

Dear Applicant,

Welcome to the '**Making Work Work – for Women Returners**' application information. The programme seeks women looking to step back into the workplace and who face difficulties in finding work that fits with all the commitments and fun of life following a career break (e.g., for maternity, caring, health issues /disability, redundancy, relocation or other reasons).

We are looking for women who have management experience or aspirations from across Scotland to take part in a peer-led skills refresher programme which will facilitate the confidence and networks which are essential to finding work which is commensurate with their skills, ambitions and potential. Participants also get support with their job search, personal development and designing their (work)life blend.

What is Making Work Work – for Women Returners?

The purpose of **Making Work Work – for Women Returners** is to empower women to find work that works which is fulfilling and meaningful. The programme has been devised by Lynn Houmudi (Flexibility Works 'Flex Influencer' of the year 2022) and The Challenges Group to contribute to more positive and productive workplace cultures where people are able to contribute in a way which fits with their lifestyles and commitments.

The **Making Work Work – for Women Returners** programme is funded by the Scottish Government and administered by [Skills Development Scotland](#). While undertaking a structured, peer-led learning experience of online sessions, women refresh and renew their skillset – specific to their needs mapped in their Personal Learning Plan – while supporting each other to build confidence and networks. They learn about good workplace cultures, performance and leadership, flexible working and how to make work work, and receive mentoring and other support on applications, CVs and interviews while interacting with an inspiring network who can support their transition back to work.

Leaving this programme, women will not only be equipped to find fulfilling work that works, but also be advocates for greater flexibility and family-friendly approaches in the workplace to the benefit of all workers, not just women.

Furthermore, throughout the programme, the women will build and grow their network of like-minded and driven participants and possible future employers. They will be part of an exclusive MWW Alumni space on MS Teams, an online platform where they can seek advice from programme alumni, speakers and tutors, support each other and access continuing career support and job opportunities.

Programme content

Participants will undergo an initial assessment to determine each participant's Personal Learning Plan (PLP) and training timetable. In total, each learner will be matched with a mentor for 7 one-to-one private sessions, plus 10 live, interactive online vocational training sessions (on Zoom), facilitated by professional trainers, including an introductory session and an evaluation/closing celebration session.

Additionally, the participants enjoy lifetime access to Accenture's Skills Exchange learning platform, providing a diverse range of mobile-friendly e-Learning modules to support their skills refresh and job search.

In summary, the programme consists of the following four main components:

1. Professional and personal development training

The programme consists of 10 x 3 hour weekday morning sessions of peer-led, guided online learning with experienced trainers and facilitators.

Training covers i) Peer-led workplace, performance and leadership skills refresher content; ii) Personal development, goal setting and designing your (work)life blend; and iii) Job search and employability skills.

Sessions will be delivered over 6 weeks. There will be training cohorts of around 25 women starting at regular intervals throughout 2022. The programme also includes an introduction session at the start and an evaluation and closing session at the end of the training weeks. The session content will be shared with the participants for later reference.

Participants will be given work and exercises to complete outside of group sessions to strengthen their knowledge and develop their confidence in the areas covered; expect to complete 5 –10 hours of self-directed work outside the sessions each week. Additional materials and exercises will be provided via an MS Teams group where the participants can also chat, connect and ask questions.

2. Mentoring

Each participant will be able to access 7 one-to-one sessions of mentoring during the programme. Mentors will be matched according to participants' backgrounds and aspirations and the sessions will be scheduled during or slightly after the programme timetable.

3. Events, workshops and masterclasses

In addition, the participants will be invited to online events, workshops and masterclasses. These are designed to inspire, inform and generate ideas and confidence. They will also be an opportunity to network with participants beyond your own cohort and may be held before, during or after your training. These 1-2 hour sessions will be delivered by external experts and may cover subjects such as the following (further sessions can be arranged according to need):

- Starting a business
- Social business with purpose
- Equality rights and flexible working
- Working with recruiters to find flexible work
- Signposting to further services

4. On-going support

During the programme, the women will be able to access a MS Teams group with all Making Work Work participants and alumni to connect and support each other. This MS Teams group also provides access to content to support learning and next steps. Women are encouraged to create a sustainable digital network to support their continued transition into work which works for after the programme. As part of our aftercare provision, following completion of the programme, participants may be signposted to partner services depending on their needs.

Application Requirements

The following eligibility criteria apply to all women returners seeking to participate on the programme. If you do not exactly fit the criteria below, but feel you could benefit from the programme, please get in touch with us at womenreturners@thechallengesgroup.com.

We can refer applicants on to other programmes if Making Work Work is not the best fit, so please get in touch.

A person is eligible for the Making Work Work Women Returners Programme if they:

- are a woman
- are aged 25 years or over at the start of the programme
- have been out of paid employment for at least the last 6 months (for example due to childcare or other caring commitments, health / disability issues including menopause, redundancy or other reasons). [Please note that women on employer- contracted maternity leave are not eligible]
- have been employed in the past
- live in Scotland
- have entitlement to work in the UK without employment restriction or time limit

Contact womenreturners@thechallengesgroup.com with any eligibility questions.

All applicants:

- are expected to participate fully in the Making Work Work programme and attend the full programme of training sessions and mentoring sessions.
- must be fluent in both written and verbal English.
- should be competent in the use of Microsoft Office packages (especially Excel and Word) and able to access online trainings over Zoom.
- should be committed to an interactive and supportive process to empower themselves and the other participants in their transition into work that works.

The Programme is suitable for participants with managerial experience or aspirations (e.g. people, task, finance, project, budget, or other management), no matter whether they seek employment, self-employment or start-up support.

Application Process

Please **apply as soon as possible**, the application form provides options to let us know when you are available. Applying early ensures you the best possible chance of securing a place at the right timing for you.

If you don't feel ready to apply yet please get in touch with us via womenreturners@thechallengesgroup.com

Due to levels of interest and to manage our workload we may apply **application deadlines**, when this is the case we will note this on the website and social media posts.

PLEASE NOTE

If selected,

- You will be expected to fill in an assessment survey **within three days of selection** for our Programme Coordinators to determine your training needs and to create your Personal Learning Plan and training schedule.
- You will need access to an **internet-enabled device** to participate in the training. If this is a barrier to participation, please get in touch with us.
- The programme lasts for **6 weeks**. It is delivered in two 3 hr online group sessions weekly (Mon & Wed or Tues & Thurs). Additionally you are expected to dedicate an additional 5 – 10 hours of individual learning activity each week. The total learning commitment will be **11 – 16 hrs weekly**.
- Applicants will be held to a **Code of Conduct** throughout the programme placement, which will be made available upon admission.
- The **Making Work Work – for Women Returners** programme is an inclusive and equal opportunities programme. Women who experience multiple barriers to employment, for example older women, menopausal women, disabled women, lone parents, minority ethnic women, women from rural or areas of high socio-economic deprivation, female veterans/spouses of veterans, and LGBTQIA+ women are especially encouraged to apply. If you have any specific accessibility needs, you will be able to indicate these on the application form.

Application Form Information (for your advance information – please apply online)

Dear Applicant,

Please ensure that before filling in the online form, you have read the above application information.

We strongly recommend preparing the answers to some of the questions - e.g. regarding your management experience/aspiration, career break impact or ambition - in advance, a list of all questions is attached below.

New programmes are starting at regular intervals. **Please complete the form as soon as you can so we can allocate you to a cohort that suits your schedule.**

Applications are accepted in advance.

Answer all questions sincerely and to the best of your knowledge. Only complete forms can be submitted.

The information below is what is required for the application form, please read and consider your answers before completing the form.

1. Eligibility Criteria

You are eligible for the fully funded programme if **the following statements are all true and accurate** on the start date of the programme:

- I am a woman.
- I am aged 25 or over.
- I have been unemployed* for at least the last 6 months.
- I have been employed in the past.
- I live in Scotland.
- I am not on any other employment, education, training or enterprise programme funded by any UK and / or Scottish Government department and / or Skills Development Scotland.

*Being unemployed includes the following:

- You have not been on employer-contracted maternity leave in the last 6 months.
- You have not been working as a freelancer in the last 6 months.
- You have not been earning through self-employment in the last 6 months.

(Overseas nationals are eligible if the Biometric Residence Permit (BRP) which is provided by the Home Office shows you have the right to work regardless of the time shown, i.e. you are not subject to an employment restriction or to a time limit on your stay in Great Britain or both. We might need you to provide verification.)

2. Active Participation & Time Commitment

The training programme is designed to take place over a period of 5 to 8 weeks with mandatory weekly online sessions over 5-6 weeks, plus additional self-study and mentoring time. We expect from our participants active participation in the online sessions and a time commitment of at least 10-15 hours per week for the duration of the programme to support their learning and career planning.

The online training sessions take place from 10am to 1pm, typically on a Monday and

Wednesday *or* a Tuesday and Thursday. Where possible we will accommodate your preferences.

	Yes	No
I am able to commit 10 - 15 hrs per week to the programme for the 5 - 8 weeks duration		

3. Personal Details - Address

Please provide your physical address (Flat Number, House Number, Street, City)

You need to live in Scotland to be eligible for the programme.

4. Personal Details - Post Code

5. Personal Details - Date of Birth

Please enter it in the format DD/MM/YYYY (eg, 01/01/1980)

6. Your Career Break - Duration

In order to qualify for a funded place in this programme, your career break must be more than 6 months long on the date training commences. Please indicate how long your career break has been.

- 6 months to 2 years
- between 2 and 5 years
- more than 5 years

7. Your Career Break - Reason

What was the main reason for your most recent career break? Please select all that apply or add another reason in 'other'.

- Maternity
- Other caring commitments
- Health Reasons / Disability
- Menopause
- Redundancy
- Relocation

8. Your Career Break - Activity

Have you been doing any of the following activities while on your most recent career break? Please select all that apply or add your answer in 'other'.

- Studying - full-time or part-time
- Volunteering
- Training
- Stay-at-home parent
- Caring responsibility (other than your own children)

9. About You - Career Journey

Please answer the following questions to give us further understanding about your interest in, and suitability for, the programme.

Please describe your work experience/career path so far (roles & responsibilities) and your managerial experience and/or future managerial aspiration. (250-300 words - bullet points are fine)

10. More About You - Management and Leadership Strengths

Please list no more than three management and leadership strengths from your experience or training. This could be task related, finance or project management related, team management or leadership related, or something else.

11. More About You - Management and Leadership Areas for Development

Please list no more than three areas you would like to develop. This could be any aspect of leadership or management (examples might be task, finance, project, or people management skills).

Please note that you don't need management experience to participate in the programme.

12. More About You - Career Break Impact

Please describe the impact of your recent career break on your career ambitions and your (work)life blend; the challenges you have faced in finding work that works; and where you would like the next stage of your career journey to lead, indicating your preferred working pattern if you have one. (max. 300 words)

13. More About You - Motivation

Why do you think you should be selected for the Making Work Work – for Women Returners programme? What would you like to develop and what could you contribute? (max. 300 words)

(We are interested in your motivation and particular skills or networks that you might like to develop or contribute throughout the peer-led training. How can you support others in their journey?).

14. More About You - Future Ambition

If you were selected for the Making Work Work – for Women Returners programme, what would your ambitions be on completion? (150-200 Words)

15. Disability - Additional Requirements

The Challenges Group is committed to increasing the participation of women of all abilities in the programme and are working to ensure that we are welcoming and inclusive. Women who experience multiple barriers to employment, for example older women, menopausal women, disabled women, lone parents, minority ethnic women, women affected by domestic abuse, women from areas that are rural or of high socio-economic deprivation, female veterans / spouses of armed forces personnel and LGBTQIA+ individuals are

especially encouraged to apply. If you have any specific accessibility needs, please indicate them or get in touch to discuss this with us.

16. How did you hear about Making Work Work?

Please give us as much detail as you can - this helps us work out which of our marketing activities are most effective.