

MAKING WORK WORK

for Women Returners

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 management 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 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.

Making Work Work – for Women Returners was piloted early in 2021 with a success rate of over 80% of participants of the first cohort being employed or having started their own business within 6 months of finishing the training programme. They joined an alumni network of support and exchange and are now advocating for flexible working and (work)life blends that accommodate any working individual's needs and non-work-related responsibilities.

The **Making Work Work – for Women Returners** programme aims to support and train 125 women in groups of cohorts running for 4-6 weeks between November 2021 and March 2022. The 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 management and leadership, flexible working and how to make work work, and receive mentoring and other support on applications, CVs and interviews while interacting with inspiring female leaders and organisations 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 space where they can seek advice from programme alumni, speakers and tutors, support each other and access continuing career support and job opportunities. As CMI learners, they also gain access to Management Direct, a resource of management and leadership training and support materials.

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 scheduled two hours of mentoring, plus 10 live, interactive online vocational training sessions (on Zoom, 3 hours each, twice per week), facilitated by professional trainers, including an introductory session and an evaluation/closing celebration session. Additionally, through our relationship with CMI, we are able to offer one year of access to CMI Management Direct, a portal of management and skills information and support.

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 management 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 4 – 6 weeks, depending on the time of year. There will be new 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 two 1-hour sessions of mentoring or coaching during the programme. Mentors will be matched according to participants' backgrounds and aspirations and will form a vital link to the project team as a second contact point in the event of any feedback or concerns in either direction. Mentoring sessions will be scheduled during or slightly after the programme timetable. Mentors will also help identify the most suitable progression pathways/signposting for individual participants.

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 course of 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 are also able to 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
- they are aged 25 years or over at the start of the programme
- they 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
- they have been employed in the past
- they live in Scotland
- they 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 10 x 3 hr training sessions and 2 x 1 hr mentoring sessions.

All applicants

- 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 or see our website to book onto the next available **online information session** which is bookable via a link on the webpage: <https://thechallengesgroup.com/home/our-work/makingworkwork/>
- 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.
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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 **4 – 6 weeks**, depending on the time of year. 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 affected by domestic abuse, 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.

Project Partners

This programme is delivered by the Challenges Group and the Chartered Management Institute in partnership with Volunteering Matters and Get The Gen. It is funded by the Scottish Government and administered by Skills Development Scotland.

For further information, please contact: womenreturners@thechallengesgroup.com
Or see website: thechallengesgroup.com/makingworkwork/



Scottish Government
Riaghaltas na h-Alba
gov.scot

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

Dear Applicant,

The **Making Work Work – for Women Returners** seeks women looking to step back into the workplace and who face difficulties in finding work that fits with all the commitment and fun of life following a career break.

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

Please ensure that before filling in the online form, you have read the above application information or visited our website at [Making Work Work - The Challenges Group](#) for more 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.** Please note that 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 heading over to fill in the [online application form](#)

If you have any questions please contact womenreturners@thechallengesgroup.com

Eligibility Criteria

You are only eligible for the programme if you are able to answer all the questions with 'yes'

- I am a woman.
- I am 25 years or over at the beginning of the programme.
- I have been out of paid employment for 6 months or more at the beginning of the programme (please note that time out of work on employer-contracted maternity leave does NOT count as a period of unemployment).
- I have been employed in the past.
- I live in Scotland.
- I have the right to work in the UK and I am not subject to an employer restriction or time limit.

Personal Details

- Name

- Email address
- Telephone number
- Physical address
- Postcode
- National Insurance Number

Availability

The structured sessions total 6 hrs per week. Participants will benefit most if they are able to set aside 5 – 10 hrs weekly for self-study and reflection. Thus the total weekly commitment for the duration of the programme is 11- 16 hrs weekly.

- I am able to commit to 11- 16 hrs per week to the programme for the 4 – 6 week duration

We accept applications for **training cohorts starting regularly throughout 2022**. Please indicate your availability for attending sessions either n Mondays and Wednesdays **or** on Tuesdays and Thursdays.

The programme lasts for 4 – 6 weeks depending on the time of year. There are **10 online live sessions** across this period, additionally there are **2 mentoring sessions** which will be individually scheduled at times to suit you, and **masterclasses** which will occur periodically on Friday mornings.

- I am available for training courses on **Mondays and Wednesdays**
- I am available for training courses on **Tuesdays and Thursdays**
- I am available and eligible to start the programme at the **first available opportunity**
- I am available and eligible to start in a **few weeks or months**

Your Career Break

This programme is designed for women who face barriers to returning to work commensurate with their skills and earning potential, following a career break. Career breaks may be due to maternity, caring responsibilities or health issues, or other reasons. You may have also been working through parts your career break, but not in your discipline/profession or field, and you must not have been working in the last 6 months before training commences. Please give us a little information about your career break.

Duration – How long has your career break been?

- 6 months to 2 years
- 2 to 5 years
- Over 5 years

Reason – What was the main reason for your most recent career break?

- Maternity
- Other caring commitments
- Health reasons / Disability
- Menopause
- Redundancy
- Relocation
- Others – please specify

Activity – Have you been doing any of the following activities while on your most recent career break?

- Studying – full-time or part-time
- Volunteering
- Training
- On an internship
- Stay-at-home parent
- Caring responsibility
- Others, please specify

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 and your managerial experience/future managerial aspiration. **(250-300 words)**

More about you - Management Strengths and Areas for Development

- Please describe up to three management / leadership strengths from your experience or training
- Please describe up to three management / leadership areas you would like to develop. This can be people, task, finance, project, budget, or other management.

Examples might include particular tasks or areas such as finance, project management, HR skills or something else. Please note that you don't need management experience to participate in the programme.

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)**

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. How can you support others in their journey?).

More about you – Ambition

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

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, long parents, minority ethnic women, women affected by domestic abuse, women from rural or areas of high socio-economic deprivation, female veterans / spouses of veterans 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.

How did you hear about Making Work Work – for Women Returners?

Please select as many as relevant or add a specific resource

- The Challenges Group Website
- Skills Development Scotland
- The Talent Loom/Lynn Houmudi/Flexible Working Scotland
- Word of Mouth – former participant
- Social Media – please specify in “other”
- Other, please specify

Declaration

Signing this declaration does not commit you to take part in the programme or guarantee you a place. It shows that the information you have provided is correct, and that you would like to be considered for a place on the Making Work Work – for Women Returners programme.

I agree that The Challenges Group and partners directly involved in the delivery of this programme will store and process my data in accordance with the requirements of their data protection practices (GDPR). All parties may use my details to send me further information relating to their work.

Please type in your name and the date of submission.