



# YOUR WORK & LEARN TOOLKIT

Information for family, whānau and aiga carers to explore options for paid employment

Work & Learn is a free programme from Carers NZ.

If you're a family carer, you may want to connect with carer friendly employers to find flexible work and a job you love. We can help!.

Many workplaces are part of our CarerWise initiative for employers. Every workplace includes staff who are carers, and CareWise employers have 'open door' hiring policies for new staff who are carers.

We will walk alongside you every step of the way as you make employment choices that work for you and your family.



0800 777 797 | [centre@carers.net.nz](mailto:centre@carers.net.nz) | [www.carers.net.nz](http://www.carers.net.nz)





# Finding carer friendly employment CARERS NZ CAN HELP!



## Work, Earn, Learn!

Like you, many New Zealanders work hard every day as a family or whānau carer, assisting someone who is frail, unwell, or has a chronic condition or disability.

If you're providing intensive support, you may be eligible for payment for at least some of the care you provide. Helping you understand your options is part of the advice we offer at Work & Learn.

We know that carers often have extra costs and you may experience financial worries, especially if you have given up paid work due to caring.

Financial vulnerability adds unwanted stress to what can already be a stressful role.

Yet carers who continue in paid work report that it can take a lot of juggling. The demands of employment and caring responsibilities can be hard to balance.

Many say they would like to find paid work with a carer-friendly employer who understands that carers may need more flexibility than others if a family member is unwell or there is an emergency.

Being able to undertake paid work, or to access training to build skills for the type of job they want, can make a vital difference to financial stability and overall wellbeing for carers.

This is what Work & Learn is about.

## Having paid work isn't just about the money

Carers say there are other benefits



Reliable extra income

Less financial stress

Using skills and abilities

Learning new things

Broadening your sense of identity

Meeting new people

Increased sense of value and self-esteem

Improved mental health and wellbeing

Work can be respite from caring

Work can offer a stable routine when life gets rocky



It can provide a sense of achievement

It's something for just you

It can help you build more life choices

It gets you out and about more

It helps you save towards retirement

It strengthens your training or employment history for future work

It reduces financial stress, the need for debt, and helps to sustain your household

## DID YOU KNOW?

Curriculum Vitae (CV) is Latin for "course of life." And resume is French for "summary."



## Work & Learn supports you to build a stronger financial foundation

The programme is designed to support you to be less financially stressed. Your Work & Learn advisor will help you consider your work and/or training options, and assist you to step into your chosen option(s) with confidence.



### Think about your current situation

#### If you're not currently in any paid work...

- Would you like to find some part time or full time paid work?
- What have been the barriers preventing you from working up until now?
- What would your ideal paid work situation be?
- Would you be interested in training towards a paid work role?

#### If you are in some kind of paid work...

- How well does your employment situation suit you right now?
- Would you like to increase your hours? Decrease your hours? Change jobs?
- What would your ideal paid work situation be?
- Would you be interested in training towards a different paid work role?



## FINDING AND STAYING IN PAID WORK IS EASIER WITH EMPLOYER HELP

It's good news for family and whānau carers that more New Zealand employers are willing to be flexible and negotiate with staff about the best hours, days of work, and place of work for them. It's common now for some work roles to be done partially or totally from home.

A **CareWise employer** is one who is committed to making it easier for carers to keep on working while balancing their caring responsibilities. By supporting a family or whānau carer to stay in work, a CareWise employer helps them to contribute their valuable and much needed experience and skills to the workplace. Often this will mean that employers will adapt work policies and expectations, with consultation and discretion, to give extra flexibility when it's required.

The *Work & Learn* programme can help to connect you with a carer friendly employer. Carers NZ will have provided them with the right tools and information to help them better understand your needs and realities. Or the programme can help you to confidently share some CareWise resources with a prospective employer. This can assist them to learn more about unique challenges carers may experience in the workplace, and also about ways they can help make daily work practices supportive (by offering flexible hours for example).

Our *Work & Learn* Toolkit features practical topics to help you think about your employment and training options, and move into the paid workforce when you're ready.



## TRAINING TO WORK

As you begin work, you might be using skills and qualifications you already have, or you may need to build your confidence and develop some new skills to move into the future you want. *Work & Learn* can help you consider available training options, evaluate which might be best for you, and how you can start training. It's helpful that many courses are now available online. They can be completed at home, as time allows.

**We look forward to encouraging you on your work or training journey. We will be with you every step of the way!**



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# TAKE THE FIRST STEPS



When you want to change your work or training situation, there are four steps you can take that will help. We call them the SODA steps. They can help you to make choices that are right for you.

## S – SELF AWARENESS

Tune into what your interests, skills, and abilities are. Think about what your values are and work out what kind of lifestyle you want.

## O – OPTIONS AWARENESS

Explore different work or training options available to you. Compare them. Which ones would work best for you right now?

## D – DECIDING

Make your decision based on what you know about yourself and what you've learned about your options.

## A – ACTION

Make a plan and begin to put it into action, so you can settle into a work or training situation that's right for you.

The following useful links and online tools can help you with these four SODA Steps. We will walk alongside you through each step. If you like, your Work & Learn advisor can also review your CV and job applications so you can be confident when you send these to potential employers.

We can also introduce you to potential carer friendly CareWise employers.



## S – SELF AWARENESS

To start to plan your move into work or training, have a think about what your interests, abilities, commitments, and goals are. Consider what you've learned about yourself in previous work experience, including in your caring role. What sort of tasks do you like doing? What's important to you in a workplace?

- [Know yourself to get a better job](#) (Seek NZ)
- [What am I good at?](#) (Careers NZ)
- [Matching your personality to the right role for you](#) (Seek NZ)
- [How to assess your values to find the work that suits you best](#) (Seek NZ)
- [Know your skills](#) (Careers NZ)
- [10 drivers of job satisfaction](#) (Seek NZ)
- [5 tips to set career goals you can actually achieve](#) (Seek NZ)



## O – OPTIONS AWARENESS

Explore your available work or training options. Compare them. Which seem to work best for you?

### Job options

- [Returning to work after a gap](#) (Careers NZ)
- [Match your skills to jobs](#) (Careers NZ)
- [Career Quest - a fun and easy way to explore job ideas](#) (Careers NZ)
- [Job profiles – explore over 400 jobs for work ideas](#) (Careers NZ)
- [Tips to finding the right job - a short video](#) (Seek NZ)
- [Free call Careers NZ or chat to them online for job advice](#) (Careers NZ)

**“Past attempts with paid work have been tricky because an employer didn't understand what it's like to juggle work with caring. *Work & Learn* sounds great!”**



### Training Options

- How to choose study or training for your career *(Careers NZ)*
- Study and training options *(Careers NZ)*
- Search courses by region, qualification type and study field *(Careers NZ)*
- Where to study - Universities, Tertiary Providers and Wānanga in New Zealand

### Financial Help Options

- Help with work and study costs - Work & Income may be able to help with costs to get you into work (including study) and once you start your job *(Work and Income)*
- A range of financial assistance to help you train *(Connected – NZ Govt)*



### D – DECIDING

You can decide on the best kind of work or training options for you based on what you know about yourself and your personal situation, and on what's available for you.

- Who can help you make a career decision? *(Careers NZ)*
- How to work with a recruiter to find the right fit *(Seek NZ)*
- Deciding on your career path *(Seek NZ)*
- SEEK's free career planning template *(Seek NZ)*



### A – ACTION

Make a plan and put it into action by getting your CV ready and applying for jobs, or enrol to do a training course. See our helpful *Work and Learn* information sheets about these helpful topics:

- Getting your CV (resume) and cover letter ready
- Applying for jobs
- Preparing for interviews



### CONNECT

If you have any questions about your job hunt, you can chat with your *Work & Learn* advisor. You can also free call the government's helpful Careers Advice Line weekdays on 0800 601 301 or message them online. You may also like to connect with Work & Income's Job Connect Facebook page - they share information about ways they can help you get ready to work, find work, and the support that's available while you're working.

"I've been out of the workforce for more than 10 years due to my caring situation. I have worked as a manager in the past but am seeking a job that will help me build confidence and get me out in the world again."





# GETTING YOUR CV READY

You may already have a resume or 'CV', but it might need updating. Or do you need to create one for the first time? We'll help!

A CV is a shortened version of the term 'curriculum vitae'. It is a document that job applicants use to showcase their skills, qualities, achievements, and qualifications to a prospective employer. Sometimes people use the word 'resume' instead, but they mean the same thing.

Your CV is the tool that helps you get your foot in the door when applying for jobs.

Below are links and tips to help you write a good CV and what to include in it for the job you're wanting. It's your own personal marketing document!

## Remember to make the most of your family caregiving experience

Caring involves using many different skills and personal qualities and it's something you do very well. Having your carer role on your CV gives potential employers an insight into your character and values by showing your commitment, empathy, and work ethic. Your Work & Learn advisor can help you reflect on these skills and how to present them in your CV.

## HOW TO WRITE A GOOD CV



- [How to write a CV \(Careers NZ\)](#)
- [Tips for nailing your CV \(TradeMe\)](#)
- [CV templates and tips \(Work & Income\)](#)
- [CV templates to create your own CV \(Careers NZ\)](#)
- [CV Builder to create your own CV online \(Careers NZ\)](#)
- [Free resume/CV template \(Seek NZ\)](#)
- [Tips for creating a NZ-style CV \(Careers NZ\)](#)

## Choosing good referees to list on your CV

- [Practical tips from Careers NZ](#)



## HOW TO WRITE YOUR COVER LETTER

A cover letter is a shorter document that explains to an employer why you're applying for the job they have available. Your CV will be sent with it. A good cover letter can also show your written communication skills. If a cover letter is customised to the job you're applying for, it will show a prospective employer that you have taken the time to put some effort into your application.

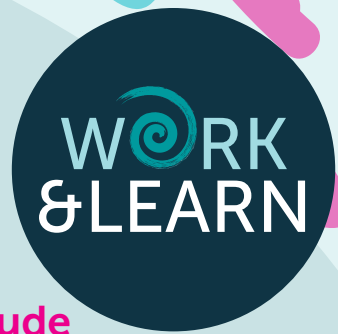
- [How to write a cover letter \(Careers NZ\)](#)
- [Writing the perfect cover letter - scroll down a bit \(Trade Me\)](#)
- [Cover letter templates and tips \(Work and Income\)](#)
- [Cover letters - the good and the bad \(Seek NZ\)](#)
- [Free Cover letter Template \(Seek NZ\)](#)

"I need help with my CV. Everything has changed and I need to present my skills in a modern way."





# COMMON CHALLENGES FOR WORKING CARERS



Caregiving usually requires a good amount of time and attention because a family or whānau carer keeps looking out for a person's needs and ensures their safety and wellbeing.



Carers say there can be unpredictable situations at times which immediately need attending to. For carers balancing paid work, caring, and maybe training, juggling these demands can definitely be tricky.

This is why our *Work & Learn* programme helps to make sure your employer or training provider not only understands that you're a carer, but is also aware of what your daily challenges are.

We encourage employers and training providers to support carers by providing them with the right information and tools, such as developing policies that give carers extra flexibility so they can continue to participate in work, or their training course.

Carer NZ's *Work & Learn* programme can help you think about your work and training goals, and connect with carer friendly employers! We'll help you every step of the way!

## When working or training, common carer challenges include

Time pressures needing ongoing time management

Competing responsibilities

Being preoccupied by their other role/tasks

Concern about the person who needs support (checking in with them during the day etc)

Receiving or making care-related personal calls at work

Leaving work/training at short notice if needed

Arriving late, leaving early, or taking time off if flexible hours are needed

Carers may need to take a job with lower responsibilities and wages than they are qualified for

They may need to reduce or increase work hours to accommodate caring

Carers often feel frustrated by their work/income realities

They can't always join in with workmates, or fellow students, for social times

They may experience pressure from other family/whānau members to work or not work (or train or not train)

Emotional and physical stress can come from both roles leading to ongoing exhaustion

Carers may not ask for help or feel they are being a nuisance if they need some support at work or when training

They may feel guilty when work doesn't get done

It can be hard to find time for themselves too



## CONNECT

Your *Work & Learn* advisor will support you as you search for work, find your feet in a job, or begin training. They can also help you find constructive solutions for any arising issues that may be making work or training difficult for you. The *Work & Learn* programme has your back!





# INTERESTED IN SOME TRAINING?

To help you get a job, you may need to get some more knowledge and skills. There are lots of courses to help you do this. Many require attendance in person, others are online, and some are a mixture of both.

Your *Work & Learn* advisor can support you to explore your training options, so you can find the course that is right for you.

They can also help you find information on any financial assistance available to help you with training costs.

These helpful links can help you to start gathering the information you need to make your choices.

## Find out about your training options

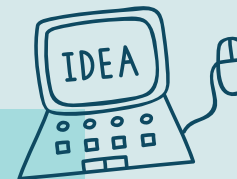
- How to choose study or training for your career (*Careers NZ*)
- Study and training options (*Careers NZ*)
- Which places offer which qualifications? (*Careers NZ*)

## Learn about managing your finances as you study and train

**Study Link** This free government service can help you make informed choices about your training/study finances, how to apply, and how to manage your funding efficiently online. It offers financial management tips for starting study, during study, if you're returning to study, and when you finish your course/training.

### Find out how you can get prior learning or experience credited towards a particular qualification

- Credit work or learning towards a qualification (*Careers NZ*)
- Learn about study and training if you need learning support (*Careers NZ*)
- Gain the support you need (*Careers NZ*)



# WORK & LEARN

## Consider training while you work

You might want to continue to broaden your skills while working in a paid job. You can become better at your job, increase chances for a promotion, or even change your job or career entirely. Here are some tips.

### Find out about your Financial Help Options

- Help with work and study costs - *Work & Income* may be able to help with costs to get you into work (including study) and once you start your job
- A range of financial assistance to help you train (*Connected – NZ Govt*)
- 7 ways to fund your study (*Careers NZ*)

“Finding work, building a KiwiSaver balance, flexibility so I can earn while caring for Mum – that’s my goal.”



## CONNECT

Use your *Work & Learn* advisor can help you work out what kind of training might work best for you right now. They will also keep being available to you, so you have the encouragement and support you need – especially if things get extra challenging for a time.







# BUILDING CONFIDENCE

Making a life change, such as getting into paid work or starting a training course, can feel daunting for family carers. Maybe you've been out of the paid workforce for awhile, or you might dread the idea of job interviews. Maybe your self-esteem is low right now. It might all feel too hard. Your Work & Learn advisor is here for you. They can help you build up your self-confidence, right from when you first start thinking about your options through until you begin in a new job or a new training course. They will continue to support you every step of the way!

## Think about your own personal style – and celebrate it!

Carers NZ has partnered with inclusive stylist Monique Doy - [Click here to watch Mo describe her best style tips for carers!](#)

## INCREASE CONFIDENCE

Improving our self-confidence provides the energy and motivation to take the actions to make positive things happen for ourselves.



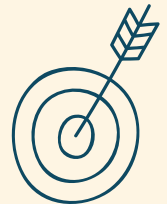
Here are some helpful resources providing practical tips on ways to boost your confidence – and keep it strong it strong on your work or training journey.

- **Build up your confidence to make a career change** (*Careers NZ*)
- **Build your confidence after redundancy** (*Careers NZ*)
- **Stay confident during your job search** (*Monster Career Advice, UK*)
- **How self-confidence leads to success in your job search and how to start** (*Forbes, USA*)
- **How to build and maintain your confidence during a job search** (*Andrew Seaman, LinkedIn*)
- **Using community volunteering to build your confidence** (*Careers NZ*)

## WORK & LEARN

## Focus on your strengths, not your weaknesses

We all know that there are things we aren't good at, but when we concentrate on our natural abilities, we can appreciate the strengths we do have. This helps us to believe in ourselves.



Here are some tools that can help you identify your strengths:

- **The VIA Character Strengths Survey** (*All Right NZ*) – a 15 minute free online quiz
- **Skill Matcher quiz** (*Careers NZ*) – a free quiz
- **CliftonStrengths** – An hour long online assessment used widely around the world. This assessment, presented by Gallop, will help you identify your key strengths (themes) and how to apply them in life and work. There is a fee for this assessment, depending on which service you select.

**“Confidence helps us feel ready for life’s experiences. When we’re confident, we’re more likely to move forward with people and opportunities – not back away from them. And if things don’t work out at first, confidence helps us try again. It’s the opposite when our confidence is low.”** (*Neumors Health*)





# APPLYING FOR JOBS

Carers NZ's *Work & Learn* team connects with lots of employers interested in being CareWise – being supportive of employees who are also family or whānau carers. This helps us to hear about job opportunities that might be right for your situation.

You will probably also hear about, or find out about, some advertised jobs that interest you.

Working together, we can find an employment opportunity that is a good fit for you.

**“I want to explain to employers that my years of caring for my brother with special needs are not just gaps in my work history – I now have valuable skills in advocacy, and the ability to navigate complicated government systems.”**

Here are some useful resources for job hunting. The links offer key information, practical tips, and helpful insights from employers.



## APPLY FOR A JOB

- Free job hunters' workbook in English, Māori or Pacific languages for practical tips and activities to get you back to employment (*Careers NZ*)
- 10 ways to boost your job search (*Seek NZ*)
- A step-by-step guide to finding a job in New Zealand (*Careers NZ*)
- 10 steps to job hunting (*Careers NZ*)
- Applying for jobs – common questions (*Seek NZ*)



## OTHER HELPFUL ADVICE

- If you're job hunting, it's time to clean up your social media (*Careers NZ*)
- Courses to help you get a job (*Work & Income*)
- Check out all the job hunting resources *Careers NZ* makes available. Subscribe to receive monthly emails with job hunting tips and advice. (*Scroll right down to the bottom right of this web page.*)



## JOB WEBSITES

- Work & Income's 'Find a Job' website (*Work & Income*)
- Job searching (*Work & Income*) – links to a range of job listings
- Job vacancy and recruitment websites (*Careers NZ*)
- Find work now (*Connected – NZ Govt*)
- Use community agencies to help you source work or work-related courses, including driving license training (*NZ Family Services Directory*)



## CONNECT

Connect with your Work & Learn advisor to talk through your job hunting steps. They can give you support and encouragement, as well as tips on useful approaches to try. Job hunting can sometimes be a frustrating process and it can go on for longer than you'd want. Having someone to talk to who believes in you can really help.

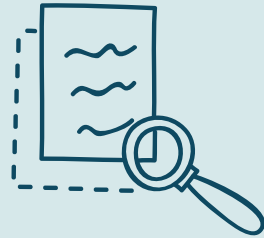




# PREPARING FOR INTERVIEWS



Being invited to a job interview means that you have made a good impression in your job application. Congratulations!



The job interview is now your opportunity to convince an employer that you're the right person for the job. It's a chance to connect well with them, and to impress them with your skills, experience, and qualities.

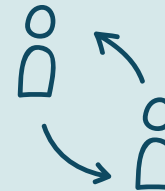
During a job interview, an employer wants to find out why you've applied for their job, how well you could fit into their organisation's culture, and what value you could add if you worked there.

Today interviews can be done in many different ways. For example, they may be in person, or by video link or phone. Whatever form an interview process takes, preparing for it well can help you to be as successful as possible.

By preparing you can feel more calm and confident. You can think through what questions you might be asked, find out about the business, and consider what questions you have about the job.

The following links offer useful information and helpful insights from NZ recruiters and employers.

- [4 ways to prepare for an interview](#) (*Seek*)
- [Most common NZ job interview questions \(with answers\)](#) (*TradeMe*)
- [Getting ready for an interview](#) (*Careers NZ*)
- [Job interview tips](#) (*Work & Income*)
- [Job interviews in New Zealand](#) (*Careers NZ*)  
Going for an interview in New Zealand might differ a little or a lot from interviews in other countries. These suggestions can help you prepare if you are new to New Zealand.
- [Interview tips for applicants](#) (*Employment New Zealand*)
- [Interview preparation tips](#) (*Hays – employment recruiter*)



**"I would love to help others with a mix of behind the scenes and meeting people."**

Whether a job interview is successful or not, your *Work & Learn* advisor is here for you every step of the way, to support you to find the job that's right for you.



## CONNECT

Your *Work & Learn* advisor will share practical tips with you as you prepare for interviews. They can answer any questions you have and give you ongoing encouragement and support. You might find it helpful to role play the interview with them in advance. Getting some experience answering a range of questions on the spot is really useful and it can help build up your confidence.





# TRANSITIONING FROM A BENEFIT TO PAID WORK

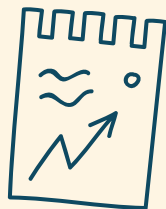
Moving from a benefit to paid employment, maybe even just slowly, means that you are strengthening your own financial situation. The following information is important as you find your way through this change. You can also talk with your Work & Learn advisor about any aspect of this change you're not sure about.

## About abatement

Although you're allowed to earn money while on a benefit, what you earn will affect the amount of your main benefit and whether you're entitled to supplementary assistance or not. Depending on how much you earn, your benefit will be reduced ('abated') by a certain amount. The more you earn, the less benefit you will receive from the Government. Community Law clearly explains abatement [here](#) and what you'll get when you begin to earn, depending on what benefit you have been on.

## Declaring your income

If you've been on a benefit and you move into paid work, even if it's just for a few hours a week, you may need to let Work & Income know. This is called 'declaring income'. Work out if you need to tell them about income you've earned or payments you get by [using this link](#).



## Financial assistance available when coming off the benefit



It is important to know about ways Work & Income make some financial support available to people who are not on a main benefit. Community Law clearly explains possible extra financial support [here](#).

## Getting some extra support as you move off the benefit

If there are any problems you come across as you move into paid work, it can help to find some extra, specialist support. It can help a lot to talk to someone who knows how these things work, and who can give you advice. Here are some support options:

- Your local **Community Law** Centre can provide free initial legal advice and, depending on your situation, may be able to provide ongoing support. [www.communitylaw.org.nz](http://www.communitylaw.org.nz)
- Every local community **Citizens Advice Bureau** has volunteers who can provide information, particularly on where to access beneficiary advocacy services. Phone: 0800 FOR CAB (0800 367 222) or see [www.cab.org.nz](http://www.cab.org.nz)
- **AAAP** (Auckland Action Against Poverty) provides a free advocacy service for people in the Auckland region who are dealing with Work & Income. See [www.aaap.org.nz](http://www.aaap.org.nz) or phone (09) 634 0591. They have also published a 30-page 'Beneficiary Rights Booklet' available [here](#), which explains the Supplementary Assistance that may be available as you transition off your benefit. It is also a basic guide to your entitlements from Work & Income.
- The **Work & Income** website and helpline both also provide information about available support as you come off your benefit. See [www.workandincome.govt.nz](http://www.workandincome.govt.nz) or phone 0800 559 009.

WORK & LEARN

"I am limited to work within school hours. It would be fantastic to find a carer friendly employer."



# MONEY MATTERS

Carers can struggle financially, especially if they are unable to work. Even if we have a low income, our financial situation can improve when we take some steps to get our money better organised, to plan our financial future, and to get financial help and advice if we know we need it. Your Work & Learn advisor is here for you to chat about your financial options. Here also are some helpful financial planning and budgeting resources worth checking out.

**COMING SOON!** Carers NZ is working with financial expert Mary Holm on a special planning series for carers. As a Work & Learn programme participant, we'll let you know when our series with Mary is available, and send you a free copy of her latest book!

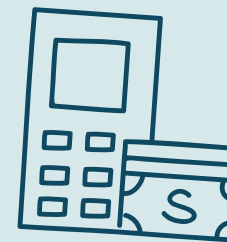
## Do a free financial literacy course

If you'd like to learn more about money matters, and ways you can plan your financial future, there are free online courses to help. MoneyHub lists some [here](#).



**Sorted** is a free service that helps New Zealanders in all kinds of financial situations get their money sorted, including those feeling overwhelmed or stuck by their money situation. They offer many useful online tools and very practical tips. They help you look ahead, including towards retirement.

- 6 steps help you take control of your money
- Click on their top **TOOLS** tab at the top to find online tools to help you with budgeting, tackling any debt you have, saving, KiwiSaver and retirement planning, as well as working towards buying a home.



## WORK & LEARN

- See their **GUIDES** tab at the top of their website for a wide range of financial help topics.
- **20 Easy Ways to Save LOTS on Household Bills** Money Hub offers these practical ideas for kiwis.

## Find financial advice and support with money

Managing personal money is a big challenge for many people. Not everyone has the time, knowledge, or confidence to work out the more complicated details. Talking to a money expert can help you feel more in control of your money and better able to plan ahead. These advisers will always keep your financial situation private and confidential. Here are a range of ways you can find such financial advice for your own situation.

- A free **MoneyTalks** financial mentor can help you set up a budget that works well for you. MoneyTalks offers free, confidential money advice. You can contact a financial mentor through its free helpline on 0800 345 123, [email](#), or try a live online chat with them. If you like, they can help you set up a budget using the **Sorted budgeting tool**.
- See the Citizens Advice Bureau's information on [Where can I go for free budgeting advice?](#)
- This practical government listing [offers links](#) to a wide range of trusted community services that can help you manage your finances.
- See **Work & Income's Managing Your Money** information. This explains what budgeting is about and the types of help you may be able to get to assist with managing your money better.
- See Sorted's advice on finding the right financial advice for your own situation [here](#).

Don't forget that your bank will also be able to provide some advice. Check their website or call their customer helpline. Every bank does it in their own way, but they want you to be financially stable and are usually keen to talk with you about your options.

