

Reference Guide for Learning Providers

The purpose of this guide is to inform Learning Providers about Next Step and to support them in promoting and registering their learners with the service. The Next Step website includes features that were introduced as part of the Skills Account trials, which have now concluded.

Next Step is available free to every adult in England, aged 19 and over, (over 18 for Jobcentre Plus customers or offenders in custody) whatever their prior skills, qualifications or employment status. It provides people with the information and tools they need to make more effective choices about their skills, careers, work and life. It builds on what users liked about Skills Accounts. Help is available online, or with one of our Next Step advisers over the phone or face-to-face.

The Next Step website provides adults with the information and tools they need to make more effective choices about their work and life. Registering online for Next Step will enable individuals to save and retrieve skills assessments, course searches, action plans and create and store their CV. They will have access to a personal record of their learning, qualifications and achievements that they can share with others including employers. It will also allow them to track how much has been spent on their learning.

Your role

As a provider you have an important role to play; by supporting, promoting and championing the Next Step service to learners. You can signpost learners to Next Step at any point in their learning journey, from their initial information and advice session, during enrolment, at course review time or when a learner is due to leave a course and is looking for their next opportunity. As a Learning Provider you will fulfil four main functions in relation to Next Step:

- Provide information on Next Step and respond to enquiries
- Capture learner details via an ILR extract and submit a monthly batch return
- Undertake role as a Learner Registration Body in support of Next Step
- Update the Next Step Course Directory.

How will Next Step benefit me?

- Increase the potential size of your market and a greater range of age and skills levels
- Next Step supports you in building longer term relationships with learners. In time the service will produce increased customer intelligence and help to address barriers to learning
- By offering facilitated access to the web portal, you will help to overcome and reduce literacy and language barriers as well as support those who are uncomfortable with IT
- The Next Step website supports learners throughout their journey including providing tools and services that help keep the learner engaged prior to their course induction or enrolment
- Those that have already registered with Next Step could be fast-tracked, reducing input time at enrolment or initial assessment

- Introducing the Next Step web based tools can help to provide evidence towards your Quality Improvement Plans and self assessment reports as part of the Common Inspection Framework – ‘use of interesting and appropriate teaching and learning resources’
- Next Step supports staff development in providing up-to-date information to support learner progression into employment.

How will Next Step add value to my customers?

Registering for Next Step will provide individuals with:

- A free online personalised, secure space where they can manage their own career and skills development information
- Ease of free storage with repeat access to personalised records
- The ability to input information once but use many times adapting it to meet their individual need
- Potential to share validated information
- Access at a time and place that suits them 24/7, 365 days a year.

A range of tools and information are available on the Next Step website including:

- The **Skills Health Check** assesses individuals’ abilities, strengths and areas for development and produces an Action Plan. These results can be stored within “My Next Step” where individuals can access and review them at a later date and reassess their progress
- **Job Profiles** provide guidance on likely responsibilities, salaries and conditions of work to help learners make informed choices and identify future training needs
- Access to national **Labour Market Information** which will include; jobs in the industry, forecasted trends, prospects and careers paths
- The Next Step **Course Directory** offering a range of searchable up-to-date provision
- Your learners can use a **Learning Record** to track their achievements in both formal and informal learning. By registering with Next Step, learners will have access to achievements recognised by the Skills Funding Agency as part of their Personal Learning Record
- Your learners can use the **Indication of Government Contribution** tool to find out if they may be eligible for a government contribution towards the cost of their learning
- The **Learner Statement** enables your learners to track how much they have spent on their learning and the amount the Government has contributed towards these achievements.
- **Interview and Job Advice** including preparation for job applications and interviews, tips on letter writing and advice on job related activities such as volunteering.

Contacts and further information

If you have any questions please contact your Regional Skills Funding Agency contact.

For further information please visit: www.direct.gov.uk/nextstep or www.skillsfundingagency.bis.gov.uk/providers/programmes/nextstep

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