



Steps to Work Employer Subsidy

The Steps to Work Employer Subsidy provides employers with advice and support, increased access to potential employees and financial assistance with wages for the first 6 months of permanent employment.

The Steps to Work Employer Subsidy is a 26 week package of assistance available to employers who recruit people eligible for the Steps to Work programme. You may be entitled to a subsidy if you employ someone who satisfies the eligibility conditions. Advice and support is available from trained advisers during the period of the subsidy.

How it works



The subsidy is payable for up to 26 weeks to employers who recruit eligible clients. You may employ clients on a part time (16 - 29 hours) or full time (30 hours+) basis.

Who can apply?



If you employ a client who was claiming a work focused benefit, has been economically inactive for at least 13 weeks (some exceptions to the qualifying period apply), you may qualify for financial assistance by advertising a Steps to Work vacancy and recruiting an eligible client.

How do I apply?



You can place a Steps to Work vacancy by contacting your local Jobs & Benefits office/JobCentre where staff will provide you with more information on advertising your vacancy;

You can also advertise your vacancy online via **www.employersonlineni.com** by telephone on **FREEPHONE 0800 353530**; or by visiting **www.nidirect.gov.uk/stepstowork**

Alternatively, you can contact one of the Department's Employer Contact Managers – visit **www.delni.gov.uk/employercontactmanager**

Before the person starts work with you, it is essential that you complete an Employer Agreement. The Agreement must be signed and returned to your local Jobs & Benefits office/ JobCentre in advance of your employee commencing employment on the Steps to Work Employer Subsidy.

FAQs



What is the Employer Agreement?

This is a formal agreement between you and the Department asking you to commit to certain conditions. These include a commitment to:

- offer the employee a permanent job;
- ensure that existing employees are not made redundant in order to make way for a Steps to Work employee;
- arrange for 18 to 24 year old employees to receive appropriate training;
- comply with the National Minimum Wage regulations and offer Steps to Work employees the normal rate for the job.

What support will I get?

You will have the support of an Adviser who will be available to help with any difficulties which may arise. As well as help from an Adviser, additional support may be available if your Steps to Work employee has any problems during the early stages of settling into the job. In work support may be available.

What is "In work support"?

"In work support" is aimed at Steps to Work employees who require additional help to overcome any barriers and assist them to find and sustain work. The Adviser will identify if your employee requires extra support which is available for up to 12 weeks to address individual issues, barriers or problems and help the employee remain in employment. The Adviser will agree what support should be provided.

Is help available with the cost of training?

We will provide financial assistance to help you with the cost of training an 18 to 24 year old employee. This training may be a short vocationally related course to increase the skills of your employee, qualifications or units of qualifications on the register of regulated qualifications, or Essential Skills training. The Adviser will agree specific training arrangements with you for your Steps to Work employee.

Will I have to keep the employee on after the six month subsidy period?

Yes, you will be expected to retain the employee, provided he or she continues to perform the job duties satisfactorily. As with any employee, you may end a contract of employment. However, during the subsidy period, our staff will assist you with any issues which may arise.

How do I find out more about the Employer Subsidy?

Staff in your local Jobs & Benefits office/JobCentre will be pleased to provide you with more information.

Telephone the Freephone number on **0800 353530** to get more information.

What happens next?



Once your vacancy has been received and processed you will then be offered candidates for interview who will meet the criteria which you have set for the job. You will, of course, have the final decision on the selection of a suitable candidate.

Even if you do not currently have job vacancies, you may still be able to offer work experience placements to jobseekers on the Steps to Work programme. Work placements provide valuable experience in a working environment which will help to renew or update work skills. Your local Steps to Work Lead Contractor can help you with this. You can find them by logging on to www.delni.gov.uk/stw-recontracting

What funding is available?



The amounts payable range from £40 to £75 per week depending on the age of the participant and if the job is full time or part time. Please check with staff from your local Jobs & Benefits office/JobCentre for further information.

Benefits



How can the Employer Subsidy help me?

- you will have access to potential employees you may not otherwise have considered;
- you will receive assistance towards the cost of your employee's wage;
- you will have access to advice and support during the subsidy period;
- you may be entitled to financial assistance to help you with the cost of training an 18 to 24 year old.