

A new you for the New Year

The New Year is upon us and maybe one or two resolutions have already been broken. But for those wanting to resolve to change their lives for good this year, help is at hand.

This is the time of year when many people take stock of their lives and look to the future, whether that be finding work, moving up the career ladder or changing direction completely.

As well as gyms and health clubs up and down the country filling up with new recruits, many colleges and other training organisations will be opening their doors to new learners enthused by the spirit of New Year. This is also a busy time of year for the Next Step adult careers service, which is expecting an increase in the numbers of people using the service to change their lives.

Next Step offers free and impartial careers and skills information and is available online, over the telephone on 0800 100 900 and with a local adviser face-to-face. 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.

Petra Crichton, 47, from Blyth, in Northumberland, is one Next Step customer who will be making a brand new start in 2011 with a new career to look forward to, thanks to the help and support she received from Next Step.

Petra, a mother of three, contacted Next Step back in September after finding herself out of work for the first time ever. After leaving school she worked as a nurse for 17 years but then decided to move into pharmaceutical sales. Her job involved a great deal of travelling and after becoming a grandmother for

the first time recently, she wanted to spend more time at home with her grandson. She applied for 40 jobs while she was unemployed but didn't manage to get a single interview. But after receiving help with her CV from her Next Step adviser, she got the second job she applied for!

"I knew that with my new grandson around, I wanted to be at home as much as possible and was no longer able to cope with the travelling my job entailed," she said. "I decided to take the plunge and follow a new career path. I wanted to work in a customer facing role locally and use all the skills I have gained over the past 30 years, but in a different way and in a different career. My CV did not reflect the skills I had, however, and I was just not getting any interviews. I didn't know what to do next."

Thanks to her new winning CV, she was offered a full time, permanent job just before Christmas as a customer services adviser working in a call centre in Newcastle.

And Petra is delighted that she decided to contact Next Step and make a career move, as she will be needed at home more than ever as two more grandchildren are expected later this year!

"Changing career can be scary," Petra added. "I have worked all my life and was really daunted by the prospect of signing on, never having been unemployed, but thanks to the help I received from Next Step, everything has worked out for me and I am really looking forward to enjoying the company of my new grandchildren. I am really excited about my future. It is such a relief to start the New Year with a job to go to. If I hadn't contacted Next Step, I think I would have struggled."

Since it was introduced in August, Next Step, the adult careers and skills service has helped some 350,000 people explore their options and prepare for their futures.

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.

Next Step adviser Lynne Cope, who helped Petra, said: "The New Year is always a busy time for Next Step as people take stock of their lives and look to the future. For people like Petra who have worked in the same type of job for many years, it is often their CV that can let them down as many won't have applied for a new job for many years and others will have CVs that are very specific to their current jobs.

"An important part of our role is helping people realise that they already have many transferable skills to offer potential employers and give them the confidence that is often so lacking in people when they come to Next Step - whether they are looking at getting into work, changing career or moving up the career ladder. Our job is to help them."

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
- make a face-to-face appointment at a location near you.

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.

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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