



Make it Work!

**A guide for carers thinking of returning to
paid employment**

INTRODUCTION

Background to the guide

The data gathered from the 2001 census (the first to include a question about caring) suggests that there are around 5.2 million unpaid carers in England and Wales. Looking after a friend or relation because they are ill, frail or have a disability can entail considerable financial hardship, which usually increases the more time a person spends caring. Although the benefits system provides something of a safety net, as the Government admitted in its 2008 national carers strategy 'Carers at the Heart of 21st Century Families and Communities':

"The most reliable and sustainable means of ensuring that carers can enjoy a reasonable level of income is if they, where possible, combine paid employment with their caring role"

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This guide is based upon an earlier publication called 'It's Time for Me' (2002), which was itself the product of a three year project exploring some of the issues around work and caring. The text of the new edition has been thoroughly revised and updated, reflecting the many changes that have taken place both in legislation and in the practical assistance available to carers who want to work, since the original guide was produced.

Who is the guide for?

'Make it Work!' is intended mainly for working age carers – those who are not currently in paid employment, but who would like to be, either now, or at some time in the future. However, we expect that it will also benefit other carers, particularly those who already have jobs and are trying to juggle the twin responsibilities of work and caring.

What this guide contains

Like its predecessor, this guide is arranged in five main sections corresponding, very loosely, to the stages of the decision making process:

- Thinking about finding a job
- Alternative care options
- Money and benefits
- Learning and training opportunities
- Finding a job

At the back of the guide you will find contact details for organisations referred to in the text and a list of useful publications.