

FreeWire

Issue 10: Winter 2010



Retention

**Disabled People Working
Together to Change Employment**

break  through
Including disabled people



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Welcome to the tenth edition of our regular magazine on tackling employment barriers. This issue contains true stories from disabled people about barriers that have come up for them in employment and how these have been dealt with. This magazine looks in particular at how disabled people have held their jobs down, and the kind of support that makes disabled peoples' jobs sustainable.

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Please note that the views expressed in this magazine are in people's own words and are not necessarily those of Breakthrough UK Ltd. Images from **www.photosymbols.com** and Mark Watts.

Don't Just Walk Away

“ I was called to an interview and was told that I would not be able to do the new job role due to the amount of mobility it involved. My employers said that due to my disability I would find it difficult to take that role on. This made me feel like I was not going to be considered for that existing job.

I was offered a redundancy package or the chance to be redeployed to an office-based job, which I had never done. I did apply for one of the jobs they recommended but was unsuccessful.

It felt like I had been written off and was just being brushed aside with no thoughts of where they could accommodate me or how. All the upset of being made to feel I was incapable of doing my job and being written off in the process was just far too much, which made me go off with stress.



Work had got in touch with the Disability Employment Advisor (DEA) at the local Job Centre Plus. They spoke with me and my employer about making reasonable adjustments and contacting Access to Work (AtW) to do a work place assessment.

The DEA advised me to contact Breakthrough UK who could support me through this difficult period and make me aware of the different options available to me to deal with my employer.

I chose to have 121 Advocacy – even though I was happy to speak up for myself it was nice to have someone offering moral support and liaising on my behalf when there were some difficult days and meetings.



After I contacted Breakthrough and arranged a meeting with AtW, the advocacy worker from Breakthrough came to the assessment with me on a journey round my place of employment, taking a look at the different aspects of what I did now and what I would be doing after the changes.

Steve from AtW could not see any problems – he felt with reasonable adjustments in place I would still be able to do the new job. He suggested some equipment may be required for that to happen, but my employer would not accept it.

There were several meetings where we discussed reasonable adjustments, but everything I suggested seemed to be ignored and worries about the impact on the non disabled staff seemed to be their major concern.

Once Breakthrough started to get involved and speak with my employers they seemed to start to listen. I also was sent to Occupational Health on several occasions who put it in writing that I should not do the mobile duties but could do everything else with regular breaks. They recommended I work part time and did not do a shift that started too early due to my medication.

I spoke out on how I felt and told my employers exactly what I thought they were trying to do – which was getting rid of me. I was given the impression that all the jobs had now been taken and the only option was to work full time or take redundancy.

The advocacy worker from Breakthrough asked my employer if I could do a job share with someone who would be willing to cover the early shifts – this could be a solution that would suit everyone.

They said they would go away and ask the question, which they did immediately and got a few responses. They put the person in touch with me and allowed us to work out our own shift patterns as long as they were all covered, and we both did the correct amount of hours over the rota period.

I returned to work and was put on an 8 week trial which I passed. Now I am working various shifts and not having to work all the very late shifts to accommodate my impairment as I was before. Neither do I have to swap shifts or take annual leave to cover the early shifts or mobile duties.

My advice to other people who find themselves in the same situation as me is to not just walk away or accept what is offered at the first few meetings. Stand up for what you believe in and find out what your rights are.

Most disabled people can do the same jobs as non disabled people but some may just need a few reasonable adjustments made to make that happen, and an understanding employer.”

Comments from our clients about how Breakthrough has helped them to keep work:

“I wouldn’t be in work now without the service... Sally gave me confidence to know I had support, gave me information I could use and networked so I could also access other agencies to help me back into work. I am back in work with reasonable adjustments, the discrimination has stopped and my relationship with my manager seems to have improved.”

“Breakthrough and Sally did an amazing job, which enabled me to keep my employment. I smile to myself every time I see my boss, and how I overcame the situation that I was put in... Never, ever give up due to the ignorance of others. Always try to be strong no matter how difficult things get. ”

Interview with Nicola Lomas, Access to Work

The government's Access to Work (AtW) funding scheme is there to make sure disabled people can compete equally with non-disabled people in employment. For new disabled employees, the scheme meets all the additional costs associated with employing you. If you have been employed for more than 6 weeks when you apply, your employer may have to contribute. Here are the basics that you need to know:

What does AtW cover?

- Travel to and from work
- Travel needs within work
- Support workers/communicators/readers
- Equipment
- Adaptations to the working environment

Who is eligible for help?

Any disabled person who:

- is in paid employment (full, part time or self employed)
- is unemployed and needing support with job interviews
- has a confirmed start date for a new job

We asked Nicola Lomas, North West Area Manager for Access to Work, for her views on how AtW can help disabled people keep their jobs:

In your experience, what are the key differences that Access to Work funding makes to disabled people retaining their jobs?

1. It educates employers on solutions to overcome any difficulties.
2. It helps employers with any additional costs that may be required for a disabled person to get an equal footing in the workplace.

What percentage of customers contact you when they are under threat of losing their positions?

“In the North West it is around 15% to 20%.”

How can you help them?

“Our assessors can have a three way conversation with the customer and employer to find out what the problems are. So if, for example, the customer is finding it difficult to meet targets, we can look at what the barriers are and what support can be offered. This also helps the employers understand what to do and that it may not be to do with the person’s ability – it is barriers that can be overcome.”

Have you seen any changes to the types of requests you’ve had since the recession began?

“In response to the recession, AtW removed the requirement for employers with less than 250 employees to make a financial contribution to aids and equipment for existing employees (usually employers have to make a contribution if an application is made by a employee who

has been in their post for more than 6 weeks). This has resulted in a rise in the number of contacts we have had from disabled employees of small and medium businesses. The removal of this requirement to make a contribution will continue until 1st April 2010. Any applications made prior to this date will be included under this scheme – the process does not have to be completed by then to be eligible.”

What would you say to someone with a hidden impairment who doesn't think AtW is for them?

“We follow the Social Model of Disability not the Medical Model – anyone who has any difficulties with a health condition for the last 12 months or a condition which is likely to last for the next twelve months should apply and we will try to help. For example we could support someone with a non-specific learning disability or arthritis.”

How has AtW changed in the way it supports disabled people stay in work?

- In terms of people with dyslexia we don't just look at technology now, we look at things like coping strategies and job restructuring (this applies to people with other impairments also).
- We now do job coaching.
- We are flexible in the way we meet people's needs.
- We will do route learning for some people instead of



providing taxis. This is to support people to become more independent.

- AtW strives to enable people, to help support them to achieve their independence, and put them on an equal footing with their colleagues.
- Whether it's technical, support workers, training, new doors or route learning there's not much we don't do!

New applications for Access to Work support and ongoing payments are dealt with by the Operational Support Unit in Glasgow.

They are on tel: **0141 950 5327**,
minicom 0845 602 5850,
or email **scotland.atw@jobcentreplus.gsi.gov.uk**.

It is the disabled employee's responsibility to get in touch.

Nicola Lomas can be contacted at:
nicola.lomas@jobcentreplus.gsi.gov.uk.

Retention

By Jeff Banda – Employment Officer at Breakthrough

“The following are some of the key things that I do as an Employment Officer to support people at work:-

- Talk clients through Health and Safety information to make sure that the importance of its meaning is understood, and also simplify any technical jargon that doesn't make sense. If my client feels confident from the induction stage then there is a greater chance that they will want to continue working in a given environment.
- Planning the first day usually determines whether a client will feel comfortable in their new job, so I will ensure that an employer understands beforehand the access requirements that need to be in place. This could translate into ensuring my client has a separate working area, receives pictorial instructions and is shown how to complete a task a few times before attempting it themselves.
- Making sure that training is at a level that is suitable for the client is very important. Some tasks may take longer for some clients to grasp and will involve exploring ways to complete the work. Providing additional 1-to-1 support is often necessary for clients to make progress.



- Once the training has been completed regular calls and maintaining a good rapport with the employer ensures that any “hiccups” can be identified early and reviews can be a positive and rewarding experience for all involved. I encourage my clients to call me, not just when there is a problem but also when they have managed to overcome a situation that they were finding difficult.

Retention as stated above starts on the first day, and when a client has received the support they need and are happy with that support they are more likely to face challenges with a positive outlook. The tasks that may have seemed difficult in the past become new skills that increase clients’ opportunities in the future.”

Volunteering Support

Another Breakthrough UK Employment Officer, Yvonne Pridding-Bell, gives some examples of support she is currently providing to clients to assist them to stay in voluntary work. A smaller number of disabled people do voluntary work than in the general population, often because of barriers they have to getting and keeping the work:

“Mary is doing voluntary work at a hospital and I support her. I have engaged with a volunteer coordinator, to keep Mary informed of any changes that may happen – for example when they had a change round in the department. With my support and contact with the

coordinator there was not too much disruption for the volunteer. I have done route training with Mary as the hospital's location has changed and the new route was quite daunting. This continued until Mary was comfortable with going on her own. I also worked with coordinator to negotiate more hours.

Albert wanted to do some voluntary work which would not interfere with his benefits. I got him doing some voluntary work at a recycling centre, supported him at the interview stage, and did route training with him until he was familiar



with getting to workplace. I engaged with his employer when there was any difficulty getting in. He is happy at the placement and he uses his skills, rather than doing something he is unfamiliar with.

Darren is a volunteer doing horticulture working on allotments etc. I supported him when he started as he had concentration needs, and the trainers could not allocate him all their time. I supported him, helping to keep him focused. My support was more or less in a supervising capacity, not completing tasks for him, but to make sure tasks were done safely.

Fred wanted to do some befriending. We discovered that he played the piano. I made enquires and found a placement where he could play piano and engage with people at a community centre. He plays the piano at a fortnightly luncheon for users and gets to speak with users. He also did some volunteering at a park. But he found the community centre more engaging. Dennis was really shy,

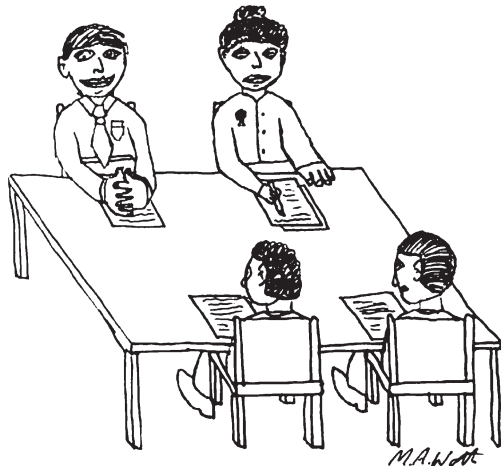
but the placement has made use of his talent which broke the ice in making contact with other people.”



Volunteering can be a valuable route into paid employment for disabled people and disabled people as volunteers are a relatively untapped resource, enhancing the working capacity of organisations with their time and skills.

We are often asked about guidelines and good practice relating to disabled volunteers. You can contact our free information service to discuss volunteering issues if you are a disabled person or a volunteer organiser looking to involve more disabled volunteers within your organisation. Please ask for our free factsheet ‘Disabled People and Volunteering’.

Breakthrough UK’s Manchester Employment Team can be contacted on 0161 945 8411 or email: empman@breakthrough-uk.co.uk.



Cooks!

By Rachel Cook

Rachel is a client of Breakthrough's Manchester Employment Team and currently has two jobs which she does under the Supported Permitted Work Rules.

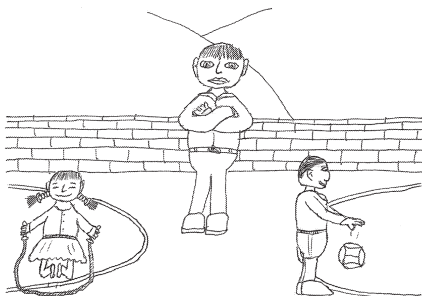


My Work History

“ I trained to be a chef at college. I was there for three years and did level 1 and 2 in catering. They didn't think I would be able to do a level 2, but I proved them wrong! Then I did voluntary work as a Chef for 12 months. Lots of people in my family are in catering and it's something I really enjoy.

A few years ago I came to Breakthrough to do IT and Retail training. I just came into the building and asked about it. My training at Breakthrough lasted for 9 months.

It took a while for me to find work. First of all my Mum got me a job at Old Moat School in autumn 2008 – this was voluntary for two months to get experience. I was pleased when they gave me backdated pay for the months I had worked there. When this finished I worked at Cavendish Road School as a Lunchtime Organiser for a while.



I then transferred back to Old Moat as a paid Lunchtime Organiser so I've stayed in employment the whole time. I've also done a Teaching Assistant job for one month, supporting one child.

I have got a Disability Employment Advisor but I found my jobs myself in the end."

What work are you doing at the moment?

"I'm still doing the job at Old Moat School and also I do a couple of hours a week cleaning at Breakthrough's office in Northenden now which started in September 09. My Employment Officer Ben told me about it and gave me an application form. I did training for the cleaning on the same day as the interview so they could see how well I could do the job. I've been doing it for quite a while now and enjoy meeting the people here. My work gets checked and I get feedback on what I've done. I'll be starting an NVQ level 1 in cleaning here soon."

What things have helped you to stay in work?

"Getting up and going to work! Also I don't take much time off sick – I can't remember the last time I had a day off sick. I don't like to be lazy. I like to be doing things all the time and I hardly ever sit down. I've got lots of friends at work and we have a laugh.

I get support from other people too – my Mum is also a lunchtime organiser at Old Moat, but she is not working in the same playground as me.

Also I've got my Employment Officer and my Disability Employment Advisor.

Work in general keeps me going.”

What difference has it made doing work under the Supported Permitted Work rules?

“I know I could work up to 16 hours a week without losing my benefit. With Supported Permitted Work I can carry on doing this for as long as I want whilst Breakthrough is supporting me.

I get to keep all my money and I'm saving up for a holiday to America. I like to pay my own way and I'm very careful with money.

I've had no problems, it's been quite smooth. I can still see my Employment Officer when I want to.

In the future I would like to work more hours and get back into cheffing. I'd love to have my own restaurant.”

What advice would you give to other disabled people about keeping their jobs?

“If you want to do something then go for it. Try and get the experience – even voluntary work for a start.

Go for your dream – that's what I'd say. ”

Managing Absence

This is some guidance from our team to employers on managing the absence of disabled people:

To treat people fairly and avoid less favourable treatment, employers need to avoid any blanket applying of sickness absence policies and find a way to record impairment and non impairment related sickness separately wherever possible. Reasonable adjustments should be the first consideration at every stage in the process.

Different mechanisms can be used to record impairment related absence. Some impairment related leave will be planned, such as appointments and operations, other absence may not be. There needs to be an easy way for people to request the former, without having to produce mountains of evidence. Regular supervision which asks all employees about any impairment related issues and the possible need for adjustments can pick up on the possibility that impairment related leave might be required also. These initiatives all help to develop an approach which ensures the organisational attendance needs are met whilst taking impairment issues into account.

Employers should avoid making assumptions and work with the disabled staff member as far as possible at every stage, whether this is discussing possible adjustments to assist them back to work or asking for permission to get medical evidence for longer term absences.

Return to work interviews can include a question about whether the sickness is impairment related. This then makes it much easier to consider making reasonable adjustments to working practices, the environment and to the actual absence procedures where appropriate. It is important to keep in touch with people who are off for longer periods, to discuss what can be done to assist them to come back to work effectively when they are ready.

A range of adjustments should be considered with the disabled person such as phased return or allocation of some tasks to another worker. Redeployment should only really be a last resort, unless that's what the person wants. Contact us for our factsheet on reasonable adjustments.

Some employees may not be aware of the support that is available from the government's Access to Work scheme, details of which are given in the article on page 7.

There also needs to be plenty of scope for disabled people to declare an impairment at a later point than at the beginning of their employment. This means that people who develop impairments whilst already employed by you (or who have a recurrence of an impairment which they didn't feel the need to discuss before), are not penalised. Also sometimes people may have an underlying impairment which is aggravated by non impairment related illnesses and it may take time for this to become apparent.

Trigger points, if applied fairly and not used as an immediate route into disciplinary proceedings, may be another way to assess what adjustments can be made.

They should just be a means for things to be investigated rather than an automatic sanction.

Extending contractual sick pay for disability related leave is usually discretionary according to the means of the employer. It is most likely to be considered a reasonable adjustment under the Disability Discrimination Act when the person is off sick because appropriate adjustments have not been made to enable them to be at work effectively.

Common barriers for our clients include the absence policy being applied so rigidly that people end up off on a cycle of long term sickness and pursuing grievances against their employer. Another is disabled people being disciplined because the policy has been applied inappropriately for impairment related absence. This has a knock on effect upon retention of skilled workers and the employer's reputation.

Some employers adopt specific 'Impairment Related Leave' and/ or 'Disability Leave' as separate measures for impairment related absence and environmental absence. The former could include time off for impairment related appointments and operations or foreseeable impairment related illness. Disability Leave is related to external barriers rather than the person's impairment. It may include time off when the weather is too bad to attend work safely or when personal assistance has broken down. Often a quota for the maximum number of acceptable days per year will be set by the person's line manager.

Of course, other reasonable adjustments such as home working and flexible working should be considered alongside these.

Some employers have benefits packages which assist with rehabilitation or that offer employee assistance such as counselling.

“Before dismissing on grounds of medical capability there are several steps employers must follow for a dismissal to be reasonable – e.g. getting up to date medical evidence, keeping in touch, looking with employees at all possible adjustments to return to work and redeployment to another post if this is not achievable.

Useful resources:

TUC Guidance on Disability and Sickness Absence is fairly recent and consolidates some of the main legal and good practice arguments: **www.tuc.org.uk/equality/tuc-15361-f0.cfm**

Acas guidance on Managing Attendance and Employee Turnover is at the link below. **www.acas.org.uk/CHttpHandler.ashx?id=241&p=0**

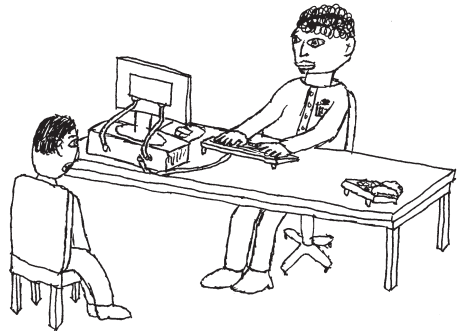
Discipline and Grievances at Work – see appendix 4 – This Acas guide is what Employment Tribunals refer to when deciding whether people have been treated fairly. The Acas helpline can be contacted on **08457 47 47 47: www.acas.org.uk/CHttpHandler.ashx?id=1043**”

DEA Retentions and Interventions

By Patrick Hourigan

“ **What is employment retention?** Employment retention is any employee intervention by a Disability Employment Advisor (DEA) that enables a person with a disability, who is having difficulties in coping with their job, to overcome those difficulties and remain in their current job or a more suitable one.

An intervention may come about if the disabled employee is having difficulties coping with the job and there is a risk of losing the job due to disability. The intervention by the DEA significantly helps to overcome those difficulties. The DEA works with both parties to reach a satisfactory outcome. This can include visits to the employer; agreeing with everyone what the objectives and process will be; investigating and assessing the employee's job role, requirements and work environment; holding case conferences; action planning and evaluation of whether the intervention has succeeded.



Supposing someone was facing dismissal due to disability or health issues: first of all I would take their details, find out about their impairment and about the help they've had from other organisations. Interventions can be initiated by

employers as well as disabled people. We then go through our flow chart to look at which way to go and investigate the situation.

The satisfaction comes from knowing you have helped someone to keep their job.

Development interventions are when a DEA does not consider there is a risk of job loss because of disability. In this type of intervention the DEA makes a significant contribution in enabling a disabled employee to overcome development barriers within their current employment to any of the following; promotion, prospects of advancement, higher earnings, etc. Also the requirement for disability awareness.

Employed disabled people (my past customers) often come back to talk about work issues. I don't see any boundaries to my job. We can't be selective – we don't discriminate.

DEA referrals are not mandatory. The role is unique. People volunteer to see a DEA so we have to build up a reputation. I tell people what they need to hear, not what they want to hear. I look with them at the pros and cons of a course of action and how to get things resolved.

It's always worth running it by a DEA if you have any queries. I treat each person individually and with confidentiality. It's all about the customer. If someone is in fear of losing their job it can get very complicated. There is no wide set of guidelines – each individual case is

different. You can't make an employer do what you suggest. The skill is in how you as a DEA put things across to break down barriers.

Retention work has to be done with the blessing of both parties. DEA's have to be totally impartial. We have the services of a work psychologist at the Jobcentre and I will



often run things by them to get another view. We do also involve other organisations such as Breakthrough. ”

Breakthrough's Advocacy Team does a lot of work with disabled people on a one to one basis or in groups. We support disabled people to raise issues at work and successfully deal with barriers. We have produced a factsheet based on our experiences of bringing matters to employers' attention in a constructive way. It is about organising your information and putting informal written or verbal requests to your employer. It is not a guide to putting in formal grievances, but we have give you ideas on contacts for this if you get in touch with us.

You may also want to look at some of our other free resources that deal with speaking up at work, negotiating and your rights, especially:

F3 Reasonable Adjustments

F12 Dealing with Barriers at Work

B11 Dealing with Bullying and Harassment

B12 Accessing Legal Advice

B15 Frequently Asked Questions

F14 Negotiation Techniques

Contact us to obtain copies in different formats.

Disabled people in self advocacy sessions, and our advocates, have shared their views below on things they have found helpful when preparing to speak up at work:

- What is the issue or barrier? If there is more than one, try to work out whether they are related or not. Focus on one thing at a time whenever possible.
- What do you want to achieve, both now and in the long term?
- Are there other things that could be affected by the outcome e.g. any benefits or tax credits you get? Change in work life balance?
- Where can you turn to for support should you need it? Are you in a Trade Union, for example? Do you have supportive colleagues/friends/family?
- How are you going to put your views across in a way that does not jeopardise your situation?
- What have you done about the barrier already?
- What information do you need to be able to tackle this barrier effectively?
- Who are the key people / organisations you need to speak to in order to deal with this?
- What is your plan of action?
- Do you need to get advice from an organisation like ACAS, a union's legal team or Breakthrough's Law Clinic?

Verbal requests

Many people start by raising an issue verbally. Often things can be resolved simply and speedily this way, and misunderstandings cleared up. If you have regular supervisions, this may be a good way to flag up issues to your line manager. Supervisions should be a two way process which allow you space to raise any matters of concern, as well as to get feedback about your work. If you do not get supervisions you could ask for an informal catch up meeting with your manager at a convenient time.

Sometimes supervisions may not be appropriate. This may be because the matter is too urgent to wait, or it may not be a good idea to raise things with your line manager because you feel bullied by them. In that case you may want to arrange to speak with a more senior manager, someone in the Human Resources team, a harassment or dignity at work officer. You could also ask someone else to speak to the person you have an issue with on your behalf. This could be an advocate, a union rep, a supportive colleague or someone from your organisation's disabled worker's group if there is one.

Our factsheet on negotiation includes lots of tips on how to put yourself across well when speaking face to face. The top 5 tips are:

1. Be prepared. What it is that you want to say? Have evidence to support your case if possible and be prepared for questions which you may think might come up.

2. Do research beforehand to find out which employment rights might apply in this situation.
3. Stick to the facts and don't make it personal.
4. Decide what issues you think are negotiable and if anything is non-negotiable.
5. Work out in advance some possible solutions that could meet both yours and their interests – try to see things from their point of view.

Example: Requesting a Reasonable Adjustment

So if, for example, you need to request a new reasonable adjustment, or comment on the effectiveness of an existing one, a verbal request is often a good starting point. Good employers should really build in plenty of opportunities for you to discuss your requirements. They should not assume that just because they asked you about the adjustments you required at the start of your employment, that these remain the same now. Changes to your role, team, work environment or impairment could all have an impact on how well a particular adjustment is working.

You should decide on the merits of your case first, and think about the possible ways the employer might respond. You need to clearly explain how you are currently at a big disadvantage the way things are, and how your suggested adjustment will overcome that. The employer might try to argue back that the request is not reasonable because:

- It does not overcome the problem.

- It is not practical.
- It would be disruptive to others.
- It would be too costly and they don't have the means to pay for it.

It may also be useful for you to think about whether the suggested adjustment will benefit other disabled people or colleagues more broadly.

If you do not get a positive outcome from your verbal request, you may need to back this up with a detailed written request. Some people may prefer to start with a written request anyway if they feel that this would be taken more seriously by their particular employer.

Please see our factsheet on reasonable adjustments for more background on this area and contact us for a full copy of this factsheet on raising issues, as this is just an extract.

Independent Advocacy

Independent Advocacy is about supporting people to get their point of view across, get the right information and stay in control of situations.

Are you facing issues around work or work-based training that may affect your ability to work?

We offer a flexible confidential service in:

- Getting information about your options
- Checking out your facts so far
- Support at meetings and appointments
- Signposting to access other services in your area

We don't do:

- Direct advice or make decisions
- Any representation such as legal or debts
- Form filling, CV writing or job searching

But we will:

- Give you moral support
- Provide information on options
- Make links with relevant advice agencies
- Talk through how to make your own decisions
- Focus on the outcomes you want first and foremost

Marie's Story

“ I have worked for a large company for 5 years and have been off sick on 2 occasions which have both been in the last six months.

I was finally diagnosed with my impairment in November 2008 and was alarmed when after my 2 occasions of sickness I was told that I would be facing a sickness review meeting if I was to go off sick again. This was adding stress to my condition and I was terrified of the consequences.



There were certain areas in my job which I could not manage, for example I found it difficult to stand for long periods of time. Another area I found difficult was climbing on the foot stools to stack the shelves above my shoulder

height. Also they had mentioned about changing our working pattern and altering our hours. This would have meant me starting early in the morning which would have caused me problems as it takes me a longer time to sort myself out.

We had been appointed a new store manager and I needed help to explain to him that I wanted to stay in work and not go off sick. But to do this I needed some reasonable adjustments to be made.

I was given Breakthrough UK Ltd's telephone number from GMCDP. Breakthrough contacted me in April to come and have an interview with an Advocate.

At the interview we discussed my situation and came up with an action plan. This was a list of things for me to discuss with my manager and to point out the reasonable adjustments that could be made to retain my job.



I received the list from my advocate and went to see my manager who listened and allowed these adjustments to be made – therefore I have been able to stay in work.

I am grateful to Breakthrough UK for their help and support and feel that without them I would have been unemployed, as it would have been impossible to face the situation alone and I would have walked away. But they encouraged me to sort it out.

They have given me the confidence to speak up for myself and to challenge any situations I am unhappy with.

My advocate from Breakthrough UK spoke to me regarding Self Advocacy Workshops which are run in different areas of Greater Manchester, so when the next one is run in my area I am going to attend.

I would not hesitate to contact Breakthrough UK again for help, information or support. ”

Getting Involved:

Would you like to see your ideas in print?

Do you want to share your views on employment with other disabled people?

You can contribute to Free Wire by:

- Being interviewed
- Writing an article
- Commenting on articles
- Drawing pictures
- Editing the magazine



Out of pocket expenses can be paid.

If you would like to receive this free magazine on a regular basis, please tell us and we will add you to our circulation list. You can contact us on:

Telephone: 0161 273 5412

Fax: 0161 274 4053

Minicom: 0161 273 5727

Email: **advocacy@breakthrough-uk.co.uk**

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