boards, chatroom or by phone 0800 11 11. Free and confidential.

This booklet is only a guide and does not cover every circumstance. We have done our best to make sure that the information in this booklet is correct as of June 2010. It is possible that some of the information is oversimplified, or may become inaccurate over time, for example because of changes to the law.

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