

Definitions of employment-related terms

When we think about employment, we think about it in its broadest term. That means we include thinking about what “meaningful activity” is.

There are different types of employment and different words that are used throughout the toolkit. Here you can find some definitions of the main types of employment terms used within this document.

Fixed-term employment

You will be employed for a fixed amount of time (example 6 months or 12 months).

Full-time

Full-time employment is when you work for more than 35 hours per week. It can be fixed hours and days, for example Monday – Friday 9am-5pm, but it can also be spread over different shifts throughout the week.

Living Wage

The Living Wage is what economists have calculated to be the lowest amount people can be paid to live off without struggling to pay their bills.

Meaningful activity

Meaningful activity will depend on what activity is being done, how and where the activity takes place and if it is a voluntary or paid activity. What is meaningful to one person might not be to another, the best way to know if something is a meaningful activity is to ask.

National Minimum Wage (NWM)

The National Minimum Wage is the least amount an employer can pay you per hour by law. How much you are paid is dependent on age.

Paid work

Paid work is any job where you are paid for your time. This can be as a one-off (temporary role) or in a permanent job.

Part-time

Part-time employment is when you work for anything up to 35 hours per week.

Permanent employment.

You will be employed on a permanent basis – unless you decide to leave.

Supported internship

A supported internship will provide you with real work experience in a working environment. supported internships are usually linked with a college and usually follow an academic year calendar. You will be given support from a job coach who will help to teach you any tasks in a specific role that you might otherwise struggle to learn. You will experience what it is like to have a job and will be able to use the employer as reference when applying for paid work at the end of the internship.

Temporary employment

Similar to fixed-term employment, you will be employed on a temporary basis, however a specific end date isn't always said at the start of the work.

Volunteering

Volunteering is when somebody has free time so they use their skills and knowledge to give back to a charity or their local community. For example someone could volunteer in a charity shop one day per week. It can also be used by people to gain experience in an area they would like to work in.

Work experience

Work experience is usually done before you start working. You get a taste of what a job is like. Placements are often organised through school or college and are for a specific length of time.

Work trial

A work trial is given by an employer when they want to make sure an individual is right for the job. They can often be done in place of a traditional interview, or after an interview. This makes sure the person being considered for the role can meet the requirements of the job and it also gives the individual the opportunity of trying out a job before fully committing. Some work trials are paid but many are not, it is down to the employer's discretion.

Zero hours

Zero hours is a term used to describe a type of employment contract. The employer is not obligated to give the employee any specific hours, and the employee does not have to work a specific number of hours.