

# Career development: Meeting the needs of individuals, society and the economy

A key aim of government should be to empower individuals to access decent work and build meaningful and productive careers. Where individuals are supported to build their careers there are benefits for the economy, society and the individual. For individuals, career development makes a positive contribution to earnings, wellbeing and enhanced quality of life. When skills and talents are valued and well used, productivity increases and employers and the whole of society gain.

We are asking individuals and organisations, of all political parties and none, to endorse the following statement.

*Every citizen should have the right to build a career that allows them to meet their own needs and the needs of their family and to make a positive contribution to society and the economy. The right to build a decent career should not be limited by an individual's background. Government has an important role to play in ensuring that individuals can gain access to the support that they need to build and develop their careers throughout their lives.*

To support this statement the next government should:

1. Set out and implement a strategy for lifelong career development.
2. Start career education earlier.
3. Drive forward the 'Gatsby revolution' that has been started in secondary schools and colleges.
4. Place career development at the heart of post-compulsory education.
5. Ensure that career development support is available to all young people, including those not in school or college, and to all adults both in work and those out of work.

The five career development policies for the next government are explained in more detail on the next page.

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## Five key career development policies for the next government

1. **Set out and implement a strategy for lifelong career development.** This strategy should make it clear what citizens should expect across their lifecourse. It should address the fragmentation, gaps and overlaps in the present career development system. There are enormous efficiencies and improvements to services to be gained from viewing career development as a lifelong and holistic system. There is also huge value in involving key stakeholders (citizens, employers and education providers) in defining such a strategy and evaluating its implementation.
2. **Start career education earlier.** Young people form their ideas about career long before they enter the labour market. Ensuring that citizens gain a broad overview of the possibilities for their lives before they have to start making decisions is essential. Career education has been successfully piloted in primary schools by the current government, the previous Labour government and by the devolved administrations. There is a need to turn these pilots into normal practice.
3. **Drive forward the 'Gatsby revolution' that has been started in secondary schools and colleges.** The Gatsby Benchmarks set out a very clear model for what needs to happen in secondary schools and colleges. Since their introduction we have seen steady progress in provision, but it is still moving much too slowly. There is a need to fund all schools and colleges to provide personal guidance, delivered by qualified careers advisers, to all pupils; to extend the coverage of the careers hubs and ensure that every school/college has a trained careers leader.
4. **Place career development at the heart of post-compulsory education.** Universities, colleges and training and apprenticeship providers all offer some career development provision for their learners, but this is variable in nature and patchy across the country. A future government should use its influence, and funding agreements with providers, to drive up the consistency and quality of career development provision across the post-secondary sector. As a minimum all students should be able to access personal guidance at key decision points such as entering and leaving post-compulsory provision, including T levels and apprenticeships.
5. **Ensure that career development support is available to all young people, including those not in school or college, and to all adults both in work and those out of work.** We spend most of our lives building our careers in the workplace and yet publicly funded support for careers provision is strongly concentrated in the education system and those furthest from the labour market. There is a need to improve the entitlement to ensure universal access to career support for all working adults and for those who are out of work.

Key to achieving this will be improving the provision available through the National Careers Service including making appropriate use of telephone and online provision, increasing funding to the UnionLearn scheme and exploring how that can be extended to workers in non-unionised workplaces. It is important to ensure that the National Retraining Scheme and Jobcentre Plus align well with existing government funded provision including the National Careers Service. The various pilots that have been trialed around midlife career reviews should be made universally available to support workers in the second half of their career to make the most of their skills, to prolong their working life as long as they choose, and to maximise their contribution to the economy.