



Stepping Stones

Information for potential clients



Enabling people with disabilities to access training and work opportunities.

What is Stepping Stones?

Stepping Stones is a scheme run by Vocational Services, (Dorset County Council Adult and Community Services) which enables people with a mental health, sight, hearing, learning or physical disability to access training and work opportunities with the support of a Vocational Support Officer.

Can I access Stepping Stones?

Yes if you:

- are 16 years+ and of current working age
- are a Dorset resident (excluding Bournemouth and Poole)
- have a learning disability / physical disability / sensory loss or mental health problem
- are **not** in receipt of Job Seekers Allowance.

What other criteria apply?

You need:

- to be motivated to try new challenges and willing to see them through
- the potential to access to vocational opportunities for a minimum of 4 hours per week
- a referral that is vocational i.e. not for a hobby / holiday job.

What are the advantages of accessing Stepping Stones?

- being able to make informed choices regarding vocational activities
- the opportunity to develop new skills and knowledge
- increased confidence and self esteem
- possible assistance with training, travel and child care costs
- opportunity to meet new people and increase social interaction
- if appropriate, opportunity to build a current work history and to prepare for paid employment.



What support can I expect from a Vocational Support Officer?

- ongoing 1:1 support and guidance based on your individual need
- encouragement to identify your personal strengths, abilities and interests
- advice on the availability of vocational training, voluntary work and paid work under the Supported Permitted Work rules
- arrangement of suitable training courses and/or work opportunities
- arrangement of any support needs with training providers or employers
- monitoring and review of your progress on a regular basis and provide you with feedback
- assistance with the completion of application forms, writing CVs and interview preparation etc, if appropriate.

How can I access Stepping Stones?

- by completing a Stepping Stones referral form (available at most Community Mental Health Teams, Day Centres and local Social Care offices). Alternatively please contact Stepping Stones direct on 01305 228401.
- by sending completed referral form to Stepping Stones, Grove House, Millers Close, Dorchester DT1 1SS

What happens next?

- at an initial interview an assessment will be carried out by the Vocational Support Officer to ensure your suitability for the scheme, this will include details of your disability and how this could impact in a vocational environment
- once accepted on the scheme an Action Plan will be completed with you, detailing your vocational aims and the agreed objectives necessary to achieve these.

What vocational options are available?

- training opportunities with local colleges, Adult Education, Learndirect etc
- voluntary work placements with the voluntary sector or if available, with local employers
- Supported Permitted Work whereby you can do paid work for up to 16 hours per week - full information regarding Supported

Permitted Work rules will be provided by the Vocational Support Officer.

Future options?

This depends on you. You may be content to remain in training/voluntary work or Supported Permitted Work for the foreseeable future or you may wish to progress to paid employment of 16 hours or more. If you want paid work of 16 hours or more the Vocational Support Officer will advise you of the available options, these could include:

- referral to the Disability Employment Advisor at the local Jobcentre Plus office
- referral to New Deal for Disabled People who provide short term support
- referral to Workstep who provide supported employment
- progression to unsupported open employment.

For further information please contact:

Stepping Stones, Grove House, Millers Close,
Dorchester DT1 1SS

Tel: 01305 228401

Fax: 01305 228411

Minicom: 01305 228413

Email: steppingstones@dorsetcc.gov.uk

Compliments and complaints

Adult and Community Services staff in Dorset are committed to providing quality services to our service users, their carers and families. We welcome comments from our service users as this helps us to understand what aspects of our service people like.

If you are unhappy about the service you have received and want to make a complaint, our factsheet 'How to complain' describes the procedure. Our Complaints Officer can give you advice on the process and can be contacted on 01305 224322.

Diversity statement

Diversity is not about treating everyone in the same way, but about recognising and valuing difference, as well as recognising and addressing inequalities and disadvantage.

As an employer and service provider, Dorset County Council seeks to promote an environment that accepts and actively supports diversity in age, gender, ethnic origin, sexual orientation, religious belief, disability, culture, work style and the many other ways in which people differ from each other.

All our factsheets are available in large print and on audio cassette/CD, Braille or alternative languages. Please contact the Information Office on 01305 224320.

Further information on services provided by Dorset County Council Adult and Community Services can be accessed at www.dorsetforyou.com