CAREER DEVELOPMENT INSTITUTE

Careers Insights

Jul-Aug 2026 edition

Stay ahead of the fast-moving careers field, with a roundup of the latest research



About Careers Insights

Welcome to Careers Insights, the CDI's bulletin that reports on new research papers and reports that have been published over the past few months that are particularly relevant to the issues in contemporary policy and practice.

Research is critically important, and not just for academics. It helps career professionals to understand the needs of different clients to a greater depth. It describes the implications of political, economic, social or technological trends affecting the field. It also describes different models, theories and practices, and provides evidence on 'what works'.

This is a supplement to the CDI's Research Directory, which you can access in the Resources section of the CDI website. The Directory offers a wide collection of references to thousands of career-guidance related articles, reports, papers, books and open data sets.

(NB: We strive to reference articles that are mainly in the public domain, but include important ones that are behind paywalls. These are denoted with an asterisk (*) in the title)



Contents

About Careers Insights 02

Contents 03

Featured articles 04

#1. New career workforce sizing and trends 04

#2. The case restated and expanded for work experience 04

#3 A holistic evidence review of the NEET situation and challenge 04

#4 Deeper insights into career barriers related to intersectionality 04

Roundup 05

General career practice 05

Primary education 06

Secondary education 07

Further education, vocational training and apprenticeships 09

Higher education 10

Adults 11

Equity, diversity and inclusion in careers 14

Economic & labour market influences 18

AI, technology and careers 20

Health and wellbeing 21

Careers and the environment 22

What we missed last time! 22

Featured articles

We've highlighted four sources that are particularly relevant to current issues in the careers world.

#1. Gatsby/IES - Career workforce sizing

This extended analysis report for Gatsby - by the Institute for Employment Studies (IES) - uses updated data to size the careers adviser workforce in England and identify trends in composition.

The report confirms that there is generally less than 1 full time equivalent career adviser per English school, though numbers of career advisers in secondary and (especially) technical education have grown over the last decade, with other areas reducing. Strong regional variations are seen in advisers per student.

Trends in exits and entries and destinations of leavers to the professional workforce were approximately in balance. However, insight into the qualifications of careers practitioners showed a strong uplift in standards over the decade, with the norm tending to Level 6.

Williams, M, Pollard, E, Clark, A. (2026). The Careers Adviser Workforce 2025. A follow-up report for the Gatsby CharitableFoundation. IES/Gatsby (Link)

#2. Education & Employers - Work experience

This report offers an expansive review of work experience literature and new insights, to both restate and expand the case for its importance in tackling a range of socio-economic challenges, not least the NEET challenge.

Some startling statistics are gathered and presented e.g. 54% of UK 15-year-olds now agree that "School has done little to prepare me for adult life" and "50% of young people are focused on just 10 jobs" .

The core of the report is in its presentation of four options on how government, schools, colleges and employers might work together to turn a "well-intentioned manifesto commitment into a genuinely transformative programme."

Education & Employers (2026). Work experience past present and future (Link)

#3. Dept Work & Pensions - NEETs

The DWP published an interim report in August and a follow-up survey that, together, provided a robust review of the NEET challenges.

The literature review and commentary pointed to a series of growing factors that are serving to exasperate a problem that the review describes as having never been effectively tackled e.g. the formalisation of recruitment processes and the decline in Saturday work.

Importantly, the report describes that successive governments have only tackled the supply side of NEETs, but structural issues also exist on the demand side, which are unaddressed but just as important..

Surveys show that the majority of NEETs wish to move into work or study, with the most popular desired destination being full time work.

Department for Work and Pensions (2026). Survey of young people not in education, employment or training (NEET): Young people and work report (Link) Young People and Work Interim report (Link)



#4. Intersectional insights

Two paper provided deeper insights into intersectional barriers facing members of ethnic minorities (a topic that is generally under-researched).

One (Rees-O'Donnell) examines the structural, cultural and organisational factors shaping the career opportunities of Non-Traditional British South Asian Women following their completion of a Business and Management undergraduate degree. Employees interviewed for the research described, in candid terms, ways that discrimination could manifest within recruitment processes in terms of (e.g.) assumptions held about the group.

The second (Wakefield et al) describes how ethnic minority status and disability combined to hinder progression into HE medical pathways. A literature review showed how disability and ethnicity can negatively impact medical training, with respect to a number of areas including examination performance, levels of support and learning/work-based experience.

Both papers reveal tangible dynamics by which under-representation appears due to intersectional effects.

Rees-O'Donnell, L. Breaking Traditions, Building Futures: Employer Perspectives on the Career Aspirations, Barriers and Professional Agency of Mature British South Asian Women in Business Education. Salford University (Link) and *Wakefield, H. Z., Ellawala, A., Kehoe, A., & Crampton, P. E. (2026). Understanding how disability and ethnicity impact UK undergraduate and postgraduate medical training: A critical review. Medical Education. (LInk)

Roundup

General career practice

Theme	Reference	About
The careers professional workforce	Williams, M, Pollard, E, Clark, A. (2026). The Careers Adviser Workforce 2025. A follow-up report for the Gatsby CharitableFoundation. IES/Gatsby (Link)	This extended analysis report for Gatsby from the Institute for Employment Studies (IES) using data up to 2025 on careers adviser workforce in England. Sections include a) census results, b) inflows/outflows to/from the profession, c) ratios of career guidance practitioners to clients by group (regional and local authority analysis). Trends are shown from previous workforce studies. Analysis of careers advisers & vocational guidance specialists by sector, England, 2011 and 2021, shows a contraction from 20k to 16k. Secondary education workforce has about doubled to 3.1k, largely driven by growth in technical education, but numbers working outside of education reduced from 8.7k to 5.2k. There has also been a strong reduction in tertiary education from 4.5k to 2.5k. Other parts of the study show that qualification levels are increasing, with attainments all expected to be at level 6.
Practice techniques	Galea, J., & Falzon, R. (2026). Metaphor in counselling research design: accessing imagery to unveil understanding. British Journal of Guidance & Counselling, 1–24. (Link)	Although this work was set in the counselling field, the use of metaphors is of interest to many career counsellors who use similar techniques with clients: This paper outlines the methodology and research design used to explore how counsellors conceptualise personal growth and how this may inform their work with clients. Five Maltese counsellors were interviewed about ways to work with clients that offered deeper, more complex sources of meaning. Participant responses highlighted the role of creative and analogical thinking in fostering reflexivity and deeper therapeutic engagement when using imagery and metaphors.
	Başaranoğlu, K., Erguzel, T. T., Karaer Unaldi, H., & Komitoglu Yaman, O. The Impact of a Single Coaching Session on Affective State and Neurophysiological Markers: A Pilot Study. Int. Journal of Evidence Based Coaching and Mentoring, 17418305261455152. (Link)	The paper describes an experiment that elicits the psychological and neurobiochemical effects of a single coaching session on participants. These findings indicate that a single session can have substantial immediate psychological advantages under certain conditions. Corresponding neurobiological patterns point to possible directions for further study. (The paper offers transferable learning to the careers arena, but there is no comparable study existing to the best of our knowledge).
Theoretical developments	Chen, C. P., & Ilton, J. (2026). Career Human Agency Theory in Educational Settings. In The Palgrave International Handbook of Career Guidance in Education (pp. 1-16). Cham: Springer Nature Switzerland. (Link)	The authors propose and justify an approach to career counselling based on developing agency: Career human agency theory (CHAT) is a relatively new meta-theory that emphasises the role of personal agency in career exploration and development. CHAT consists of four key components: career intentionality, career forethought, career self-reactiveness, and career self-reflectiveness. A CHAT approach to career counselling involves four phases that are intended to improve agentic functioning and skills across each of the components. By strengthening these skills, students will be equipped to navigate career exploration and lifelong career development. The authors suggest that career guidance programmes would benefit from incorporating CHAT interventions. Suggestions are given for future research. (More work would be needed to demonstrate this could work at scale - but the aim of increasing client agency offers relevance in light of the uncertain contemporary job market).

Primary education

Theme	Reference	About
Childhood background and development	Allen, J. et al (2026). Five to Twelve: Year 1 Report. National Foundation for Education Research (Link)	Five to Twelve is a new longitudinal study led by the National Centre for Social Research (NatCen) supported by various partners: The study aims to understand educational and wellbeing outcomes and how they are linked to social inequalities. It follows children through primary education in England during the 2020s Survey interviews were conducted with 8,632 families in their homes between November 2023 and August 2024. Findings included that: Inequalities emerge at the very start of primary school, with children eligible for Free School Meals (FSM) and those with special educational needs (SEN) experiencing disadvantage across multiple areas linked to later educational outcomes. Children eligible for FSM, those with SEN, children from lower-income households and those with less well-educated parents were more likely to have longstanding health conditions. Children with SEN were less likely to have regular bedtimes or exercise daily, slept fewer hours on average, and were rated by teachers as having less developed motor skills. While 78% of children lived with two parents, nearly six in ten FSM-eligible children (59%) lived in lone-parent households, compared with 13% of non-eligible children. The insights provide a range of useful contributions for the design of inclusive primary careers education.

Secondary education

Theme	Reference	About
Work experience	Education & Employers (2026). Work experience past present and future (Link)	This report is about state of work experience and its potential to be part of mitigating various socio-economic challenges: It is written in context of new expectations arriving from the Department for Education for schools to deliver more work experience and employer engagements. The primary focus of the report is on provision in England. Data gathered from young people and employers shows: 46.4% UK students now have no clear career expectation; twenty-five years ago, this figure was 5%. 67% of students with a career plan expect to work as a doctor, lawyer or one of the other professions, a type of work that employs only 21% of the working population. Career confusion is commonplace: 28% of those expecting to work in a job that typically requires a degree for entry do not plan on going to university, rising to 40% among the most socially disadvantaged. Growing numbers also struggle to see how their schooling will help them in working life. A majority (54%) of UK 15-year-olds now agree that "School has done little to prepare me for adult life". Compared to similar countries moreover, participation levels in workplace visits/job shadowing are poor and in work experience placements average, but in job fairs good. Nonetheless, the Survey of Young Adults shows that work experiences and employer engagements are received positively. The report draws on extensive literature sources to propose four different options for how work experience could be delivered.
Career psychology	Kökçam, B., & Traş, Z. (2026). From Perfectionism Profiles to Career Adaptability Trajectories: A Longitudinal Person-Centered Study of Adolescents. Journal of Career Development, 0(0). (Link)	This longitudinal study examined how young people's perfectionistic strivings and perfectionistic concerns shape adolescents' career adaptability trajectories and adapting behaviors. The study was done on a sample of n = 1,391 young people, mean age of 15.3. Researchers found that different kinds of perfectionism affect teenagers' career development in different ways. Wanting to do well and setting high personal standards ("perfectionistic strivings") can be associated with better development of career adaptability to explore options, cope with uncertainty and adjust to changes. Worrying excessively about making mistakes, being judged or not being good enough ("perfectionistic concerns") tends to be associated with poorer career development. The paper concludes that perfectionism isn't simply "good" or "bad" - rather careers support needs to recognise these different patterns rather than treating all perfectionism alike.
Implications of job automation	Sowa, S., Smith, J., & Manches, A. (2026). Developing school students' career preparedness for automation and job change. Australian Journal of Career Development, 35(2), 194-204. (Link)	To examine the complexities of supporting young people's preparedness for automation and job change, a case study was conducted of the Scottish career education system: This comprised of a thematic analysis of national career education documents and feedback gathered from stakeholders. Policymakers and practitioners considered that automation would be creating new occupations, rather than resulting in the mass elimination of jobs. Stakeholders suggested that exploring the novel technological and occupational changes can inspire children's career development. The authors argued that stakeholders could teach the principles underlying automation and job change to better equip students to interpret the changing landscape.

Secondary education *continued*

Theme	Reference	About
Parents and social support	Zhao, Y., Cao, H., Xu, H., & Zhou, N. (2026). Adolescents' Career Adaptability and Their Perceived Collective Contributions to Career Efficacy Over Time: A Network Analysis. Journal of Career Assessment, 0(0). (Link)	The researchers looked at how different parts of teenagers' ability to manage their future careers connect with each other, and how parents, teachers and friends influence that process. They found that curiosity (wanting to explore different careers and possibilities) and confidence (believing you can make good career decisions) were the most important parts of career adaptability. Parents and teachers were particularly linked to career confidence, while friends were more strongly linked to career curiosity. (The paper offers ideas for career guidance professionals to use exercises that co-opt friend and parental input into development processes).
Early indicators of labour market outcomes	De Bono, E. et al (2026). The economic value of childhood socio-economic skills. Institute of Fiscal Studies (Link)	The report examines the relationship between childhood socio-emotional skills and labour market outcomes using the 1970 British Cohort Study. The study provides surprising findings that highlight the importance of focussing on socio-economic problems - Childhood "conduct (i.e. behavioural) problems are (*perhaps surprisingly*) linked to positive labour market outcomes, including higher earnings, increased labour supply and greater job satisfaction, with no significant effect on schooling. Conversely, attention problems correlate negatively with labour outcomes, partly due to educational effects. The authors suggested that the findings demonstrate the importance of early interventions, which carefully distinguish between different socio-emotional problems. The paper provides useful insight for career practitioners dealing with individual students who present with the characteristics covered in the research.

Further education, vocational training and apprenticeships

Theme	Reference	About
Future outlook	Cedefop, & ETF. (2026). Future-proofing VET in Europe – Progress, challenges and policy directions. A synthesis of national policy developments from 2020 to 2025. Cedefop report series.Publications Office of the European Union. DOI: 10.2801/2766978 (Link)	This joint Cedefop and ETF publication examines how EU Member States, Iceland, Norway and five candidate countries (Albania, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Serbia, and Türkiye) have implemented the common vocational education and training (VET) priorities set out in the Council Recommendation on VET and in the Osnabrück Declaration. It offers a contrast with the UK picture.
	Cedefop. (2026). The changing position of apprenticeships in education and training systems: papers by Cedefop's Community of apprenticeship experts. Cedefop research paper. Publications Office of the European Union. DOI:10.2801/5232325 (Link)	This collection of papers, drafted by members of Cedefop's Community of apprenticeship experts, helps navigate common challenges and identify the conditions for the successful introduction or repositioning of apprenticeships in education and training systems.
	Cedefop, European Commission, ETF, ILO, OECD, UNESCO and IAEVG (2026). What we learned, where we're going next. Cedefop. DOI: 10.5281/zenodo.21103534. (Link)	This brief revisits Global Careers Month (GCM) 2025 to provide a summary and commentary of the discussions, exchanges and initiatives that took place during the month. Key messages are highlighted, drawing on the impressions of regional partners. Progress was reported since the last event in 2022 in terms of "greater policy attention, expansion of digital provision, strengthening of professional associations, increase of cross-regional cooperation and the development of innovative approaches to meet complex societal challenges".
	Baxter, E. (2026). A future vision for the role of FE colleges in innovation (Link)	This paper makes the case for recognising FE colleges as key drivers of UK innovation, driving productivity through employer partnerships, applied learning, student enterprise and stronger collaboration across education, industry and communities.
Learner perception and experience	Hagemann, I., Deutscher, V. Quality is in the Eye of the Beholder: A Quality Model rethinking VET through the Eyes of Gen Z Learners - Individualization, Digitalization, and Meaningful Work. Vocations and Learning 19, 16 (2026). (Link)	This study examines how Gen Z apprentices define the quality of training in school- and company-based learning environments in a German setting, using 15 qualitative interviews. Six core dimensions were identified: (1) digitalization, including access to infrastructure, tools, and artificial intelligence (AI); (2) flexibility and work-life balance, with a focus on remote work and individualized schedules; (3) meaningful work, reflected in autonomy, relevance, and opportunities for impact; (4) job security and career opportunities, including transparent pathways and structured development; (5) individualization, such as customized feedback and learner-driven content; and (6) interpersonal relationships, emphasizing respectful communication, team cohesion, and emotional support. The factors provide consideration for provides in crafting fulfilling experiences.
Data	Department for the Economy (2026). All Apprenticeships in Northern Ireland, 2024/25 (Link)	This statistical report provides an overall picture of government supported apprenticeships across qualification levels 2 to 7 in Northern Ireland.

Higher education

Theme	Reference	About
Career psychology in job-search	Fris, D. A. H., van Vianen, A. E. M., van Hooft, E. A. J., de Hoog, M., & de Pagter, A. P. J. (2026). Students' Career Decision-Making Stress and Self-Regulatory Career Behaviors: Putting Off or Moving Forward? Journal of Career Development, 0(0). (Link)	In two multi-wave studies (n=126 and n=176), the researchers explore relationships between master's students' career decision-making stress and self-regulatory career behaviors. When master's students feel stressed about making career decisions, they tend to cope by avoiding the problem rather than actively working on it. Feeling stressed did not, on its own, make them more likely to take positive steps such as researching options or applying for jobs. Students with higher self-confidence and self-esteem were generally less likely to avoid career decisions, while support from friends encouraged them to take constructive action. Those constructive actions helped them make progress with their career choice, and making progress then reduced their stress, suggesting a cycle where action reduces stress, whereas avoidance tends to keep people stuck. The main takeaway is that career stress seems to trigger emotional coping (avoidance) rather than problem-solving, and interventions that encourage small, practical steps and peer support could help to break that cycle.
	Han, S., & Reichard, R. J. (2026). Assessing Prosocial Values in Initial Career Choice: The SVO Slider as a Behavioral Predictor of CSR Attribute Preferences. Journal of Career Assessment, 0(0). (Link)	This paper examines what different types of people look for when choosing a job, particularly whether they care about wider social impact. A survey of n = 425 undergraduates measured the role of four CSR dimensions (employee, environmental, social, and governance) alongside salary and location as drivers of job choices. The researchers found that salary was by far the most important factor when students considered jobs, followed by how well a company treats its employees. However, students who were more naturally inclined to cooperate and consider the interests of others placed more importance on a company's environmental and wider social responsibilities. These same students tended to place less importance on salary, while being no more concerned about how the company treats its own employees.
	Brown, J. L., Lexis, L., Julien, B., & McIlveen, P. (2026). Dispositional Employability, Career Adaptability, and Career Identity Among Undergraduate Health Science Students. Australian Journal of Career Development, 35(2), 157-166. (Link)	This study examines the relations between employability, career adaptability, job search self-efficacy, and the career identity of Australian undergraduate health science students. Participants were 1,236 first-year non-vocational health science students who completed a survey embedded within a curriculum-based career development module. Results show the strong role for career identity - firstly, career motivation and optimism were strongly associated with career identity. Secondly, job search self-efficacy also showed meaningful associations with career identity. Career agency was particularly important for students experiencing career identity uncertainty, supporting adaptation and exploration.

Higher education continued

Theme	Reference	About
Students at risk	Berens, J., Diem, A., Rumert, L. et al. Crossing individual university boundaries: a comprehensive approach to predicting dropouts in the higher education system. High Educ 91, 2055–2076 (2026). (L:ink)	The paper uses analysis of Swiss students to predict HE dropouts. Using only pre-enrollment data, the authors can correctly classify about 73% of all students. By adding academic performance variables from consecutive semesters, the authors can correctly label about 88% of students after the 4th semester. The approach has applicability to develop more accurate forecasting tools to predict and intervene-with students at risk.
Data	UCAS (2026). Quarter of a million students (Link)	UCAS produced a commentary on the latest university enrollment figures. Figures published for Level 3 Results Day (13 August) show a record 262,820 UK 18-year-olds have been accepted compared with 255,130 last year (+3%). This growth is being driven by a rising number of UK 18-year-olds in the population with the entry rate for this age group (the percentage of the population entering higher education) flat at 31.6% (32.0% last year).
	Office for Students (2026). Student pulse survey. Year 2 Wave 6. (Link)	Students pulse surveys, eliciting typically 1k+ responses, are used to give insights on regulatory and salient themes. About 78% of students reported that the HE experience matched the one that they were promised - numbers falling by a few percentage points over the past few years. However, the assessment of academic student support has improved - with >86% rating it at least good. The scores were somewhat lower for admin and personal/wellbeing support. Financial worries remain a concern for many with only about ½ of students reporting that they have enough money to cover tuition fees (54%).

Adults

Theme	Reference	About
	Şahin, Ö. U-shaped relationship of age and over-education: scarring effects for older workers. J Labour Market Res 60, 12 (2026). https://doi.org/10.1186/s12651-026-00436-2 (Link)	This research revisits the relationship between age and over-education across the total span of a career in 33 country-years and for 31,608 individuals with tertiary education. Findings show that, (1) Although over-education decreases in the first half of a career, from the age of 45 onwards it starts increasing, contrary to what earlier research would suggest. (2) This effect is documented only for senior workers with tenures shorter than 5 years, suggesting that over-education is a potential scarring effect of job change or job loss in the tail-end of a career. (3) The effect of the skill level of a senior worker is negligible risks of over-education.
Career lifespan effects	Fricke, P., Bainbridge, H., Van Der, B. I. J. M., Fugate, M., Price, C., Wordsworth, R., ... & Robertson, P. (2026, July). Careers Across the Lifespan: Meaningful Starts, Mid-Career Transitions, and Later-Life Renewal. In Academy of Management Proceedings. Academy of Management Valhalla, NY 10595. (Link)	The document reports on four papers that advance understanding of career development at selected points in the career lifespan, spanning early career through later working life. Specifically, the papers examine: (a) how early-career professionals experience and respond to challenges to career sustainability; (b) how accumulated career success shapes occupational mobility beyond early career; (c) how occupational aspirations can emerge mid-career through unplanned and informal role experiences; and (d) how health, caring responsibilities, and career guidance influence career change and sustainability later in working life.
	Jiang, Y., Jiang, Z., Zheng, X., & Wu, C. H. (2026). Career outcomes of work–family conflict: A literature review and future research agenda. Journal of Vocational Behavior, 104250. (Link)	The authors synthesised studies on career outcomes of work-family conflict (WFC). The review revealed five broad categories of career outcomes in WFC research. Individual and contextual factors intervene in WFC's effects on career outcomes. The authors proposed a research agenda. (The subject is of potential interest to adult career coaches).
Active Labour Market policies	Fox, A.(2026). Understanding what works: lessons from JobsPlus partnerships. IES (Link)	JobsPlus is a voluntary community-led, hyperlocal employment support programme designed to help people in social housing communities find work. The paper presents the findings from the JobsPlus pilot evaluation which relate to working with local partners, summarising the wide-spread benefits of this approach. The report described what worked well (e.g. being visible, shared spaces). challenges (e.g. "limited time/capacity", "staff turnover"), lessons for strengthening partnerships (e.g. "Invest early in face-to-face relationship building", "Keep processes simple" etc
	Ghosh, S. et al (2026). Work-first interventions: types and effects. Institute of Employment Studies (Link)	This report examines the evidence on approaches used to support people into employment, focusing on the effectiveness of supportive ("assisting") and coercive ("sanctioning") interventions within work-first Active Labour Market Policies. The review draws on 61 studies across OECD countries between 2018 and 2024. Findings show that while employment services have traditionally focused on rapidly moving people into work, there is increasing evidence that more personalised and supportive approaches are more effective in promoting sustainable employment outcomes.. Themes were outlined for policy considerations.

Adults *continued*

Theme	Reference	About
Overqualification effects	Liu J, Yao L, Cai D (2026), "When being overqualified helps or hurts: the double-edged sword effects of perceived overqualification on proactive behavior". Career Development International, Vol. 31 No. 5 pp. 527–545, (Link)	Data were collected from 290 employees in China to examine the impacts of perceived over-qualification (POQ) on employee behaviour. POQ indirectly and positively predicted proactive behavior via role breadth self-efficacy for employees who perceived high task significance. Meanwhile, it indirectly and negatively predicted proactive behavior via role breadth self-efficacy, intrinsic motivation and positive affect for employees with low task significance.The paper outlines different mechanisms by which the effects take place.
Satisfaction & wellbeing at work	CIPD (2026). Good work index (Link) A separate report "Working Lives Scotland" was also produced for Scotland with similar results to the UK-wide survey (Link)	The CIPD Good Work Index is an annual benchmark of job quality in the UK. Each year, there is a survey more than 5,000 workers from different sectors and occupations about key aspects of their work and employment. The resulting data and analysis provide evidence-based insights for people professionals, employers and policy-makers. This year,70% of employees are satisfied with their job and 65% with their life. Just half of respondents feel they are paid appropriately, rising to 72% for those on the highest incomes. Work centrality – how much importance people place on work in their lives – has been steadily declining over the Good Work Index series. Employees generally report good job security, but there is an undercurrent of concerning areas for signficant minorities of respondents: 30% of all employees say their workloads are too high. A quarter (25%) of employees have personally experienced some conflict atwork. A fifth (20%) of employees say they have no voice channel (a way to express their views) at work at all. While 37% say that work impacts positively on their health, 25% say it has a negative impact.

Adults *continued*

Theme	Reference	About
Re/up-skilling	Schimke, B. Hiring value of skill signals in occupations with different automation risks: evidence from a survey experiment in Germany. J Labour Market Res 60, 9 (2026). (Link)	The paper addresses how technological change is changing the nature of work, and affecting employment security and (re-)employment chances. Affected workers must adapt by acquiring new skills, primarily through further education. This study examines the hiring value of such training in occupations with varying susceptibility to task automation. A experiment was conducted whereby a survey was returned from 717 HR managers and recruiters in Germany, generating 5,443 evaluations of fictitious CV-like profiles against job advertisements in 15 occupations. Results show that extra training can make someone more attractive to employers, but its value depends on the type of job. Training that directly matches the skills required for a job increases the chance of getting an interview, but this benefit becomes smaller in jobs that are more likely to be automated. The researchers suggest that employers may be less convinced by a training certificate when they cannot see evidence that the person has actually used those skills in a real workplace. Interestingly, actual previous work experience remains a strong signal regardless of how automatable the occupation is. Implications for career guidance professionals are to persuade those reskilling to gain real world evidence for deploying those skills that draw on their training.
	OECD (2026), A Conceptual Foundation for the Development of a Lifelong Learning Measurement Framework, Educational Research and Innovation, OECD Publishing, Paris (Link)	This report proposes a conceptual framework for measuring lifelong learning (LLL) aimed at improving policy design and evaluation. To address these gaps, the framework is structured around three interconnected pillars: demand, supply, and coordination.

Equity, diversity and inclusion in careers - Race/ethnicity/culture

Theme	Reference	About
Migrants	Abkhezr, D. P., & O'Neill, E. (2026). Making Sense of Career After Resettlement: Tensions Between Meaning Systems and Career Support for People with Refugee Backgrounds in Australia. Australian Journal of Career Development, 35(2), 178-193. (Link)	Refugees' longer-term settlement is closely tied to education, employment, and access to decent and meaningful work, yet little is known about how they conceptualise 'jobs', 'career' and 'career development' after resettlement. This study looks at refugees who settled in Australia, but makes some general points about the challenges facing migrants and their support requirements. Distinguishing jobs from careers, participants framed jobs as survival-oriented and contingent, and careers as longer-term, self-aligned pathways offering direction and stability. The paper makes the case for "culturally responsive, developmentally timed career support involving families, communities, dialogue, and exposure to host-country labour-market expectations" to support settlement.

Equity, diversity and inclusion in careers - Race/ethnicity/culture *continued*

Theme	Reference	About
Experiences and barriers (context)	Office for Equality & Opportunity (2026). Race Equality Engagement Group: One year of action (Link)	The Race Equality Engagement Group (REEG) was established in March 2025 to strengthen the relationship between the government and ethnic minority communities. The group comprises 10 independent experts who have assembled to advise government. This article provides insights into the groups' perspectives and priorities - out of four such priorities, two pertain to careers: 1) tackling the barriers to equality in education and the transition to work and 2) unlocking finance for ethnic minority entrepreneurs. The article provide a deeper look into themes at play.
Data	McShane, M. (2026). Ethnic Diversity in the Workplace Statistics UK (2026). Equality & Diversity Training (Link)	This up-to-date publication provides a statistical overivew of the UK landscape, and the commentary highlights the key issues.

Equity, diversity and inclusion in careers - Gender

Theme	Reference	About
Virtual reality for tackling gender stereotypes	P. Matarrodona-Moragas, R. Baltà-Salvador, M. Peña Carrera (2026) Can Virtual Reality Reduce Gender Stereotypes in Engineering? Evidence from a high school intervention, EDULEARN26 Proceedings, Article 1140. (Link)	Despite the global effort to increase female representation in STEM fields, engineering remains one of the most male-dominated disciplines. This research investigates whether exposure to realistic immersive content through 360º virtual reality (VR) headsets can improve high school students' understanding of engineering degrees and mitigate gender-based stereotypes. To analyse the potential of VR, a study was conducted with a sample of 56 high school students, aged between 15 and 17 years. The intervention consisted of a two-minute immersive 360º video experienced through VR headsets. The footage depicted a "day in the life" of an engineering student. The VR intervention increased engineering career familiarity for female students by 24%. Additionally, the intervention produced a 21% reduction in females' perceived barriers to social integration

Equity, diversity and inclusion in careers - SEND/Neurodiversity

Theme	Reference	About
Student-centric services	Abdalla, O., & Abdin, M. E. (2026). Reframing career development services through a neurodiversity lens: Student experiences and institutional practices. (Doctoral dissertation, University of Pennsylvania). (Link)	This qualitative US-based study examined how neurodivergent undergraduates at several research-intensive institutions perceived the design, accessibility, and effectiveness of career development services and how career staff understood their capacity to support these students. Drawing on interviews with 22 neurodivergent students and seven career development professionals, as well as analysis of institutional documents and websites, the study identified key accessibility features, institutional barriers, and evidence-based practices that shape engagement with career services. Findings inform an accessibility-centred career development framework (The study provider general insights for those seeking to critically analyse and (re)design more inclusive career services for SEND/neurodivergent client groups.)

Equity, diversity and inclusion in careers - Intersectional

Theme	Reference	About
Gender-ethnicity	Rees-O'Donnell, L. Breaking Traditions, Building Futures: Employer Perspectives on the Career Aspirations, Barriers and Professional Agency of Mature British South Asian Women in Business Education. Salford University (Link)	This paper examines the structural, cultural and organisational factors shaping the career opportunities of Non-Traditional British South Asian Women (NT-BSAW) following their completion of a Business and Management undergraduate degree. Findings demonstrated that leadership teams across most organisations remained predominantly white and male, even within businesses located in predominantly South Asian communities. Several employers attributed this to a lack of local applicants; however, when prompted, it became evident that recruitment strategies, organisational culture and perceptions of managerial suitability also played a role. Employers acknowledged the presence of unconscious bias, gendered expectations and cultural stereotyping that influenced recruitment and promotion decisions. For example, employers described assumptions that South Asian women might not apply for senior roles due to family commitments, cultural expectations or perceptions of incompatibility with demanding managerial responsibilities.Across the discussion, employers highlighted a range of barriers that they believed constrained the progression of South Asian heritage women.
Intersectional effects with disability	*Wakefield, H. Z., Ellawala, A., Kehoe, A., & Crampton, P. E. (2026). Understanding how disability and ethnicity impact UK undergraduate and postgraduate medical training: A critical review. Medical Education. (LInk)	This critical review aimed to evaluate all published empirical evidence regarding the impact of disability and ethnicity on the training of UK medical students and qualified doctors, with a specific focus on their intersection. 25 articles presented data on both disability and ethnicity in relevant areas. The review showed how disability and ethnicity can negatively impact medical training, especially with respect to examination performance, levels of support and learning/work-based experience. Considerations are raised for medical educators. (The study provides insight for career professionals to impart to clients).

Equity, diversity and inclusion in careers - Socio-economics & NEET

Theme	Reference	About
NEET risks	Department for Work and Pensions (2026). Survey of young people not in education, employment or training (NEET): Young people and work report (Link) NB: An interim report with literature review was published earlier in the year (Link)	This report presents findings from a survey of 417 young people aged 16-24 who were not in education, employment or training (NEET). Fieldwork was conducted by YouGov between March and April 2026. The research explored current circumstances, aspirations, barriers, support needs and young people's views on employment, education and training. Some of the findings included that: 84% of respondents wanted to be in employment, education or training employment was the most common aspiration among NEET young people; 54% wanting to move into employment, including 38% seeking full-time work. most respondents (69%) believed that getting a job was worthwhile, indicating generally positive attitudes towards work despite significant barriers
Home schooling	Careers Connect (2026). Elective Home Education: A Growing Concern (Link)	The report provides a review of the growing trend in home schooling and the issues it is presenting. It offers contextual considerations for career practitioners looking to support this student group.
Data	ONS (2026). VACS01: Vacancies and unemployment (Link) ONS (2026). UNEM02: Unemployment by previous occupation (Link) ONS (2026) UNEM03: Unemployment by previous industrial sector (Link) ONS (2026) A10: International comparisons of employment and unemployment rates. (Link)	ONS produced a series of updated datasets on unemployment in August, including UK vacancies and unemployment trends since 2024: vacancies have fallen while unemployment rose Another release provide international comparators, and others reported the previous occupation or sectors of unemployed people, to provide an opportunity to focus interventions.

Economics and labour market influences

Theme	Reference	About
Skills	Skills England (2026). Skills England annual skills report and Sectoral Skills Needs Assessments 2026 (Link)	The 2026 annual skills report highlights key challenges in the skills system. This updated report from the first release in June outlines skills demand and supply in priority sectors - advanced manufacturing, clean energy, construction, creative industries, defence, digital tech, financial services, health and adult social care, life sciences, business and professional services. The main report is built around the response to five defined challenges.
	Skills Development Scotland (2026). Financial and Professional Services Future Skills Needs (Link)	There are currently over 13,000 financial and professional services businesses in Scotland, with numbers expected to grow, contributing 149k jobs. However, there are currently skills gap in the sector, with nearly half of the employers surveyed for this study reporting vacancies. The report provides further insights into which parts of the sector are expected to grow, from employers' perspectives. Skills shortages currently lay most in digital technology areas, such as cyber security.
Labour market intelligence	Aubert, B.A., Bourdeau, S., Warin, T. et al. Digital skills assessment in jobs in Canada. J Labour Market Res 60, 18 (2026). (Link)	The report offers a comparison with the UK situation and review - in more detail - the digital skills needs in the Canadian job market.
	CEDEFOP. (2026). Harnessing web data for next-generation skills intelligence. Book of abstracts. Harnessing web data for next-generation skills intelligence. Cedefop and Eurostat research conference, Thessaloniki, Greece. DOI: 10.5281/zenodo.20656597. (Link)	This research conference showcased innovative methods and approaches for analysing and interpreting web-based data sources in the context of occupational, sectoral, and thematic labour market and skills analysis. The insights and findings shared during the event enhanced the understanding of how web data can be leveraged for labour market and skills intelligence, helping to shape the future of research in this evolving field
Aging workforces	Zhang, Y., Harper, S., Wang, S., & Gong, B. (2026). Working from home among older adults in the UK: examining its link to labor market exit intentions and expected retirement age. Social Forces, soag123. (Link)	Prolonging work life has been widely discussed in countries facing population aging. To these ends, the authors review data from the British Household Panel Survey (BHPS) and the UK Household Longitudinal Survey (UKHLS), covering the period from September 1998 to May 2020. Findings indicate that WFH is linked to reduced labor market exit intentions and a later expected retirement age, through improved subjective well-being. The association between WFH and expected retirement age is significantly stronger among women than among men. The estimated associations for the labor market exit intentions are also larger among women, although the corresponding gender interaction terms are not statistically significant
	Han, M., & Zhao, J. (2026). The rise and fall of AI's benefits: Investigating the curvilinear relationship between employee-AI collaboration and successful aging at work. Journal of Vocational Behavior, 104265.	The rapid integration of artificial intelligence (AI) into workplaces presents both opportunities and challenges for aging workforces, yet existing research lacks a nuanced understanding of how employee-AI collaboration influences successful aging at work. The authors theorize that employee-AI collaboration has an inverted U-shaped relationship with successful aging at work, mediated by job crafting behaviour of the individual worker.

Economics and labour market influences *continued*

Theme	Reference	About
Data	House of Commons (2026). Economic indicators: Key statistics for the UK economy (Link)	A broader statistical review of the key metrics and trends in the UK economy, covering the period to mid 2026. The economy is relatively flat, though this exceeds expectations given the Iran-Israel war. he Labour Force Survey shows that 34.47 million people were in employment in April to June 2026, up 253,000 from a year before (but note that other data shows a fall in payrolled employees of 86,000 over the same period). The employment rate was 75.1%, down from 75.3% the previous year. Average wages excluding bonuses were 3.5% higher in the three months to June 2026 compared with the year before, and 0.7% higher after adjusting for inflation
	ONS (2026). Labour demand volumes by Standard Occupation Classification (SOC 2020), UK: January 2017 to July 2026 (Link) ONS (2026). Labour market in the regions of the UK: August 2026 (Link) Data are released in monthly intervals.	The ONS have produced their latest data on the number of online job adverts split by local authority and occupation (SOC 2020). They also produced regional, local authority, and parliamentary constituency breakdowns of changes in UK employment, unemployment, and economic inactivity, and other related statistics.

AI and technology in careers

Theme	Reference	About
AI in Careers Guidance: State of the field	do Céu Taveira, M., & Silva, A. D. (2026). Applications of Artificial Intelligence in Career Guidance and Counseling. European Psychologist. (Link)	The paper provides an overview of applications of AI in career support: It discusses how technological evolution has renewed interest in vocational psychology in how digital tools, including artificial intelligence (AI), can be ethically and effectively integrated into guidance and counseling practice. The paper takes the form of a systematic literature review, and explores the current state of the art in applying AI to career guidance and counseling. Of 50 identified articles, 27 met the inclusion criteria and were reviewed. The findings highlight the applications of AI, the underlying theoretical frameworks, its effectiveness, and the ethical issues, as well as implications for research and professional practice. Overall, the evidence portrays a transformative yet still maturing field in which AI enhances engagement and decision-making in career development. However, its responsible integration ultimately depends on empirical rigor, ethical grounding, and a sustained commitment to human-centered values.
Tools, apps etc	Sipondo, A., & Terblanche, N. (2026). Ziqamo: A Pilot Study of a Cognitive Behavioural AI Coaching Chatbot to Enhance Resilience. International Journal of Evidence Based Coaching and Mentoring, 17418305261455170. (Link)	This pilot study explored the design of a Cognitive Behavioural Coaching (CBC) AI chatbot aimed at enhancing resilience, drawing on expert feedback to assess theoretical and practical alignment. Using unstructured questionnaires and thematic analysis, findings indicate the chatbot effectively facilitated structured reflection, goal-setting and guided discovery. However, limitations were also noted in deeper cognitive-emotional work. Future development and research were proposed. (Unlike many reported chatbots and AI tools, this one was evaluated in a coaching-related peer-reviewed journal, rather than engineering/tech journals).
Impacts of AI on labour markets	Shin Y, Hur W, Shin G, Park K (2026), "Service employees' job insecurity in the era of AI: buffering roles of mindfulness and self-efficacy". Career Development International, Vol. 31 No. 5 pp. 505–526, (Link)	This study aims to examine how the awareness of smart technology, artificial intelligence, robotics and algorithms (STARA) affects service employees' turnover intentions and when this relationship can be buffered. Data was collected from over 300 South Korean service workers. The authors observed a three-way interaction effect of STARA awareness, mindfulness and self-efficacy on job insecurity. When mindfulness and self-efficacy were high, the positive association between STARA awareness and job insecurity and the positive effect of STARA awareness on turnover intention through job insecurity were the least pronounced. Findings therefore suggest to build positive and resillience postures towards new technology.
Upskilling	Ameen, N. (2026). Skills for AI: What works for AI upskilling in the UK. UK Government (2026) (Link)	The reports provide evidence-based guidance, real-world case studies, practical principles and tools to help employers build their AI workforce capability. "Staff often learn through trial and error, peer support, online videos or built-in tool prompts. This can help people get started, but it also creates uneven and risky practice.... The main issue is deemed as "capacity" - limited time, staff pressure, cost, unclear provision and fear of failing in technical areas. Training systems also struggle to keep pace while courses are too generic."

Health and wellbeing

Theme	Reference	About
Social media	Wang Y, Song X, Li C (2026), "Does social media use always lead to negative career results? The role of growth mindset". Career Development International, Vol. 31 No. 5 pp. 546–560 (Link)	The paper challenges past studies which suggested that social media primarily elicits negative career-related outcomes due to upward social comparisons. Authors conducted a three-wave survey among employees from the UK. Results show that inspiration mediates the relationship between social media use and social comparisons. Moreover, the growth mindset strengthens the effect of social media use on inspiration and the indirect effect of inspiration. This study reveals the "bright side" of social media within career and its beneficial influence on encouraging positive forms of social comparison.
Wellbeing in education	Bailey, R. P. Global Perspectives on Wellbeing Strategies in Education: A Holistic Approach. In Frontiers in Education (Vol. 11, p. 1938128). Frontiers. (Link)	The editorial introduces a special journal edition which examines wellbeing in education, pulling together case studies, evaluation studies and meta reviews. It should therefore be of interest to those looking to build linkages between career guidance and wellbeing in education. The papers address careers obliquely, through discussions on integrated support services. Overall, however, it provides a body of work to describe the wider considerations of wellbeing within education and the breadth of ways that wellbeing is supported or eroded.
COVID legacies	Forret ML, Sullivan SE, Simmons J (2026), "The career impact of the COVID-19 pandemic: A longitudinal examination using the kaleidoscope career model". Career Development International, Vol. 31 No. 5 pp. 561–574. (Link)	Utilising the kaleidoscope career model (KCM) as its basis, this study examined how COVID-19 impacted authenticity, balance and challenge. Data were obtained from 105 US undergraduate business school alumni pre- and post-pandemic: The study examined whether respondents' experiences and attitudes with illness from COVID-19, children going to school online, negative work-family balance due to COVID-19, positive work-family balance due to COVID-19, satisfaction with their employer's handling of the pandemic and rethinking their career focus predicted changes. Results showed that "challenge" significantly decreased during the pandemic - both experiencing illness from COVID-19 and rethinking one's career focus significantly predicted a decline in challenge. Contrary to expectations, there were no significant changes in balance or authenticity. The paper reminds us that COVID's impacts continue today for many.
Work wellbeing	Cetkovská, K., Bauer, G. F., & Tušl, M. (2026). The Role of Needs-Based Job Crafting in Strengthening Work-Related Sense of Coherence: A Two-Wave Panel Study. Scandinavian Journal of Work and Organizational Psychology, 11(1), 14-14. (Link)	Work-related "Sense of Coherence" (work-SOC) is an important concept, linked to employee motivation and well-being. The present study investigates whether Needs-based Job Crafting (NJC) promotes employee work-SOC over time, using a study of n=924 employees from various occupations in Switzerland and Germany. The findings suggest that NJC for approach needs is a useful strategy for employees to strengthen their work-SOC and support workplace well-being and motivation. (The results are of potential interest to adult career coaches support workers with work-related health issues).

Careers and the environment

Theme	Reference	About
Attitudes to green jobs	Hašková, K., & Vaculík, M. (2026). Careers in the Time of Climate Change: Reflection of Czech High School Students. Australian Journal of Career Development, 35(2), 167-177. (Link)	The perception of climate change and its effects is growing among career researchers and practitioners. The aim of this article is to explore the reflection of climate change in high school students' career aspirations because young people. To do this, 14 interviews were conducted. The work led to areas of consideration for suggested topics and discussions for exploration with students.
Green jobs and careers	Hopner, V., Carr, S. C., Valdes, E., & Meyer, I. (2026). Indexing Sustainable Livelihoods: Green Collar Work. Australian Journal of Career Development, 35(2), 147-156. (Link)	The authors note the lack of a way to effectively score the sustainability of different professions, using the triple bottom line approach of the sustainability development goals (people, planet, prosperity). An index of sustainable work is proposed using a New Zealand context. The paper provides the basis of a more objective way of assessing professions when directing students to sustainable careers, as well as a resource to think through the various factors at play.
	Cedefop. (2026). New careers in the green transition: using online job advertisements to track emerging jobs and skills. Cedefop policy brief. Publications Office of the European Union. DOI: 10.2801/6783716 (Link)	This policy brief explores how the European Union's shift toward climate neutrality is transforming the modern labour market and creating a surge in demand for clean technology occupations. By analysing online job advertisements, the report identifies essential emerging roles in engineering, installation, and maintenance that are vital for deploying renewable energy systems.

What we missed last time!

In this section, in future, we'll mention papers or reports that were pointed out to us, and we didn't include last time.

Theme	Reference	About
Understanding course information	UCAS (2026) Course is king. Understanding key terms (Link)	Drawing on results from over 1,100 applicants, the "Course is King" research explores how course information is interpreted by people making decisions about which course to pursue - which words and phrases encourage next steps, and where meaning can become unclear. Language changes perception of a course's appeal markedly e.g. Clear wording can lift a student's view of a course's quality from 36% to 79%. The implication for careers advisers is that students may need support to interpret jargon and confusing language. The resource provides a list of common terms and how well they are understood.

If you see a paper that you want including, then please contact stephen.plimmer@thecdi.net.

CAREER DEVELOPMENT INSTITUTE

Ground Floor,
Copthall House,
1 New Road,
Stourbridge,
West Midlands
DY8 1PH

e: hq@thecdi.net
t: 01384 445627

thecdi.net