

Case Study 01.03 FRN: 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 She thinks her skills will be out of date and that nobody else will give her a job or be as supportive as Mr and Mrs MacKay have been.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.

Facilitator Information:

- It is important that the learners demonstrate the appropriate behaviours and skills for example empathy, selling skills (to 'sell' the benefits of working for both Mariko and her children), using coaching questions to identify Mariko's skills and experience in order to build her confidence.
- Reassure Mariko that her availability can be restricted to the children's normal school hours. Travel time to and from the school to collect the children will also be taken into consideration. You need to discuss these details with her to decide on the work search requirement for her claim.
- The hours of availability you agree will also apply to the amount of work search that Mariko will be expected to undertake.
- Use coaching questions to identify if Mariko's skills are in fact out of date and if so how she can gain the skills she needs.
- Focus on what Mariko can do rather than what she cannot.
- Encourage Mariko to think beyond the work area she has worked in so far. Try questions like 'what would be your ideal job?' 'If you could do any job, what would it be?'
- Coach Mariko to identify what childcare options are available to her.
- Mariko is lacking in confidence so it would help her to meet you face to face again in the next week or two so that you can help to build her confidence and assess how effective she is being in her work search. This will help you to decide on the schedule for subsequent meetings and whether you need to meet face to face or can telephone.