

Case Study 01.03: Mariko

Learner information

Mariko is divorced with two sons of 9 and 11 years. Her ex-husband now lives in Canada and pays an allowance for the boys every month. Mariko has about £1000 in savings.

Mariko has worked in the office of a small local building firm, MacKay's, since she left school. The owner's wife, Mrs MacKay filled in for her both times she was on maternity leave so that she was able to return to the same job. It is part-time and she loves it but now Mr MacKay has retired and the firm has closed.

Mariko is very nervous about looking for work. She has only ever worked in one place and she was treated more as a family friend than an employee. She thinks her skills will be out of date and that nobody else will give her a job or be as supportive as Mr and Mrs MacKay have been.

She is especially anxious about her children. The MacKays allowed her time off and more flexible ways of working if she needed it, for example during the school holidays or if one of the boys was ill. A friend has told her that when you claim Universal Credit you have to spend every day looking for work or else they won't pay it. She doesn't know how she will be able to devote that much time to it, or even worse, what she will do if they stop her money. Her ex-husband's allowance is not enough for them to live on.