



**NEXT
STEP**

Helping you get on
in work and life

Next Step – the integrated adult careers service

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Section 1.

Next Step – the integrated adult careers service

A quick reference guide for prime contractors – June 2010

This guide provides an overview of Next Step, the integrated adult careers service, and the benefits the service can bring and your role within the service.

What is Next Step?

Next Step, the new integrated adult careers service will be launched in August 2010. It will be available to all adults in England, aged 19 and over, (aged over 18 for Jobcentre Plus customers), whatever their age, prior skills and qualifications or employment status – fuelling the potential of millions of adults.

Customers will be able to choose to access the service online, by telephone, face to face or a combination of all three. Whichever channel they use, they will experience the same high quality service, under one brand, Next Step; with one website, search online for next Step or www.direct.gov.uk/nextstep and one telephone number **0800 100 900**. Referrals and signposting will also take place between channels to meet customer need.

What will the service deliver?

Customers will benefit from expert, impartial advice which reflects labour market intelligence, supplied by Jobcentre Plus. They will also be able to make an informed choice about where they learn by having access to user-friendly information on courses and providers, on the Next Step Course Directory, including how successful previous learners have been at progressing into further learning and employment.

The online channel of the service will be the first point of contact for many customers and will include a range of resources, so that an individual can see in one place all that they need to make a personal choice about how to move forward. Those who require support from an adviser to understand and make use of this information can speak to one in person or on the telephone. Customers will also be offered the opportunity to register with Next Step, (formerly skills accounts) which provides a secure, on-line space in which they can manage their personal information. And people receiving out of work benefits who need skills training to move into sustainable employment will be referred to the service by a Jobcentre Plus adviser.

What online resources are available?

The web service will be the first point of contact for many customers, and will provide access to the following tools and services:

- a **skills diagnostic tool**, which uses psychometric techniques to enable individuals to assess their skills, abilities, personal attributes and preferences, and career and work objectives;
- **CV builder**, providing a template for effective CV structure and headings, with advice on how to complete a CV;
- **labour market information**, including:
 - sector information provided by Sector Skills Councils, and updated on a quarterly basis;
 - “Live” local job vacancies via Jobcentre Plus systems; and
 - comprehensive information on career paths, setting out the qualifications, skills and experience required for specific careers and jobs.
- **course search**, enabling individuals to search a new course directory with access to course information for all colleges, private and third sector training providers accredited to receive public funding by the Skills Funding Agency, and information on provider quality drawn from the Framework for Excellence;
- **entitlement checker** enabling individuals to get information on their potential entitlement to public funding for training, covering support with tuition fees, and learner support funds to help with other costs (transport, childcare, books and equipment);
- a wide range of online **information and advice** including access to advisers via email, web chat and forum facilities; text, video and audio information on careers and jobs; and the latest news and articles on relevant work and skills issues; and
- the ability to **register with Next Step** (formerly skills accounts) which will provide the customer with a secure, personal space where they will be able to store their personal information on skills development, their achievements, careers and financial support and a CV in one easily accessible location that is private to them.

What does our brand stand for?

The Next Step brand will unite the three channels of the service and fuelling the potential of millions requires we live by strong values:

- **Enthusiastic:** positive energy is infectious. It inspires and motivates.
- **Expert:** we need to know our stuff to deliver high-quality effective information and advice
- **Impartial:** we only ever act in the best interests of our customers
- **Pragmatic:** our aim is to get the job done. The right outcome is more important than the right process

What is my role in relation to the brand?

As the public face of the service your role is to ensure that you and your sub-contractors:

- promote and champion the Next Step vision and values;
- ensure the Next Step brand is effectively implemented in your organisation and by your sub-contractors;
- fully understand the nature of the integrated adult careers service and the way in which the different channels work together for the benefit of customers;
- provide expert information and advice on careers and skills to fuel the potential of every customer you speak to;
- offer customers the opportunity to register with Next Step (formerly a skills account) and support those customers who already have registered and wish to share information contained in it, to use in order to plan their career and skills development effectively;
- act as one service, under one brand and be prepared to refer customers across all channels;
- make each customer the centre of the service by accurately using the customer relationship management (CRM) tool, so customers can be tracked through the system;
- quality assure and track outcomes for customers; and
- provide feedback and identify success stories to help shape the future of Next Step.

How will the service develop in the future?

We will continue to develop and enhance the service beyond August 2010.

By building strong networks rooted in local communities we will help individuals tackle all the barriers they face to getting on in learning, work and life.

Contact and further information:

Email - nextstepcomms@skillsfundingagency.bis.gov.uk

Visit <http://skillsfundingagency.bis.gov.uk/providers/logoanddesignguidance/nextstep/>

for details of marketing collateral available.

Visit <http://www.bis.gov.uk> for more information on fuelling potential.

Visit the Skills Funding Agency website here: <http://skillsfundingagency.bis.gov.uk/>

Section 2.

Next Step - the integrated adult careers service

Key Messages and Lines to Take - June 2010

- The arrival of Next Step brings together two major commitments by the Government set out in the World Class Skills publication, to provide an enhanced adult careers advice service and to fully integrate skills accounts within this; to enable individuals to manage their own careers and learning, work and life through an online service.
- The vision is for millions of individuals to enjoy more rewarding working lives. We want to create a culture where careers development and acquiring new skills is the norm. This will improve individuals' lives, society as a whole and in turn increase productivity and boost the economy.
- The Skills Funding Agency will manage the provision of information directly to individuals through each service channel; online, telephone and face-to-face. Adults wishing to engage in learning will be able to search for the course which is right for them through the use of the new Next Step Course Directory which will support them in making the decisions which are right for them.
- Next Step will be launched in August 2010 and will be available to all adults, aged 19 and over (aged over 18 if a Jobcentre Plus customer) in England, whatever their age, prior skills and qualifications or employment status – fuelling the potential of millions of adults. We will continue to develop and enhance the service beyond August. By building strong networks in tandem with other agencies, rooted in local communities we will help individuals tackle all the barriers they face to getting on in learning, work and life.
- Customers will be able to choose to use the service online, by telephone, face to face or a combination of all three. Whichever channel they use, they will experience the same high quality service. There will also be referrals between the different channels in response to customer needs.
- Customers will be able to register with Next Step (formerly skills accounts) which will give them access to a secure, on-line space where they can manage their own career and skills development.
- Customers will benefit from expert, impartial careers and skills advice which reflects labour market intelligence. They will also be able to make an

informed choice about where they learn by having access to user-friendly information on courses and learning and training providers, including how successful previous learners have been at progressing into further learning and employment.

- The Next Step website; search online for Next Step or visit www.direct.gov.uk/nextstep will integrate sources of information, so that an individual can see in one place all that they need, to make a personal choice about how to move forward. Those who require support from an adviser to understand and make use of the information on the Next Step website can speak to an adviser face-to-face or on the telephone **0800 100 900**
- Registering with Next Step (formerly skills account) on the website will provide a customer a secure on-line space where individuals can manage their own career and skills development. Individuals will be able to store personal information on their skills development, achievements, careers, financial support and a CV in one easily accessible location that is private to them.

Section 3

Next Step - the integrated adult careers service

Frequently Asked Questions - June 2010

Next Step, the integrated adult careers service is a significant change. What have you done to ensure its success?

We have worked closely with the sector, its professional bodies and other key national organisations on the design principles for the new service. We have tested some of the tools the new service will use on real people and listened to what they have told us. And we have developed a brand that will not only unite the three channels of the service under a common identity but also support frontline staff in understanding and communicating the value of the service to customers.

What do you mean by a “universal” service?

We mean that it will be available to all adults in England, from the highly skilled to those with few qualifications, from those looking for a career change to those wanting to move into work. There should be no barriers to access for any group, including people: with learning difficulties or disabilities; at a distance from the labour market; from ethnic minority groups, women; who are past retirement age.

How does this square with identifying “priority groups” for the service?

Whilst the service as a whole is available to everyone, individuals in specified national priority groups will also be able to access an intensive, ongoing offer consisting of additional sessions with face-to-face advisers, free of charge.

There are already Government-funded careers advice services available. What’s different about this?

Next Step is an integrated adult careers service, which will provide the tools for people to find all the information they need to make an informed decision about skills training and sustainable employment in one place. It will cater for all needs by being available online, by telephone and face to face. These three channels will be underpinned by common resources, and a common customer database which will provide continuity, speed and simplicity for users.

Do you really need this now when the country is in recession?

Yes. If anything, the current economic climate makes an even stronger case for Next Step. Current careers advice services have expanded their capacity to help more people during the recession. And if we want as a nation to compete in the global economy emerging from this recession, we need to begin equipping people with skills for the future.

How will skills accounts fit into Next Step?

Skills accounts will be available to all adults from August, though the term “skills account” will be discontinued.

Adults will be able to register for Next Step, their personalised online space that will give them access to all the tools and services being created for the integrated adult careers service and Next Step will continue to provide a secure personal space (accessed via login and password) to help them manage their learning.

The benefits of having a personal online space to users of the web channel will be access to:

- a statement of entitlements (i.e. potential funding available towards their course fees);
- their own, verified record of qualifications awarded;
- a statement of actual funding invested in their learning;
- personal action plans generated through use of the Skills Diagnostic Tool and careers advice;
- saved searches of course and labour market data; and
- the facility to book a session with an adviser.

Customers will, at the appropriate point in their journey, be encouraged to register for Next Step, their personal online space as an important tool in helping them take control of their journey towards better skills.

What do you mean by the “core service”?

We mean the service that will be contracted by the Skills Funding Agency to provide the information, advice and support that will help people make informed choices about training and sustainable employment.

What do you mean by the “wider service”?

The face-to-face channel of Next Step, the new integrated adult careers service will increasingly sit at the heart of local “networks” bringing together a wide range of different service providers of advice to individuals. The aim will be to create a “no wrong door” environment to help individuals access the specific advice or support they need to tackle whatever barrier is holding them back – whether finding suitable childcare, understanding employment rights, coping with a disability, or getting advice on housing, health or personal finance. Next Step will serve as an identifier for these wider networks.

What research was conducted to support the development of the brand?

The appointed branding agency, Dave, started by thoroughly understanding the service itself, end-users, stakeholders and partners. This included over 50 stakeholder interviews, site visits and interviews with advisors. From this they developed the brand positioning, look and feel and launch approach. A number of solutions were researched with over 40 end-users of the service (through focus groups), those responsible for making it a reality (e.g. contractors and front-line advisors) and key influencers.

As a Prime Contractor I was visited by Leo Burnett. Why?

Leo Burnett are our appointed implementation agency to “deliver” the brand and they conducted an audit of the existing brand use in 14 existing **nextstep** sites; by a telephone audit with prime contractors and visits to 49 existing **nextstep** sites. This culminated in the design of the core collateral including stationery, leaflet, and posters.

Why have you called the integrated adult careers service Next Step?

Over 20 names were researched in two rounds of research conducted across the country. The respondents came from a broad range of ages, attitudes, backgrounds, ranging from long-term unemployed and low-skilled workers to high-skilled workers. The research conclusively showed that the name Next Step performed extremely well. It was felt that the name best described the service and was most likely to engage them and provoke action. Next Step is seen by potential users of the service as being very positive and can apply to a range of different circumstances and types of people.

Why not Careers Advice Service, Careers England or Skills Development England?

During the research many of the users felt that 'careers' sometimes had negative connotations for the service. Focus group members who were out of work or in low-skill work didn't feel that they would describe their work as a 'career', so it alienated them. Many also felt 'careers' was something that they did at school.

It was desirable to make a clear break from the existing services. Our contractors, staff and customers should see this new service as a completely different approach to skills, careers and learning.

When will the emerging networks become part of the new service?

We expect some relationships between the prime and sub-contractors and the network partners will have grown and may be operational by August 2010. But most will evolve over the course of the following year.

Skills accounts are still being trialled. Do you have plans to develop them further beyond August?

Yes. Our plans for developing skills accounts are set out in *Skills for Growth: A National Skills Strategy*. In future, Next Step will give people more choice of training, trebling the number of providers where entitlements can be used and making publicly available consistent data on quality, job prospects and course wage potential.

From 2010, all adults undertaking training paid for by Government funds will be encouraged to register for their personal online space and young people will have access to this offer when they turn 19.

What is the relationship between your service and the integration of employment and skills for the unemployed?

Jobcentre Plus will signpost or refer customers in receipt of out of work benefits to Next Step, the integrated adult career service, so that they can get professional support and advice on developing their skills and have a better chance of moving into sustainable employment. This group of customers can also benefit from having a skills account, through which they can make guided choices with their Jobcentre Plus adviser about the learning they undertake.

Careers advisers from the new service may be located in the same premises as Jobcentre Plus, where possible and appropriate.

How will contracting arrangements work for the new service?

From April, 2010 the Skills Funding Agency became responsible for the commissioning, contracting and performance management of Next Step, the integrated adult careers service. There will be separate contracts for face to face, contact centre and web content delivery. It will, however, be a clear requirement in all contracts that Next Step, the integrated adult careers service contractors operate as one service for the benefit of their customers, using common branding, tools and IT infrastructure.