

Citizens Advice Halton learning & development update

December 2021

In this issue:

- ◆ ASA 2 online training
- ◆ Working from home tips to remind you about how to work well from home
- ◆ TED Talks, blogs and more



Advice Skills Academy 2.0 is an innovative project supported by the European Union through the European Social Fund (ESF), that will build the skills and knowledge of staff offering advice services in the Liverpool City Region (LCR).



learning opportunities

Those of you who are signed up to the Advice Skills Academy 2.0 project should have received a newsletter in November which has details of learning opportunities available through ASA 2.0. For those of you who aren't eligible to sign up to ASA 2.0, there are some learning opportunities that are still available to you. Why not check out some of the online learning below:

Switch On & Learn

Online learning at a time to suit your lifestyle. Why not have a look at the '**5 strategies**' range of online learning?

[5 strategies for dealing with conflict](#)

[5 strategies to reduce unconscious bias](#)

[5 strategies for dealing with difficult clients](#)

[5 strategies for mentoring a team](#)

[5 strategies for recruiting a diverse workforce](#)

[5 strategies for speaking with confidence](#)

[5 strategies running an online meeting](#)

[5 strategies for creating a work-life balance](#)

[5 strategies for managing your time](#)

[5 strategies for building your LinkedIn profile](#)

Developed by The Women's Organisation, each of the 5 strategies series has a video with voice and graphics, and last between 40 - 50 minutes, and are full of information, strategies, tips and tools to help you develop your skills.



Thinking about your goals for 2022



December is a great time to start thinking about your goals for the next year. After 2 years of the Covid-19 pandemic, setting some simple and achievable goals for the coming year is a good way to make the new year a fresh start, and help you to reflect on all the things you've learned about yourself, and what you really value, and really want from life.

personal goals

Personal goal setting revolves **around what you want to achieve besides professional success**. Achievements in your hobbies or sports come to mind. Family, personal development, finances and health are more areas for which people often set personal goals.

Have a think about what kind of goals you want to achieve in 2022, below are a few examples, but make sure that the goals you set are personal to you - the more meaningful your goals are to you, the more you're likely to be motivated to achieve them.

- Walk for at least 30 Minutes a Day
- Improve your listening skills
- Stop procrastinating
- Stop or cut down on takeaway meals
- Start volunteering regularly
- Start waking up earlier
- Learn one new thing every week
- Overcome social media addiction
- Clear all your outstanding debts



workplace goals

Your workplace goals may feel a bit harder to influence and work towards while there's still so much uncertainty - but thinking about your goals can help you focus on some small steps - such as learning, taking on more responsibilities in your current role, or just getting ready for when things start to feel more 'normal'.

These are questions often used in coaching - have a look at them to help you think about what is important to you, and what you want to achieve:

- 1 What matters the most to you in your professional life? What do you believe passionately in?
- 2 What skills, talents, or competencies do you have that you are most proud of? Which make you the happiest? Which make you feel accomplished?
- 3 What would you love to be able to list on your ideal CV? How about if there were no barriers or boundaries?
- 4 Describe the last time you felt driven and motivated by your role (current or past). What were you doing? Who was around? Where were you?
- 5 When trying to learn a skill you're passionate about, what are some barriers you've faced? How did you overcome these? Which did you need help with?
- 6 What do you feel is preventing you from learning the knowledge you're after? Have you asked anyone else for help? If so, what happened?
- 7 What is one step you could take to get you closer to that career goal? What kind of development or opportunities might you need to make that step? What opportunities can you create by yourself?
- 8 What can you practically achieve between now and next week / month / quarter to take you closer to your goal?
- 9 How would you go about achieving your career goal if you had unlimited resources? What is already possible right now?
- 10 Have you told others around you about your career goals? Has anyone achieved a similar objective?

Try writing the answers to these questions on paper - studies have shown that you're 42% more likely to achieve your goals if you write them down. Put your answers away for a couple of weeks, then get them out again in the new year, and see whether there's anything you'd like to change, or anything you'd like to add.

Then when you're ready you can work on your action plan to work towards your goals. For ideas on creating an action plan see:

<https://www.indeed.com/career-advice/career-development/how-to-write-an-action-plan>



working from home

None of us thought we would be working from home for so long. It took a while to adjust to and the first lockdown saw us trying to work out how to work from home, let alone how to work well.

After 20+ months of working from home (even now for at least some of the time) we've adjusted to home working - how to do our jobs from home, and how to be productive.

But it's easy for us to forget some basics of how to work from home well. Have a look at some of these common areas, and ask yourself if you need to follow tips on them - it could be your new year resolution to start working from home better (but that doesn't necessarily mean harder) and looking after your wellbeing while you're still working from home.

Give yourself a break

That mean's literally - having regular breaks throughout the day when you're working, as well as giving yourself a break by not worrying about being productive 100% of the time. When you're working in the office, you're probably not productive 100% of the time, so why would you expect to be when you're working from home?

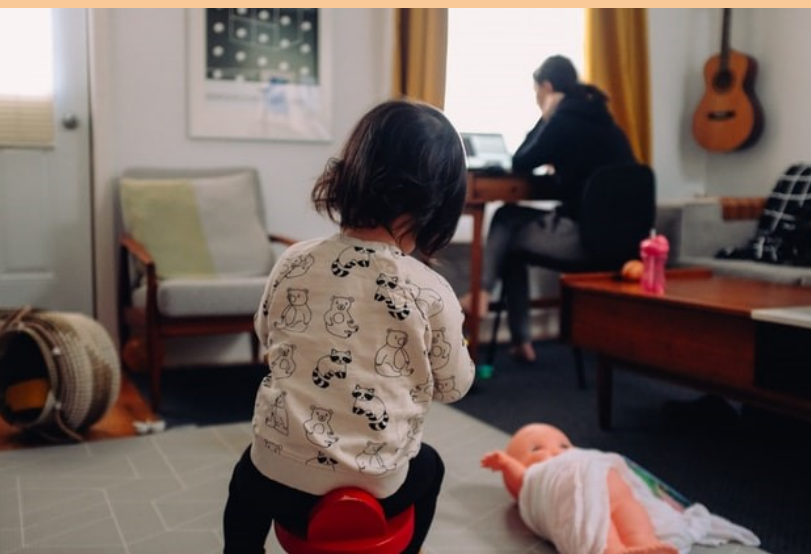
Check your work habits

It took a while for us to develop some good habits about working from home, but it's been a while now, so we need to check that we've still got good habits in place. During the first (and second) lockdowns we made sure we connected with people through things like quizzes, calling people on the phone, and setting up our work routines. Take time to reflect on how you're working now and make sure you're not neglecting the most important habits such as exercise, diet, sleep, connection and communication.

Healthy boundaries

Make sure you've got healthy boundaries in place. You need to think about:

- Making sure you're switching off at a regular and reasonable time
- Setting up a 'working day' pattern that has a set start time and finish time, with a lunch time



- Some people who have been working from home for years suggest switching your computer off, and then doing something you would have done on your commute - something like reading a paper or book, doing some learning, or if you're like me doing a crossword. All of these things can help you to make a distinction between the working day and your personal / home life.

working from home

Actually do some work

Just because we're working from home it doesn't mean that we need to be constantly communicating, chatting, running conference calls, doing Zoom meetings, and using Google Chat to do status updates...

You're allowed to switch it all off to actually get down to doing some work. Which leads on to - making sure we are actually working and not being distracted by things at home as well as constant communication methods.

That said - managers need to let their people breathe and trust them to do their work. Don't swap presenteeism for over-communication.

Understand your energy

We all have dips in energy whether we're working from home or in the office. Many people have a 3pm dip in energy, but are you aware of how your energy flows during the day?

Think about keeping an energy log so you can work out how your energy peaks and dips during the working day. Knowing how your energy flows can help you schedule in different types of work at different times to help you be the most productive when your energy is high.

Remember to take regular breaks, which will help you to even out your dips in energy, and help you rest and replenish.

Be aware of your mental health - especially in winter

Even if you think you're used to working from home now, small things can add up and slowly eat away at your wellbeing.

Feeling stress, lack of motivation, anxiety and uncertainty is still completely normal for a pandemic situation. Alongside this, many of us might still be worried about future job prospects or the best way to juggle work with our personal and family life.

Be aware of how you're feeling and try and track changes in your mood over time. This is especially important if you're home alone, or working from home on your own all day.

During the winter months it's easy to forget to get out and get fresh air, or eat healthily, or keep in contact with friends and family, so check your habits that help your mental health and wellbeing.

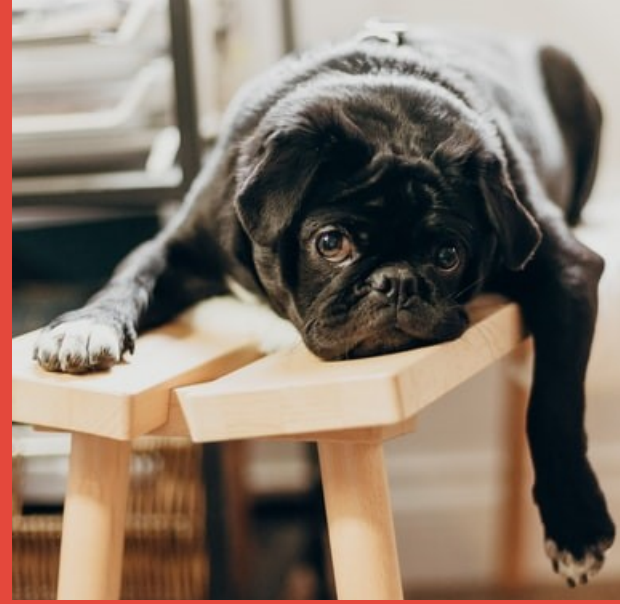
For tips on working from home from Every Mind Matters have a look here:

<https://www.nhs.uk/every-mind-matters/coronavirus/simple-tips-to-tackle-working-from-home/>



Bored of traditional looking written reports? Use a slidedoc instead

Lots of people who write evaluation reports are starting to use a slidedoc approach to producing their reports. What is a 'slidedoc' though, and how can you use one? An article by Fresh Spectrum outlines all things slidedoc:



“Slidedocs are visual documents developed in presentation software that are intended to be read and reference instead of projected.” Nancy Duarte

Slidedocs are reports created with Powerpoint - they are intended to be read and not be presented on screen behind a presenter. This is an important point, as slidedocs can include smaller text, and more text than a Powerpoint presentation ever would (or should) have.

Advantages of a slidedoc:

- ◆ If you know how to use Powerpoint, you can create one - you don't need to learn new design software. Powerpoint is versatile for adding visual elements including graphs, photos, and other graphics.
- ◆ It's easier to work with visuals in Powerpoint than it is in a Word document.
- ◆ Presentation documents are set up in landscape, which is better for people to view them on a computer screen.

Some ways you could use a slidedoc instead of a written report:

- For an Annual Report to be shared with Trustees, service users, staff and volunteers, funders or partners
- As a project evaluation report - keeping it focused on key areas, like the outcomes of projects, and photos you've taken during the project
- To include infographics on things like what your organisation does, who you deliver services to, and why.

For more information and links to examples of slidedocs visit the full article:

<https://freshspectrum.com/slidedocs/>





learning highlights

World of Work Project

What are your goals for 2022?

The World of Work CIC are delivering a free online workshop to help you think about your goals in 2022. In the workshop World of Work share their approach to personal goal setting, and help you work through what you want to focus on in the coming year. It's a light-hearted festive session, and it's a great way to make sure you invest time in thinking about what you want to work on in 2022.

21 December 2021 - 1.30pm to 4.30pm FREE

[Sail into 2022 - The Awesome Annual Goal Setting Workshop from World of Work](#)

The World of Work Project is working to try and help people have better and more satisfying work lives. Delivered by James and Jane, who have qualifications and years of experience of coaching, mentoring, and organisational development, World of Work project are committed to providing free learning, as well as commercial support for leaders and organisations.

<https://worldofwork.io/>



dates for your diaries

10 December

World Human Rights Day

<https://www.un.org/en/observances/human-rights-day>

18 December

International Migrants Day

<https://www.un.org/en/observances/migrants-day>

17 January 2022

Brew Monday

<https://www.samaritans.org/support-us/campaign/brew-monday/>

27 January 2022

Holocaust Memorial Day

<https://www.hmd.org.uk/what-is-holocaust-memorial-day/>

learning highlights

useful blogs, videos & websites

A round up of some useful blogs, videos and websites to get you thinking, give you some handy tips, and to help open up ideas for your learning and development...

TED Talks

TED Talks are great - they're short, informative, and come in a really wide range of subjects. But with over **3,800 TED** Talks to choose from it's difficult to know where to start. Here are a couple of **TED** Talks that you might find interesting. They're both around 5 minutes long, and you can watch them in a tea break or just to take breather from your busy work days...

How to **reduce bias** in your workplace

We all have bias - especially the unconscious kind - and it's preventing us from doing our best work. Gone unchecked, bias can make employees feel resentful, frustrated and silenced, and it can even lead to outright discrimination and harassment. (TED Talk from Just Work cofounders Kim Scott and Trier Bryant.)



This TED Talk gives 3 simple techniques for disrupting bias quickly and kindly.

https://www.ted.com/talks/kim_scott_and_trier_bryant_how_to_reduce_bias_in_your_workplace

5 tips for dealing with meeting overload

Could this meeting have been an email? The phenomenon of "calendar creep," where meetings completely take over your work days, is wasting time, energy and productivity - but you can take back control says Leadership expert Cindy Solomon.



https://www.ted.com/talks/cindy_solomon_5_tips_for_dealing_with_meeting_overload

Check out over 3,800 TED Talks at www.ted.com

TED Ideas worth spreading

learning highlights

The Skills Toolkit

Launched last year during lockdown, this government funded free online learning has a range of courses for people who are in work or who are looking for work.. With a range of courses provided by trusted organisations like Open University, Google, Amazon and Future Learn.

There's a range of courses including:

- ⇒ Practical Maths
- ⇒ Computer essentials
- ⇒ Personal growth and wellbeing
- ⇒ Professional development
- ⇒ Business and finance
- ⇒ Digital design and marketing
- ⇒ Computer science
- ⇒ Coding



For more information visit the gov.uk website:

<https://nationalcareers.service.gov.uk/find-a-course/the-skills-toolkit>

Save the date - Learning at Work Week 2022

Learning at Work Week for 2022 is set for 16 to 22 May.

The theme is: **LEARNING UNCOVERED**

It focuses on deepening our understanding, knowledge and engagement in lifelong and continual learning by exploring:

- Why it's important to be lifelong learners and support lifelong learning
- How we can initiate and support lifelong learning as individuals and in our work communities
- The opportunities and benefits that lifelong learning offers for work and life

To watch out for more information, or sign up to the Learning at Work Week bulletin visit the Campaign for Learning website:

<https://www.campaign-for-learning.org.uk/>