

## Get the S Factor

The nation is gripped by X Factor fever but evidence suggests that there is no quick fix to achieving success.

As the X Factor contestants fight it out on the live shows, it seems that it's the S (Skills) Factor that will help most people achieve their ambitions and make a success of their lives.

Those who invest time or money in updating their skills are much more likely to earn more than those without qualifications. According to recent [research](#)\*, unqualified people in the labour market earn nearly £450 less per week than the highest qualified group.

Next Step is now here to help people achieve their ambitions by providing free careers information and advice to enable individuals to move forward in work and life and take control of their destiny, putting them on the road to success.

The adult careers and skills service is available online by searching for Next Step, or calling 0800 100 900 to talk to an adviser or to arrange an appointment with a local adviser face-to-face. The service gives people the confidence to access the support they need to take the next step in managing their own learning and improving their working lives.”

Some people may be considering changing direction or updating their skills due to the current economic climate and now, thanks to the free and impartial Next Step adult careers and skills service, it's never been easier to access the help and support needed to succeed.

Everyone can register online with 'My Next Step', a secure, personal online space where they will be able to assess their skills, build a CV, find a suitable

course and discover what other support, including financial assistance, could be available. They will then be able to store their information securely.

Matthew Chamberlain, age 23, struggled to get a job after leaving university so took up a voluntary placement with MerseyTravel, in Liverpool, to develop his skills in the world of work. While he was there, he contacted Next Step and hasn't looked back since.

Thanks to the help and support he received from the adviser, he undertook some training and was offered a job as assistant freight co-ordinator with the organisation, which operates the Mersey Tunnels, local ferry services and works in partnership with private bus companies and the local train operator.

“Throughout the whole experience, the most refreshing thing was actually having a reason to get up in the morning,” he said. “I love my job and am learning something new every day. I would advise anyone who needs advice and support with their careers to contact Next Step now. You have nothing to lose and everything to gain.”

It is often a lack of confidence that stops people taking steps to change their lives, with people feeling trapped, without any goals to strive towards. Next Step adviser James Fernandes says the service aims to help people to overcome these barriers and create a positive future by changing their lives, whether that be in their current job, changing career or taking the first step on the career ladder.

“For most of us, it is hard work and determination that pays the bills,” he said. “The current climate has prompted some people to look at changing their careers and updating their skills and Next Step can help them do this. Skills development has a positive effect on individuals in terms of employment, earnings, job satisfaction and health and the newly integrated Next Step

service is helping people every day get the skills they need to realise their dreams.”

To find out how Next Step can help, search online for Next Step, call 0800 100 900 between 8am - 10pm, 7 days a week, for telephone advice or to make a face-to-face appointment at a location near you. To see for yourself how Next Step can help you, click [here](#) to view the new Next Step video.

## Ends

### Notes for Editors

#### The service

Next Step is available to all adults, aged 19 and over (or 18 and over if a Jobcentre Plus customer) in England, whatever their qualification, skill level or employment status, fuelling the potential of millions of adults, through three integrated channels:

- Online: [www.direct.gov.uk/nextstep](http://www.direct.gov.uk/nextstep)
- Telephone: 0800 100 900, 8am – 10pm, 7 days a week
- Face-to-face: Call 0800 100 900 to arrange an appointment in your area
- To see for yourself how Next Step can help you, view the new Next Step video on Directgov (link referred to in the body of the release) [http://www.direct.gov.uk/en/NI1/Newsroom/DG\\_191337](http://www.direct.gov.uk/en/NI1/Newsroom/DG_191337)

The service is also available, over the telephone, with bi-lingual advisers in the following languages:

Punjabi	0800 093 1333*
Sylheti	0800 093 1444
Somali	0800 093 1555
Urdu	0800 093 1118*
Gujarati	0800 093 1119
Polish	0800 093 1114
French	0800 093 1115
Farsi	0800 093 1116

Lines are open Monday to Friday, between 9am – 5pm

\* Urdu and Punjabi lines are open 9am – 8pm

Careers services in Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland are the responsibility of the Devolved Administrations.



## **Skills Funding Agency**

The Skills Funding Agency funds and regulates adult further education and skills in England.

It is responsible for channelling funding swiftly, efficiently and securely to further education colleges and other providers, primarily in response to customer (employer and learner) choice on programmes. It will operate through customer focused services: National Apprenticeship Service (NAS), National Employer Service and Next Step.

\* In July 2010, the UK Commission for Employment and Skills published The Value of Skills: An Evidence Review, Evidence Report 22. The report seeks to provide a comprehensive and organised review of available evidence on the value of skills acquisition for the economy as a whole, for organisations, individuals; it also draws attention to the wider benefits for skills.

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