

Fall in love with a different career this Valentine's Day

Finding your perfect career match this Valentine's Day is only a click away with Next Step, which offers free and impartial careers and skills advice online.

Thanks to the increase and convenience of online dating, many people up and down the country will be looking forward to a romantic Valentine's Day thanks to meeting Mr or Miss 'Right'.

But it's not only dating online that could change your destiny forever and bring happiness and fulfilment. Next Step also helps people to change their lives for the better at the touch of a button.

With more and more computer literate people with internet access, many are paying to use online dating agencies to find their perfect match - but Next Step can change your life for FREE!

Everyone can register online with 'My Next Step', a secure, personal online space where they will be able to assess their skills, find a suitable course and discover what other support, including financial assistance, could be available. Since the website went live in October 2010, there have been more than half a million visits and nearly 53,000 people have registered with the service, setting them on the road to a new future.

In the last decade, technology has evolved beyond recognition with the rise of social networking and the increased use of technology in everyday activities having had a dramatic impact on every area of people's lives.

And with over 70% of the population now having access to the internet compared to only 30% in 2000, the Next Step website is the perfect place for people to visit and access information and advice to help them on the road to success. Whatever your personal circumstance, help and advice is just a few clicks away on the Next Step website with an area dedicated to helping people in specific situations, including:

- Advice for older workers
- Dealing with redundancy
- Help for students with disabilities
- Information for carers
- How will my benefits be affected?
- Help for ex-offenders
- Learning and childcare
- Returning to work

While the UK has 40 million adult internet users, with 30 million people using the web every day, there are 9 million adults in the UK who have never used the internet - four million of those are among the most disadvantaged, including people who are over 65, unemployed or families with children**.

And for those who don't have access to the internet or the relevant computer skills, Next Step can also help with local face-to-face advice sessions all over the country. John Jalie, 45, from Redditch, is falling in love with learning and looking forward to a high-tech future thanks to contacting Next Step.

John, who has an engineering background, had been out of work for a while and had nowhere to live but now, thanks to Next Step, he has enrolled on a computer course and is looking forward to the future.

"I had been out of work for a while but as I was applying for jobs, it seemed they all needed some knowledge of computers," he said. "I had no computer skills at all and I couldn't even apply for most of the vacancies as they all needed to be done online."

His Next Step adviser helped him onto a computer course in the local library in Redditch and he's getting the computer bug. Not only has he managed to find a home, he's hoping to enrol on a higher level computer course when he has finished this one.

“When I first started looking for work, I didn't know how to use the online facilities, it was a bit embarrassing,” John said. “But Next Step really rallied round and got me onto this computer course, which I am really enjoying. I'm the youngest person on the course, but that doesn't matter. I was really lucky to get on the course. Being able to use computers and search online is really getting me motivated and I want to learn all I can.”

Next Step offers free and impartial careers and skills information and is available online, over the telephone on 0800 100 900 and face-to-face with a local adviser. The service gives advice to help people achieve their ambitions and move forward in work and life, taking control of their destiny and setting them on the road to future success.

To find out how Next Step can help you can:

- 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.

Or follow us on [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#).

End

Notes for Editors

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

- Online: 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

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.

** Statistics from [Race Online 2010](#), an organisation calling for urgent action to inspire, encourage and support millions more people online by the end of the Olympic year 2012 through partnership with government, industry, charities and individuals. The organisation is led by Martha Lane Fox who was reappointed UK Digital Champion by the new government in June 2010

Skills Funding Agency

The Skills Funding Agency, an agency of the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills, 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 operates through customer focused services: National Apprenticeship Service (NAS) and Next Step.

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This press release and others can be downloaded from the Next Step media room [here](#)