

JOBS WILL BE A TOP TOPIC OF CONVERSATION THIS CHRISTMAS

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Banter over Christmas dinner is as big a part of the festive season as mistletoe and mulled wine. This year jobs and careers (21%) will be the top topic of conversation over Christmas dinner in the East of England, following discussions about people's New Year's resolutions (12%) and how dry or juicy the turkey is (43%), says the Careers Advice Service today*.

Revealing what's on people's minds this Christmas, a survey by the Careers Advice Service shows that about one in six people (15%) in the East of England are worried about their jobs and 52 per cent are concerned about buying presents.

The survey of over 3,000 people shows that 78 per cent of people in the East of England say they feel better when they've talked to someone about their worries. However over a third of people (35%) confess that they rarely talk about things that distress them and 17 per cent say they found it difficult to ask for help because they feel too shy or embarrassed. Just over three-fifths (61%) do not know who they would turn to for help.

Although career worries are high on people's minds this Christmas, almost two-fifth of people (39%) admit that they would feel more comfortable seeking careers advice from a professional Careers Adviser.

Jenny Kneafsey, at the Careers Advice Service, says: "We know that people are concerned about their job and careers at Christmas, but rather than talk about it people tend to bottle up these concerns instead. It can help to talk to an independent person to

get a fresh perspective on your career and the Careers Advice Service advisers are available seven days a week to do just that.”

Further survey findings show that 56 per cent of people in the East of England are considering a career change but have put their plans on hold until next year - despite Christmas being a key time to start planning for the future. Just under a third of respondents (31%) said they would most like to receive advice on their careers at the moment and 64 per cent would consider training or getting a new qualification to secure their career goal.

The Careers Advice Service provides free, impartial and confidential advice for those interested in learning a new skill; who want to find information on different courses or help with finding out about funding options and ways to get started in a new career.

The Careers Advice Service is open seven days a week from 8am to 10pm. To speak to a Careers Advice Service adviser call **0800 100 900** or online:

Official Website: www.direct.gov.uk/careersadvice.

Twitter: www.twitter.com/careers_advice1

Facebook: <http://www.facebook.com/pages/Careers-Advice-Service/202088201941>

Careers Advice Media Hub: <http://newmediaroom.careers-advice.org/>

For free face to face careers information and advice to adults, nextstep provides help and support in updating skills, training, learning and work. The service is available throughout England. The nextstep advisers are able to provide careers information and advice based on detailed knowledge of the learning and work opportunities available locally.

For more details visit: www.nextstepeastofengland.org.uk/ or call 0845 603 1059

-ENDS-

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Notes to Editors

*The research for the Careers Advice Service was carried out by 72 Point in November 2009. Sample: 3000 adults in England who have not yet retired.

The Careers Advice Service was formerly known as Learndirect Careers Advice, and is now part of the Learning and Skills Council who are responsible for funding impartial information and advice services for adults in England.

About the Careers Advice Service

- The Careers Advice Service is open seven days a week from 8am to 10pm on freephone 0800 100 900. However, CAS will be closed on Christmas Day, Boxing Day and New Years Day
- Information is also available online through the website at www.direct.gov.uk/careersadvice
- Careers advisers provide a free, impartial and confidential telephone advice service to people looking to choose a new career or get back into the workplace
- The Careers Advice Service offers information on almost 1 million courses from thousands of learning providers nationwide
- The Careers Advice Service has taken over 9.4 million calls since 1999 from people wanting careers information, advice and guidance

Careers Tools and Services

The Careers Advice Service offers a variety of tools to help you learn new skills, get back into the workforce or change jobs. The service also offers learning advice and assistance on a wide variety of issues, such as:

- Childcare issues
- People with disabilities
- Costs of learning
- Returning to work
- Redundancy
- Help with reading, writing and maths
- Decision-making

CV Builder

The Careers Advice Service website (www.direct.gov.uk/careersadvice) has an online CV-building tool that can help you make the most of your abilities and experience, and tailor your CV for the job you want. The CV-builder involves you answering a series of questions, filling in your details and talking about your interests, resulting in a bespoke CV based on your responses.

nextstep face-to-face services

The nextstep service offers free face to face careers information and advice to adults aged 20 plus. The service is also available to adults aged 18 and 19 who have been referred to nextstep by Jobcentre Plus. nextstep provides help and support in updating skills ,training, learning and work. The service is available throughout England. The nextstep advisers

are able to provide careers information and advice based on detailed knowledge of the learning and work opportunities available locally. nextstep maintains close links with the Careers Advice Service, and there are referrals between the two organisations to ensure that the customer receives the best possible service. Details of your nearest nextstep centre can be found at <http://nextstep.direct.gov.uk/>

Learning and Skills Council:

The LSC exists to make England better skilled and more competitive. We are responsible for ensuring the availability of high-quality education and training for everyone. We have a single goal: to improve the skills of England's young people and adults to world class standards. Our vision is that young people and adults in England have knowledge and skills matching the best in the world and are part of a truly competitive workforce. We work nationally, regionally and locally to deliver this ambition on behalf of learners and employers.

The LSC offers a host of support services to help those who are already in the workforce, or are about to enter the workforce, to gain the skills they need to succeed, secure their future or grow their income. For example, you could receive the Adult Learning Grant (ALG) for your decided course, a grant designed as a helping hand for adults thinking about learning but worried about the financial barriers standing in their way. ALG provides low income adult learners with up to £30 a week to help with the extra costs of learning. Since the grant became available, over 43,000 people have received ALG. You could also access training at work through the LSC's flagship programme for employers, Train to Gain.