

# Little Hearts Matter

## Access to employment

By Sharna Douglas, LHM's Adult  
Service Lead

[Sharna@lhm.org.uk](mailto:Sharna@lhm.org.uk)



Little Hearts Matter

## Housekeeping:

- Please turn your mic off if possible
- If you have questions that aren't covered here, can you please send them to me in an email and I will respond to you directly
- There have been recent changes to ESA, so I have limited information on it here, but if you have specific questions about it, please do email me any queries



[Sharna@lhm.org.uk](mailto:Sharna@lhm.org.uk)



Little Hearts Matter

## What to expect...

- I'll talk you through 'Access to employment with a heart condition'
- There may be the opportunity to share your employment stories and ask each other questions
- You'll hear the employment stories of two of our SVH Adults, Oonagh and Edward
- Yaso Emmanuel (Consultant Cardiologist) at Guys and St Thomas,' will join us around 11.45am, and she will talk briefly on access to employment from her perspective, bringing a medical insight.



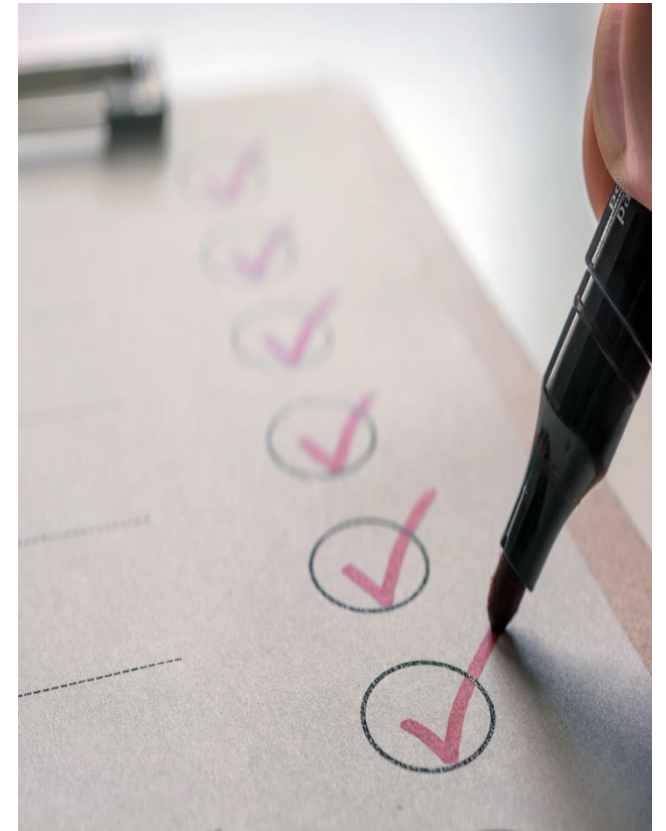
If we have time left over, it will be great to hear what has been helpful and what gaps of information are still missing so I can try to find ways to cover that for you next time



Little Hearts Matter

## What will we cover?

- Do you need to tell your employer about your heart condition?
- Some of the routes to employment
- Financial and employment support
- Acts and Laws – The Equality Act 2010, UNC
- Reasonable Adjustments
- Places to access support
- SVH Adult employment stories
- Medical perspective- Yaso Emmanuel



Little Hearts Matter

# The Equality Act 2010 and The United Nations Convention On The Rights Of Disabled Persons

There are laws, acts and rights that protect you from discrimination. Unfortunately, this doesn't mean you won't experience discrimination, but it does mean you can take action if you do experience it. Especially where employment is concerned.

**According to the Equality Act 2010, you are classed as disabled if you 'have a physical or mental impairment that has a long-term negative effect on your ability to do 'normal' daily activities.'**

Your **heart conditions** for example.

The Equality Act 2010 **may not apply in all areas of the UK.**

**The Equality Act 2010**, protects anyone with a disability; including in the workplace, providing legal employment rights.

The rights of Parents/Carers of disabled people are also protected under this act.

**The UNCRD (United Nations Convention on the Rights of Disabled Persons)**, covers various areas of rights; **Article 27**, focuses on work and employment, stating that people with disabilities have the right to work, be treated equally, and have the right to be employed in environments that are inclusive and accessible. Your rights apply during every stage, ensure equal opportunities and provide safe and healthy working conditions.



**If you find yourself in a position of being discriminated against, some of the steps you can take are:**

- Contact an Equality Advisory Support Service for help and advice 0808 800 0082
- Complain to the person/organisation directly (try to leave a paper trail, use email rather than a verbal conversation for example)
- Make a claim in a court
- Approach Citizens Advice for support
- Approach a trade union rep (you can register with one and you usually will pay a fee monthly, to use their services)

## Further information:

[Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities - Articles | Division for Inclusive Social Development \(DISD\) Persons with Disabilities - Articles | Division for Inclusive Social Development \(DISD\)](#)

[Disability rights: Overview - GOV.UK](#)

[Your rights if you have a disability | indirect](#)

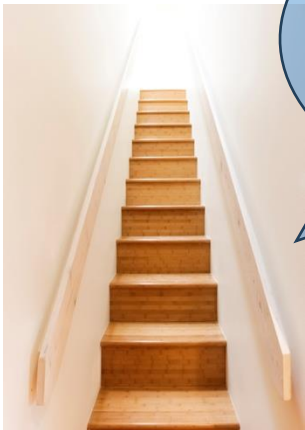
[Equality Advisory Support Service \(EASS\) - GOV.UK](#)

[Joining a trade union: Role of your trade union rep - GOV.UK](#)



**Little Hearts Matter**

Accessing employment can give you a sense of pride, independence, direction, develop your skills and expertise, motivate you, develop your confidence, create friendships, help with finances, create routine, achievement, and life purpose



**Sharna says:**

The first step to employment may be the hardest, but once you start you can work your way up to where you dream of being

## **Levelling up into employment**

Entry level- requires less experience and expertise

Mid level- little experience and skills, more responsibility and knowledge

Senior or management level – developed experience, decision making, overseeing team, responsible, skilled

Executive or leadership level- at the top of career path, responsible for overall direction of the workplaces' success and staff

Entrepreneur level – running or setting up your own business. Maybe doing what you love, or filling gaps in the employment field

Specialist or expert level – deep expertise and understanding of certain skills or areas of work/knowledge

**Tip:**

When looking for employment, consider what skills you have, what you are passionate about, what your health limitations are, your goals and ambitions



Little Hearts Matter

## Where heart conditions and employment are concerned... One size does not fit all and that is okay

**Full-time employment:** is a common type of employment where you will work on average 36/48 hours per week

**Part-time employment:** allows workers to have more work life balance, by working fewer and more flexible hours than full-time.

**Bank hours:** Working to fill staff shortages as and when you wish to, temporary work with flexible choices to work usually in sectors like NHS.

**0-hour contract:** Working on an as and when needed by the company or service; basis with not much control over your income or workload. One week you could have no work, the next week you could have full time hours, the week after you could have a few hours.



**Disability Employment Advisors** are based in every job centre and can help you find suitable employment or help.

**Traineeship:** skills development program, offering a work experience placement to 16–24-year-olds (or 25-year-olds with an education, health and care plan.) Helps you to get ready for an apprenticeship or job if you don't yet have the skills or experience. Work experience prepares young people to become 'work ready.'

**Apprenticeship:** a program training workers to become skilled and experienced in a particular trade. It mixes on-the-job training and paid work  
<https://www.gov.uk/apply-apprenticeship>

**Internship:** similar to a traineeship, but usually for students or recent graduates. Offers work experience and aimed at gaining practical experience in specific professions, where you can apply your academic learning in a professional environment. Internship length varies from a few weeks to several months, and may involve work shadowing, placements, or holiday programs, leading sometimes, to job offers.

**Voluntary:** offering help, rewarding, gain experience and gets you out the house but it is unpaid

Tip: You have so many options to employment, look out for job fairs, open days, job centre job posts, local council websites job vacancy sections, job search sites such as Indeed, charity jobs, CV library, Reed, even social media sites such as LinkedIn. <https://www.ucas.com/careers-advice/types-employment>



Little Hearts Matter

# Financial Support whilst accessing employment, getting into employment or maintaining employment:

## SVH and Driving- PIP Mobility



**For the majority**, there is no reason why you should not be able to drive if you are well enough to do so. However, as you may be aware there have been a few changes made by the DVLA over the years; so, **visit the DVLA's website for more up to date information.**

Applying for PIP mobility may not be an easy process, but it is worth applying for as it can make getting to and from work easier, faster and less exhausting. Its purpose is to provide you with a reliable vehicle that supports you to be independent, leave the home and get about – to and from work for example.

Speaking to your **cardiac team about your driving options** is also a good call as they medically know you best

If the DVLA need to be informed, it is also **sensible to tell your insurance company**, as in the event of a claim they **might refuse to pay out if they were not informed** of something that might have affected your driving.

### **Clothing tip:**

Charity shops can be a good way to save money when purchasing interview clothing



## Benefits summarised:

**Speak to places such as citizen advice, or the local job centre to work out what support you can get**

Depending on individual circumstances, you may consider applying for: Universal credit, ESA, PIP, PIP Mobility, DLA, SSP (Statutory sick pay), carers allowance, housing benefit, council tax reduction/exemption

Some people who work part time, are entitled to a benefit top up if they're on a low income. Due to your health condition, disability or illness you might get an extra amount of Universal Credit.

For carers age 16+: If you spend 35+ hours weekly, caring for someone, you could claim Carer's Allowance. The person you care for must also be getting benefits for their care needs, such as Attendance Allowance, DLA or PIP. Look on the GOV.uk website to see if you are eligible.



### **Financial support with clothing for an interview:**

Families 4 Peace  
Dress For Success (Northern Ireland/England)  
Smart Works (England/Scotland)  
Local Job Centre  
Work Equal (Ireland)



**Little Hearts Matter**

**Suzie Hutchinson's PIP and DLA video:**  
<https://vimeo.com/801540236>



# **ESA- Employment Support Allowance**

As you may know, ESA is going through some changes, so I have limited information on it here, but if you have specific questions about it, please send me an email, and I can aim to find out for you.

You can apply for Employment and Support Allowance (ESA) if you have a disability or health condition that affects how much you can work.

ESA gives you:

- money to help with living costs if you're unable to work
- support to get back into work if you're able to

**You can apply if you're employed, self-employed or unemployed.**



**If your Statutory Sick Pay (SSP) is due to end, you can apply for New Style ESA up to 3 months before SSP finishes**

- After you complete your claim, you'll be told if you need to have a 'Work Capability Assessment' and what group you'll be put in to.
- A Work Capability Assessment is used to find out if your illness or disability affects how much you can work.



**Little Hearts Matter**

**Find more information on the GOV website: <https://www.gov.uk/employment-support-allowance>**

## Work and Health Programme via DWP Job centre

The Work and Health Programme aims to help you **find and keep** a job if you're out of work and are, disabled

- **You do not have to be getting benefits to apply**

### How to apply

Ask your work coach if you have one, they will apply for you.

If you don't have a work coach, turn up to your local job centre and make an appointment to speak to a work coach about the Work and Health Programme.

To find your local Job centre office visit here:

[Contact Jobcentre Plus - Find your nearest office - GOV.UK](#)

### What you could get support with:

- Matching your skills to work that's available
- Help to identify your employment needs
- Connect you with employers
- Find long-term employment
- Link you with training providers
- Support to manage health problems to reduce their impact on work



Little Hearts Matter

## Access to Work

**Access to Work** can help you get or stay in work if you have a physical or mental health condition or disability, so your SVH condition is likely to fit the criteria

If you get an Access to Work grant, it **will not affect any other benefits** you get and you **will not have to pay it back**.

Although, you or your employer may need to pay some costs up front and claim them back later.

These grants can **pay for special equipment or support workers to help you at work, and help you get to and from work**. If you receive ESA, you can only get Access to Work if you work less than 16 hours per week, earning less than £125.50.



It is worth looking to see what applies to your specific circumstances

<https://www.gov.uk/access-to-work>

**Access to work grants are not to replace reasonable adjustments, speak to your employer about reasonable adjustments separately**

The support you get will depend on your needs, but you may be able to apply for:

### Grants to

- help pay for practical support like specialist equipment and software, a British sign language interpreter, funds for work travel (working from home is included too)
- support managing mental health at work with a mental health professional
- cover communication support at job interviews such as a translator, or British Sign Language interpreter



Little Hearts Matter

# Statutory Sick Pay (SSP)

For more information about it and how to claim:

<https://www.gov.uk/statutory-sick-pay/how-to-claim>

## PAID TIME OFF IF YOU MISS WORK DUE TO SICKNESS

If you meet the criteria, SSP is paid by your employer for **28 weeks** maximum. After 28 weeks, you should consider claiming Universal Credit for example. You must tell your employer you are sick. Some companies have sick pay schemes, which could pay more, ask your HR department, also [get familiar with their SSP Policy \(you can ask to see this anytime\)](#).

### Linked periods of sickness removes an entitlement of SSP

If you have regular sickness, it may count as 'linked'. To be linked, it:

- Lasts more than 3 days in a row and happens less than 8 weeks apart

### Eligibility

To qualify you must:

- Be in employment
- Earn at least £125 per week
- Been ill for more than 3 days in a row (including non-working days)

[You'll not be eligible for SSP if you have a continuous series of linked periods that last more than 3 years. So this may become complicated for you and your heart condition if you are continuously unwell](#)

### Telling your employer

You must tell your employer you're unable to work within the timeframe they set out in their policy ([ask to see this when you start your job so you are familiar with it](#))

### Fit/sick notes and asking for proof

You must give your employer a fit note if you're off work for more than 7 days in a row (including non-working days).

You can get a fit/sick note) from:

- Cardiac team, GP or hospital doctor or nurse
- Occupational therapist
- Pharmacist
- Physiotherapist



Little Hearts Matter

Ok, so I can apply for benefits, and grants but.....

## What can or should a workplace do for me?

### REASONABLE ADJUSTMENTS



Employers must make **reasonable adjustments** to make sure people with disabilities, or physical or mental health conditions; **are not at a disadvantage** when applying for or doing their jobs

**The cost of reasonable adjustments, should be paid by the employer not the employee**, and applies to all workers, including trainees, apprentices, contract workers and business partners.

<https://www.nidirect.gov.uk/articles/employment-support-information>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/reasonable-adjustments-a-legal-duty/reasonable-adjustments-a-legal-duty>

**Reasonable adjustments include, but are not limited to;**

- Changes to the interview process to make it inclusive such as offering an application form in an audio format
- Adjustments to the workplace like installing ramps, tactile signs, widening doors, adjusting the work layout, ground floor or lift access, training, and workplace policy adjustments
- Equipment changes such as raised or lowered desk, supportive chairs, adapted keyboards or screens, wrist supports
- Where possible - flexible hours, part time working, FT to PT
- Days off for medical appointments
- Where possible - working from home
- More rest/breaks to reserve energy levels



Little Hearts Matter

**Reasonable Adjustments** should be discussed between the employer and the employee, and the employer should not make assumptions on what is needed.

Information on reasonable adjustment support can be accessed through the **GOV.UK website, and Citizen's advice**

**If you think that your workplace is not doing what they should be doing to support...**

- Contact your HR department first. They will be able to help advise you with your rights. They can also advise you how to make a complaint or where to seek legal representation if you want it.
- <https://www.gov.uk/equality-advisory-support-service> For support from the Equality Advisory Support Service
- There are also organisations like Citizens Advice and ACAS, which is an independent body that helps with disputes between employers and employees.

## REASONABLE ADJUSTMENTS



If, when you start work you begin to find it challenging, discuss this with your employer as soon as possible, to create an action plan. For example, if the hours are too demanding, or the role is too difficult, this would be where you may ask for the employer to make more reasonable adjustments.

Although your employer has the right to hire people suitable and competent, to do the job they are offering, you have the right to have your role adjusted in order to help you work whilst you manage your heart condition



**Little Hearts Matter**

## Telling your employer about your heart condition

- Maybe you think employers may treat you differently, if you tell them about your heart.
- Maybe you worry they won't employ you if you are honest.
- Many employers will be understanding, and they should be willing to learn about your heart conditions, limitations and needs.



- If /when you do tell your employer, you can do this when you are comfortable, this may be during the application process, after the job offer, or at interview.
- It is fair if you wish to not tell the employer at interview stage, as you are finding out information about the job and assessing whether it the job is right for you and whether your health condition is relevant.
- It's better to be honest about any limitations you might have relating to a job. You can also write on the forms, about how well you manage your heart condition.



Little Hearts Matter

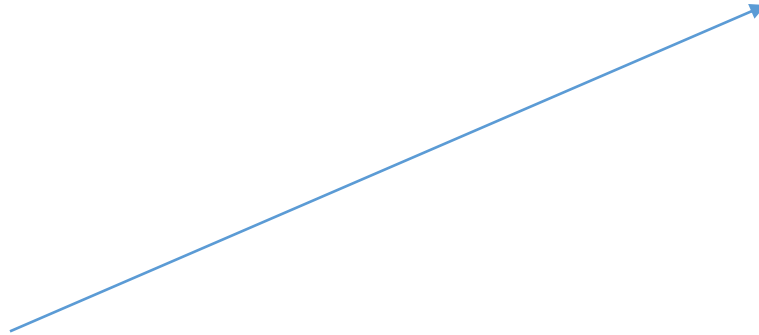


## Do I 'have to' tell employers about my heart condition?

In short, no, you don't '**have to**' but it may help them to support you and depending on the type of work you will be doing, it may be worth them knowing so they can understand your needs and ability.



Jobs that are seen to be '**lower risk**' jobs such as part time office work, there may be **less concern as the work tasks are less likely to affect your heart condition** or job performance. The hours are reduced, and you are not likely to lift heavy items. Due to this, after seeking advice from your cardiac team; you may not feel the need to inform your employer about your heart condition, straight away, if it is managed well and it does not affect you much.



However, a job with long hours of physical heavy lifting, will be a '**higher risk**' job for example; if it includes moving and lifting furniture. Therefore, your heart condition becomes much more relevant in what your job requires of you. Seeking advice from your cardiac team would be best and talking through the job requirements. It would also be good to tell your employer about it sooner, so, they can assess what steps need to be taken or if a plan can be created to keep you safer when at work. If your employer gives you a form to declare health conditions after you start work, you may wish to declare your heart condition and how it affects you, what the workplace can do to help and what your limitations are.

If your employer gives you a form to declare health conditions after you start work, after seeking advice from your cardiac team, you could write 'heart condition, managed, does not affect work', or you could leave it blank if your cardiac team agree that it won't affect your work and isn't relevant for this job.



Little Hearts Matter



Reminder:

some *medications* may affect the type of work you can apply for or do too. An example is if the leaflet with your medication says '**do not operate machinery or drive whilst taking this medication**' this could affect a job that involves driving a Fork-lift truck for example...So be mindful of this when thinking of what work you'd like to do as your heart medication is important



Reminder:

If you cannot manage your job and find it too demanding, discuss with management as soon as possible. They may be able to offer you a different job within the same company instead of you having to leave completely.



Reminder:

Your cardiac team may be able to write you a supporting letter for employment, or to help explain how your condition may be affected by the work you are applying for



Reminder:

*Pacemakers and ICD's* (implantable cardioverter defibrillators) *may be affected* by magnets and equipment in some workplaces, Please speak to your cardiac team if you have any worries or questions

Reminder:

Read more about the Equality Act and the responsibilities employers have:

<https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/>



Little Hearts Matter

## Oonagh's Story – (LHM SVH Adult)

Hi, I'm Oonagh and I am 28 years old.

I started full time employment when I was 16 training to be a hairdresser in a hair salon and going to college once a week. I trained and worked at this for 4 years but decided to leave due to the long hours standing on my feet which I found very tiring and needed more rest and days off.

I decided to go into an office-based job and tried a couple of small companies but due to my health, the benefits were not great regarding sick pay and also having to use my annual leave when I had hospital appointments.

I now work for Kent County Council as an Admin Officer and have done for the last 6 years.

Before COVID I was in the office full-time, but the company let me have my own laptop to work from home on the days where I didn't feel able to travel into the office due to feeling tired.

Since COVID, I now work at home full time and only going into the office once or twice a month for meetings. I would really recommend anyone with our condition to look into working for bigger organisations such as Councils or NHS etc. The benefits regarding sick pay is great and I don't feel 'judged' when having time off due to illness and also, I still get paid when I am off sick.

They acknowledge that we have hospital appointments through the year where sometimes we need the whole day off due to travel or having multiple appointments on the same day.

The team I work with are so understanding about my heart condition and are always intrigued to find out more about it, but more importantly they are very sympathetic when I do have time off (I even got a massive bunch of flowers and hotel chocolates from them when I was in hospital).



Little Hearts Matter

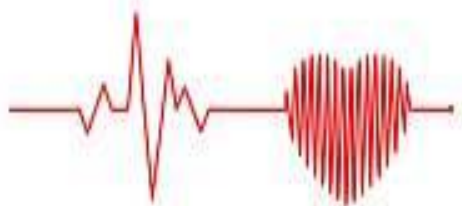
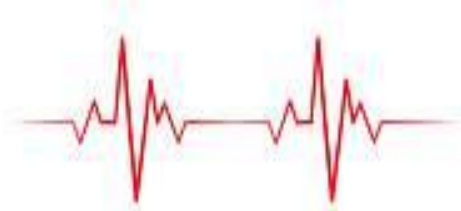
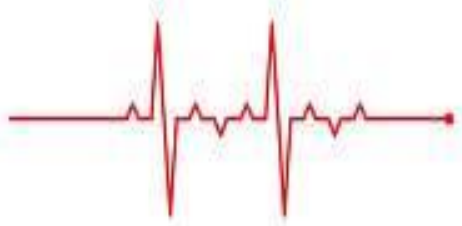


## Edward's Story (LHM SVH Adult)

Ed has also agreed to tell his employment story to inspire others, so over to Ed

Thank you





**Please welcome our:**

**Guest Speaker, from Guys and St Thomas'**

**Consultant Cardiologist,**

**Yaso Emmanuel**



**Little Hearts Matter**