

PRESS RELEASE

30 December 2009

**Take a step towards a new you with the Big Skill – Take a Step campaign**

Nearly a third of people (27%) in Suffolk have revealed that they would want to follow in the footsteps of Victoria Beckham, Anton Du Beke and JK Rowling and turn a hobby into a successful career – and they would be willing to learn new skills to help fulfil their dreams.

And, with the New Year traditionally being a time when people set themselves resolutions and challenges, the Learning and Skills Council (LSC) has launched The Big Skill - Take a Step! campaign to encourage people to take a step towards fulfilling their ambitions by learning a new skill.

Of those people surveyed in the county, 39% said that being given the opportunity to learn a new skill would be the best incentive to encourage them to return to learning. The LSC's campaign aims to show people the opportunities that are available - whether it involves a passion for fashion, dancing, writing or something else entirely.

Judith Mobbs, Area Director LSC Suffolk, said: "The Take A Step campaign is designed to break down the barriers around learning new skills. We want to remind people that learning can be fun and that there is an enormous sense of achievement from learning something new. Whether you are looking to find work, improve your career, change jobs or simply a fresh challenge, learning new skills is a great way to take steps towards a new you in 2010."

Sandra Crawley from nextstep said: "Here at nextstep we provide people with the confidence to make the right choices and to give them the right information so they can go forwards and take steps towards a new future. We are really looking forward to taking part in The Big Skill - Take a Step! and being able to help people achieve their ambitions - whatever they may be."

The Take a Step campaign builds on The Big Skill Awards which were held last year by the LSC in the east of England, and which were designed to recognise and reward people who had improved their lives, or the lives of others, through learning. The Take a Step campaign will direct those who were inspired by the award-winning stories to the help and support they need to return to learning themselves.

For more information about training opportunities and support available visit the Careers Advice Service (CAS) on line at [www.careersadvice.direct.gov.uk](http://www.careersadvice.direct.gov.uk) or call 0800 100 900.

## **SUFFOLK CASE STUDY**

Barrie Chambers from Ipswich has proved that learning a new skill can be a great step towards changing your career.

### **'I took the chance to do something that I actually enjoy'**

When an arthritic condition forced Barrie to give up his job as a self-employed builder, he decided to look into training to pursue his childhood dream of becoming a professional photographer.

Ever since he was at school, Barrie has been a keen photographer. When his doctor told him that he would have to change career, it seemed like the ideal opportunity to “do something that I actually enjoy.”

On a visit to a University Campus Suffolk open day he found a course that sounded ideal – a three-year BA (Hons) in Photography. Although in his heart of hearts he knew that's what he wanted to do, he was understandably nervous about taking the next steps.

Barrie explained: “I was really worried about the financial aspects and about whether I could cope with going on to study a degree at all. I left school twenty years ago, so the idea of doing a degree was pretty scary. I realised I needed some advice. I had heard about nextstep and asked Jobcentre Plus to refer me.”

Barrie's advisor gave Barrie practical help with filling out the University application form and who to approach about funding. She also helped him overcome his anxieties about the interview by practising some likely questions with him and getting him to talk about his portfolio.

Barrie explained how much this had helped him. “The interview went very well. All the preparation I had done meant that I sailed through it and they really liked my portfolio.”

Barrie started the course in September 2009. "At first it was a bit intimidating and most of the people on the course are much younger than me. But after a few weeks things got a lot better and I found a few others my age, which helped.

"The course is really good and my knowledge is improving all the time. We have had some inspirational photographers come to talk us which has made me realise that I'd love to go in a fine art direction. That would be my dream."

Barrie has been so inspired by the course that he is already thinking he might apply to do an MA once he has the BA under his belt.

-ends-

\*The online survey was conducted by YouGov

#### **Notes to editors**

**For more media information and images please contact Lucy Clegg or Dawn Humphreys on 01603 417722 or email [lucy@tribepr.com](mailto:lucy@tribepr.com)**

#### **Images:**

Please find attached the campaign image: The Big Skill – Take a Step aims to help people step into the right career for them

Also available on request:

- The Big Skill – Take a Step logo
- Photograph of Barrie Chambers
- Photograph of Judith Mobbs, Area Director LSC Suffolk

#### **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 Big Skill 2009**

The Big Skill first ran in 2008 and following its success in Norfolk was rolled out across all six counties in the East of England, with support from Ray Stubbs.

#### **The Big Skill – Take a Step!**

The Big Skill – Take a Step campaign is an extension of The Big Skill designed to build upon the inspirational stories of learning achievement from the awards and signpost those who have been inspired to the help, support, funding and advice available to help them take their own steps towards learning a new skill in 2010.

**Jargon buster**

A Big Skill – Take a Step! jargon buster, with details of qualification, training provider and learning terminology is available. This may provide additional editorial copy and be useful for a feature.

Please call 01603 417722 if you would like the jargon buster.

**Survey**

The survey was carried out on behalf of the Learning and Skills Council.

All figures, unless otherwise stated, are from YouGov Plc. The total sample size was 1054 adults. Fieldwork was undertaken between 16-24 November 2009. The survey was carried out online.