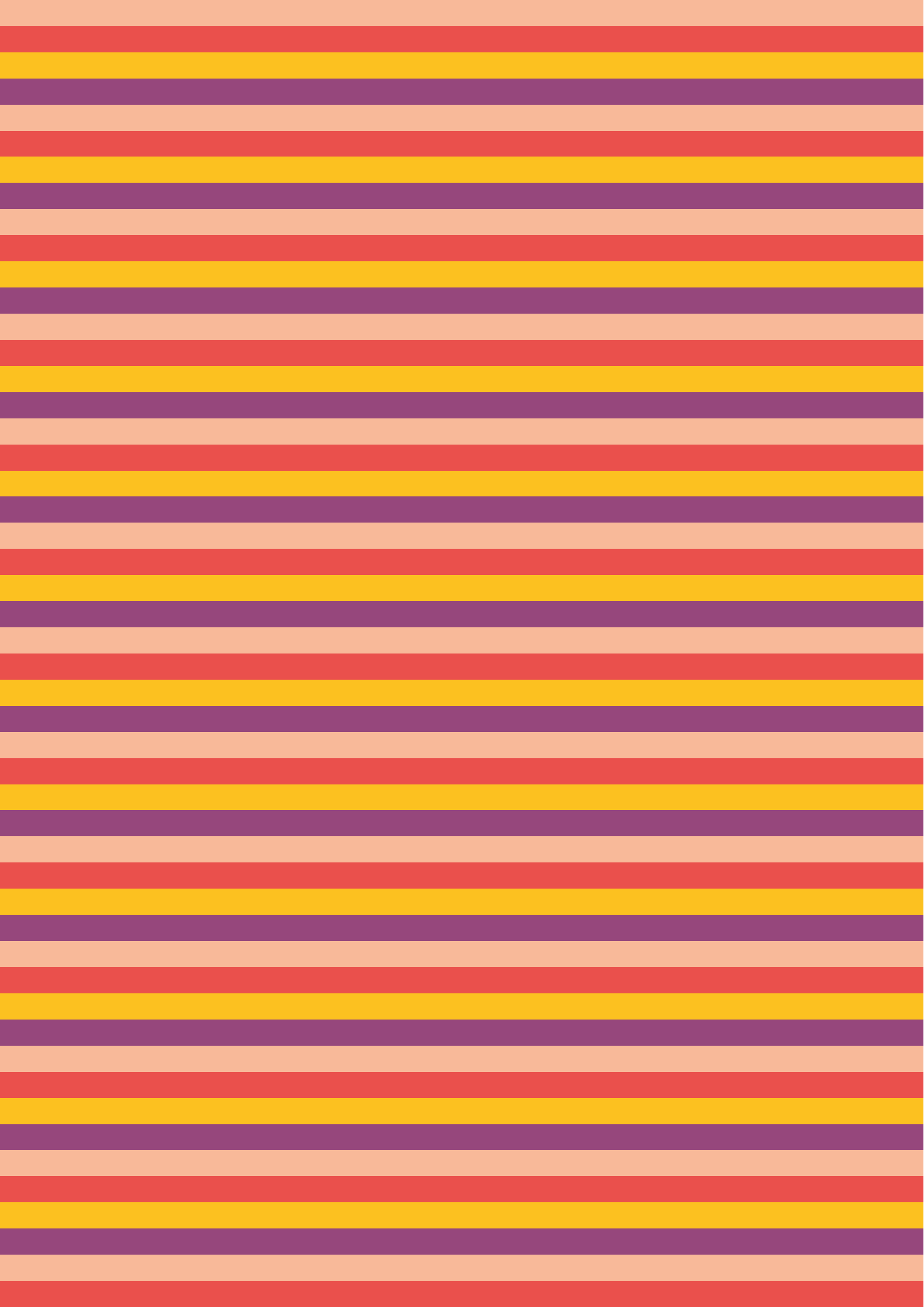


» Careers

PUTTING PEOPLE FIRST

DELIVERING OUTSTANDING
CAREERS ADVICE AND GUIDANCE



SUPPORTING PEOPLE TO THRIVE

For two decades, Education Development Trust has been designing, pioneering and delivering excellence in the provision of careers advice and guidance. We are a prime contractor for the National Careers Service and, as such, we operate in different regions in England; we adapt our services to respond to local needs. We work hard to give adults better access to an evolving job market and increase their likelihood of thriving within a fast-changing landscape.

We are good at what we do. Following a full inspection by Ofsted of the National Careers Service in April 2017, our careers provision in the north east of England was rated as Grade 1 or 'outstanding' – we were one of only two prime contractors to be awarded Ofsted's top grade. In the same inspection cycle, our other prime contractor service achieved a Grade 2 ('good') rating. As a national service, every prime contractor was rated good or outstanding.

We constantly evaluate our practice, measure our impact, reflect on our approach and build on our success; sharing knowledge and following best practice are integral to the way we work. Committed to this approach, from July to September 2018 we commissioned an external impact review of our careers advice and guidance services. By reviewing literature, undertaking site visits and conducting face-to-face and telephone interviews with our staff and regional partners, we sought to identify what we do well, why our approach is effective and where we can improve. Here, we share our findings.

THE IMPORTANCE OF CAREERS ADVICE AND GUIDANCE IN ENGLAND

The labour market is in transition. With advances in technology, many traditional job roles are disappearing. New and emerging digital skills are required to improve access to career opportunities, increase job fulfilment, eliminate work poverty and ensure economic growth for the UK. The need for a consistent talent pipeline is more important than ever.

Launched in 2012 as a nationally branded careers and skills advice service, the National Careers Service provides information, advice and guidance across England to help individuals make decisions on learning, training and work.

It is funded by the Education & Skills Funding Agency (ESFA), a crown agency for the Department for Education.

The National Careers Service takes a blended approach to engagement:

- A central website, developed, hosted and managed by the Education & Skills Funding Agency (ESFA)
- A national telephone helpline
- An area-based prime contractors service that offers face-to-face guidance
- Professional and impartial career advice over the phone

The National Careers Service is available to everyone. In particular, we provide services for adults aged 19 and over as well as 18-year-olds who are not in education, employment or training. Aligning our services to national strategy, we focus on ESFA-identified priority groups such as those without a level 2 qualification and adults with special educational needs.

KEEPING EVERY CUSTOMER IN FOCUS

We work as a prime contractor and as a major subcontractor in different regions of England in both the north and south. Creating an effective area-specific service is essential as our customers experience a range of barriers to engagement in local markets that are evolving in different ways. We carefully adapt our service to ensure results in rural areas where opportunities can be limited, in post-industrial regions where digital upskilling might be critical or in tech-led zones with a heavy reliance on specific skillsets. Key to our success is our sophisticated approach to understanding our markets, from harnessing the latest research and labour market intelligence (LMI) to continually developing our staff and partnering with area-based specialists to help us fine-tune our market insight. From this solid, informed platform we are better equipped to create impact in our regions.

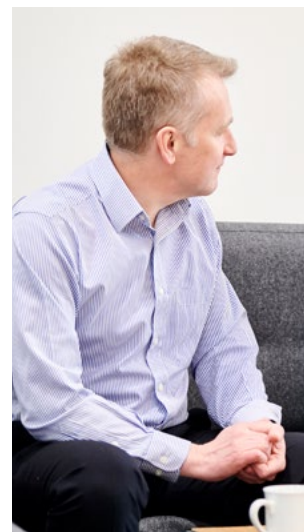
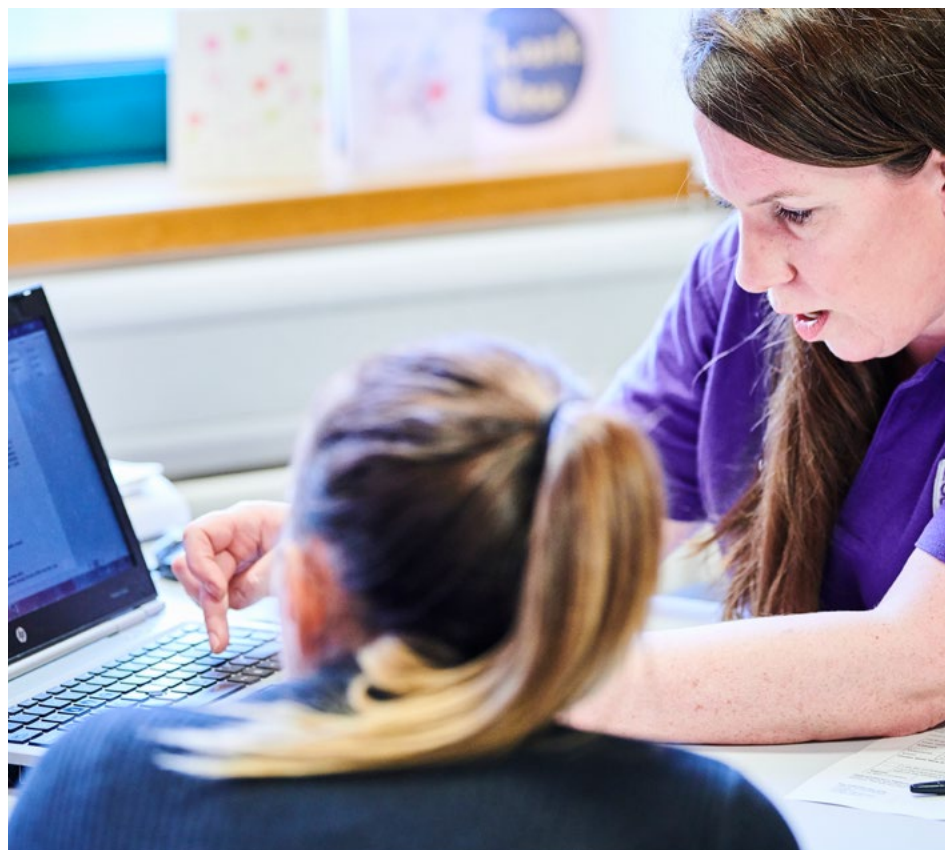
This report highlights some of the key ways in which we continue to innovate, lead and influence in the provision of careers advice. It outlines how we value knowledge sharing, measuring impact and empowering our staff and partners so that they, in turn, can equip our clients to prosper in the future.

**National
Careers
Service**

WHO BENEFITS FROM THE NATIONAL CAREERS SERVICE?

The National Careers Service is available to everyone. It provides access to independent, professional advice on careers, skills and the labour market. In delivering the service, the priority target groups for 2018–19 are:

- Low skilled adults without a level 2 qualification
- Adults aged 18–24 not in education, employment or training
- Adults aged 50 and over who are unemployed or at demonstrable risk of redundancy
- Single parents
- People with special educational needs and/or disabilities
- Adults unemployed for over 12 months





THE NATIONAL CAREERS SERVICE IN ACTION

After 30 years working for the same company, Nora from County Durham had a wealth of valuable skills and experience to offer a new employer following a sudden redundancy. However, having never been in this position before she felt lost, unsure of how to look and apply for new jobs; she was so worried about the situation that she couldn't see the skills and strengths that she had within herself. After the National Careers Service visited her place of work to give a talk on how it could support employees facing redundancy, Nora called to make an appointment.

Nora met with her careers adviser Beccy at a local National Careers Service office in Bishop Auckland. In the beginning, Nora and her adviser spent some time reviewing and improving her CV and looking at ways to use it to best effect. Nora also learned how to search and apply for jobs online and picked up a lot of useful tips to help improve her prospects.

Most importantly for Nora, Beccy helped her to recognise the skills and experience that she had to offer. It gave Nora reassurance and lifted her confidence right when she needed it the most.

Nora explains: 'I was so wrapped up in focusing on all those negatives I let my worries completely overshadow everything I had going for me; Beccy helped me to get back on track...she helped me to recognise my own hang-ups and then helped me to get over them.'

With renewed confidence, a clearer sense of purpose and direction, her new CV and the ability to use it effectively, Nora soon landed her dream job as an administrator in a local engineering firm: 'It's close to home, a good match for my skills and I'm working with a great bunch of people. It's perfect for me!'

When asked what sort of difference had her adviser and the National Careers Service made to her life, Nora had the following to say:

'Beccy opened up a new and wonderful life for me. I was in a dark little place and full of worry about being made redundant. She turned that light on for me. She made me realise what was out there, and how I could get it. I felt so much more confident and sure of what I needed to do after speaking to her, she's really a credit...She did that, for me, and it's priceless. Thank you.'



3,000+

hours of CPD undertaken
by our staff in 2018

60+

opportunities for training
and CPD were offered
to our staff in 2018

98%

of customers would recommend the
National Careers Service to a friend

WE ARE ONE OF ONLY
TWO NATIONAL
CAREERS SERVICE PRIME
CONTRACTORS TO BE
JUDGED **OUTSTANDING**
BY OFSTED

2.9M

is our social media reach in 2018. Ofsted noted our use of digital social media
to promote the National Careers Service and attract new clients is 'a key strength'

My adviser was totally unbiased and gave me a lot to think about as well as time to reflect on how I could improve. She was a real lifeline offering support and reassurance, even helping me with mock interviews. My prospects have definitely improved for the better and my confidence has improved.

AMANDA, NATIONAL CAREERS SERVICE CUSTOMER

200+

organisations receive our LMI bulletin, reaching a wide range of audiences including Local Enterprise Partnerships

40,000+

job or learning outcomes secured for our customers

11

methods of service delivery to reach our clients, including face-to-face guidance, social media and a careers portal

'GOOD'

Our customers were most likely to strongly agree the service was 'good'.
(National Careers Service Customer Satisfaction and Progression Research)

3,000+

organisations collaborated with across England to deliver the best possible service to our customers

My new job is close to home, a good match for my skills and I am working with a great bunch of people. It's perfect for me! My careers adviser made me realise what was out there, and how I could get it. I felt so much more confident and sure of what I needed to do after speaking to her, she's really a credit... She did that, for me, and it's priceless. Thank you.

NORA, NATIONAL CAREERS SERVICE CUSTOMER

OUR APPROACH

Our review shows that our success is down to a complex mix of factors that is finely tuned to meet local requirements and deliver results. Here, we highlight just a selection of these different factors that were proven to play a key role in creating impact.



1. PEOPLE

OUR PEOPLE MAKE THE DIFFERENCE

Working across different regions and bringing a range of skills and experience, our teams share the same aim – to deliver friendly, insightful and impartial careers advice and guidance for every client.

Having the right person in every role, at every level and in every region is key to creating a high-quality careers service. Our teams include specialists in management, business development and careers guidance as well as IT and data analysts. They are open, experienced and knowledgeable – together they work hard to understand the needs of every client and provide a person-centred service.

The significant investment we make in our staff enhances the quality of our careers service delivery. A structured and bespoke continual professional development (CPD) programme gives staff, subcontractors and partner organisations access to training, coaching and mentoring. Staff can also benefit from the latest industry insights thanks to our culture of evidence-based practice. We support our staff to become highly skilled and reflective professionals resulting in teams who are well placed to deliver our vision.

As part of our commitment to providing focused solutions, we bring subcontractors into our network to ensure we are targeting clients' needs as effectively as possible. For example, we might engage a charity helping single parents or an organisation supporting adults with learning difficulties. Our subcontractors are selected for their expertise, they mirror our high standards and collaborate with us to make a difference. They are part of our network and strengthen our careers guidance provision. As an extension of our organisation, our subcontractors are subject to the same professional development opportunities and quality assessment procedures as our in-house staff.

To ensure clients consistently benefit from our professional services, we have implemented a robust system that evaluates staff and subcontractor inputs, process and performance. Working with a 'plan, do, check and act' mindset, leaders and practitioners reflect on and measure the impact of their work. Our approaches and outcomes are also subject to scrutiny by external organisations. The Education & Skills Funding Agency carries out mystery shopping exercises in which we score consistently highly, while in March 2017 Ofsted recognised the quality of our leadership and management teams as 'outstanding'.

We are proud of the culture we have created. We know that by supporting our staff and giving them the tools to make a difference, we are achieving positive outcomes for our clients.

Staff were rated exceptionally for their manner. Advisers' diagnostic, motivational and knowledge-based skills continued to be rated well. Advisers continued to provide high-quality, suitable advice and ask relevant questions.

**NATIONAL CAREERS SERVICE
MYSTERY SHOPPER REPORTS
FROM APRIL TO AUGUST 2018**

I have never been given these sorts of opportunities in other places I've worked; I think the variety of training is amazing. It covers so many different aspects: personal development but also professional development too.

Because of the area I work in – an area with limited employment opportunities – I meet a lot of customers with a variety of barriers, including mental health issues, low confidence and long-term unemployment of over ten years. When they come and have a one-to-one with me, the feedback includes things like 'I now feel like I actually could work', 'You've listened to me, you've understood my situation and put plans in place to help me'. You can see clear correlation between your efforts and what you get out of it.

SARAH, CAREERS ADVISER



TAMSYN KIRTTON

Careers Adviser

I work on our teledigital service so when I pick up the phone, I don't know who I am going to speak to. To help customers you need to understand their individual circumstances and barriers; you need good engagement skills. It is all about thinking on your feet.

Obviously, we can't pick up on visual clues over the phone, so we have to be attuned to verbal ones. Sometimes it is about tuning in to what's not being said, rather than what the customer is actually telling you. We have had some fantastic training tailored to working over the phone; we have learned different techniques that really make the difference. Because of our specialist training, we get a real feel for the customer and for how our advice is being received.

Research helps us improve our local knowledge. We listen to our customers and learn from them; our LMI team supports us and makes sure our understanding of local labour markets is second to none. The LMI team is really on the ball when there are changes in the market, which means the information we give the client is always up to date.

The National Careers Service team works closely together and we learn from each other. We give each other feedback and if I hear one of my colleagues using a great technique, I will make a note of it and see if I can use it in my own work.



ROCHELLE GONSALVES

Careers Adviser

Training plays a very important role in our jobs. As advisers, we come from a variety of backgrounds, which is important – I came from a HR career; the training ensures we can all pick the right tools to help our customers.

As we offer a tailor-made service you can't use the same approach with every customer which is why we receive a lot of specific training. I have done a Solution-Focused Interview Skills course as well as specific training to use our career management tools – for example, I am a champion for our visual career management tool that helps us work with customers to set goals and identify barriers. And last year, as part of an 'over 50s' programme, we did a lot of work around supporting older workers. You don't always know who you're going to work with or what their needs might be, so the training gives me the confidence to understand how to help our customers.

Mentoring is another aspect of building our skills. We do a lot of buddying up and run group workshops as a team. Working in pairs is a great way to pick up skills from others. If you need more insight into a particular area and know that a colleague has that skillset, you can arrange to shadow them for a day and develop your own skills.

I absolutely love my job. As a careers adviser you're always helping different people who face a range of barriers. When you receive an email from a past customer saying you have changed their life – that's huge! Even something as simple as having a customer leave their appointment feeling happier makes me look at my role in a different light.





2. DATA

USING INTELLIGENCE TO CREATE IMPACT

As part of our smart approach to providing a multi-channel, user-focused service, we harness labour market intelligence (LMI) and blend it with in-house expertise allowing us to finely tune our services to every user's needs.

By evaluating our methods and practice, we continually refine our toolkit. The use of data in innovative and powerful ways gives us the edge when it comes to connecting with our users; this results in wider engagement and impact across a range of user groups.

Our use of incisive, up-to-date information about the labour market gives us a platform to deliver personal and relevant guidance to every client. The award-winning LMI we create is one of our most powerful resources. Our LMI identifies employment market trends as well as skills gaps in the economy – on a micro and macro scale – and highlights changing demands for skills across all sectors, such as engineering and health. Supported by our central LMI team, this knowledge base is continually strengthening as it is shaped by real-time data, local intelligence and best practice. While LMI is a powerful tool, it is how we harness this intelligence that really makes the difference.

All staff, subcontractors and partner organisations are trained in best use of our LMI, while evaluation and reflection on our methods lead to the promotion of best practice through the organisation. Specialist regional knowledge gained via data sources and on the ground through activities such as relationship building with local employers, further sharpens our knowledge.

This powerful information does not merely flow within our organisation; we empower our customers with market knowledge so we can work with them to make informed choices. Different channels of engagement, such as one-to-one, social media and group settings allow us to effectively reach varied and often less engaged groups.

We also use rich management information and analytics to continually evaluate the impact of our interventions and methods, gaining valuable insights into how customers engage with our services. This gives us unique opportunities to shape our practice, sharing what works across our expert network of staff, partners and subcontractors. It also motivates us to keep innovating and improving. Through an innovative partnership with the Behavioural Insights Team, an international policy-shaping organisation, we carried out a specific piece of work to better understand what motivates clients to attend a pre-arranged career advice session; the findings allowed us to design an appropriate solution. The digital initiative that was jointly developed and subsequently implemented has resulted in an increase in the number of customers attending pre-arranged appointments. Our multi-strand approach to market intelligence allows us to build on what works and ensure every aspect of our service is delivering what our clients need.

The collection and management of highly accurate data is a key feature of the Education Development Trust National Careers Service.

PWC, 2016

Our relationship with [the service] works really well. They have worked with us on myth busting around perceptions of careers and the labour market and, as a result, we saw an increase in people looking for work in the social care sector... They are working with us by liaising with employers to ascertain their expectations and to broker relationships between job seekers and opportunities available. They're very flexible, always have new ideas and most importantly they do deliver on their promises!

JOB CENTRE PLUS MANAGER

3. EMPLOYER ENGAGEMENT

UNDERSTANDING AND ANTICIPATING LOCAL NEEDS

Building strong relationships with local employers and work-focused organisations is key to understanding local and sectoral markets. Our teams collaborate with a range of partners to ensure we view the landscape from the employer perspective.

Our active partnerships generate many positives: as a gateway to engagement with priority and hard-to-reach groups, they can create lasting economic and social impacts. Through our shareable, flexible tools we empower our partners while gaining specialist insights that benefit employers, our clients and the wider community.

We work hard to make sure our tools and expertise are accessible to a range of organisations; from large corporates such as Barclays, with whom we have collaborated in the north east, to small and medium enterprises (SMEs) and micro-businesses. Working with Local Enterprise Partnerships, the Chamber of Commerce and the Federation of Small Businesses helps us overcome the challenge of engaging with smaller organisations.

Different touchpoints give us the flexibility to engage with a wide range of businesses, which improves our careers advisers' ability to ensure more effective referrals. These initiatives include the highly valued Rapid Redundancy Support services, a bespoke careers portal that brings together LMI, delivery resources and employee information as well as industry-specific visits for vacancy data handling. Our proactive teams also go directly into the community, highlighting opportunities in healthcare centres, libraries, high-street 'pop-up shops' and supermarkets. Our Supporting Inspiration careers portal is another inspiring touchpoint furnished by our knowledge. Designed to build links between schools, colleges and employers, it allows students to access the latest labour market data in order to make better career choices.

Based on local insights, careers advisers encourage employers to adjust recruitment policy and job design to be more inclusive to disadvantaged groups with poorer access to the labour market. By supporting employers, we are delivering a better service for our clients and strengthening communities.

Showcasing local industry

The National Careers Service coordinated a tour of our facility which was a fantastic opportunity to show potential future employees the high-tech and professional environment they may be part of; it provided a great opportunity for young people to learn the basics in a highly valued industry.

FORD AEROSPACE

Vital tailored support for redundancy

I have a new job and it's going really well...I'm grateful there are professionals like Alice my adviser who do such a good job and really care about helping others...if I hadn't been introduced to the National Careers Service I would still be looking for a job and wishing I could do my Prince 2 training.

CHRIS, NATIONAL CAREERS SERVICE CUSTOMER

4. DIGITAL

PREPARING FOR A DIGITAL FUTURE

The careers landscape is changing fast. Technology is transforming not only the pathways to finding work but also the types of careers on offer. Digital innovation brings new opportunities but also widens the gap between those who are equipped for the future and those who are not ready to fully access the opportunities technology brings.

We are directly addressing this challenge as part of our multi-channel approach. By embedding a 'digital by default' strategy within our organisation, we are innovating new ways to deliver our services and enhancing the digital skills of our clients.

The requirement for basic digital literacy is increasingly important on a daily basis, from the ability to use an app to pay a household bill to understanding how to do an effective internet search for local careers information. By helping our clients acquire digital and social media skills, we are helping to close the skills gap brought about by the increasing digitalisation of every aspect of our lifestyles.

We have pledged to deliver a blend of customer-focused technology and expert careers adviser interventions to increase our customers' digital footprints and use of digital tools for job seeking. They are designed to align with offline support services to give our users a flexible, personalised experience.

The Supporting Inspiration careers portal is one of our digital innovations: conceived to be used by young people in education to connect with local employers, it also provides knowledge enhancement for teachers and careers practitioners.

Reinforcing digital literacy in our staff, partners and stakeholders is embedded in our continual professional development programme. With a technologically competent and future-focused workforce, we can capitalise on tech innovation to access the latest market intelligence, track and measure our delivery and engage with our clients. These outcomes, in turn, hone our service offering and help us achieve to greater impact for our clients.

The digital revolution is intensifying. It is estimated that 50% of the activities that people are at present paid to do in the global economy have the potential to be automated by adapting currently demonstrated technology.

MCKINSEY 2017

Case study: Digital inclusivity

We invited customers to bring along their personal mobile or tablet devices to take part in a Durham and Tees Valley virtual jobs fair across 11 Job Centre Plus sites. Our advisers were available to help support all those who came along to access live online vacancies during the fair and send in applications for relevant vacancies.

5. CONTEXTUALISATION

APPLYING A WEALTH OF EXPERTISE TO LOCAL CHALLENGES

Our focus is on the individual and we are proud to deliver needs-based, one-to-one careers advice wherever we work. We take an agile approach, using our organisational strengths to target regional challenges and deliver locally focused solutions.

With our core values shared by all staff, partners and subcontractors, we deliver consistently to the same high standard around the UK while having the flexibility and knowledge to deliver effective, tailored support that is right for the locality.

Our flexible toolkit includes up-to-date LMI, international research, best practice, multi-channel delivery methods and teams of highly skilled, local and centrally located specialists. It is a powerful platform that allows us to adapt our operational model to deliver the right solutions to the right people. Through active local partnerships, employer touchpoints and outreach activities we remain rooted to our regions. With the autonomy to exploit this resource base, our advisers combine insight from across the organisation with finely tuned local knowledge to support their clients' needs.

Understanding the communities in which we work has an impact on every stage of the service our clients experience. Designing products to increase customer engagement activity and working with employers to adjust job design to include regional priority groups are just two ways in which we have responded to local needs. We closely monitor the value of using regional subcontractors to increase engagement with priority groups and adjust the model from region to region as appropriate.

We work with clients in rural areas as well as urban high streets that face vastly different challenges – from high levels of long-term unemployment to very specific skills requirements and adjusting to a post-industrial jobs market. Our motivated teams are constantly adapting and innovating as they bring advice to the community via pop-up careers initiatives or respond to the closure of a major local plant with our Rapid Redundancy Service: the priority is always to increase access to local labour market opportunities.

Case study: Specialist support

When SSI Redcar steelworks closed at the end of 2015, more than 2,000 people lost their jobs overnight. We worked very closely with the government taskforce to set up a support hub located at Redcar and Cleveland College, providing supporting organisations' details, allocating at least 13 careers advisers per day, working collaboratively five days a week. Our careers advisers supported some very emotionally charged individuals who had in most cases just been made redundant from the only jobs they had ever known since leaving school.

Alongside this support hub, we also provided outreach support within Jobcentre Plus offices, the local colleges and our shop premises here in Middlesbrough. Within the support hub we supported the SSI Taskforce alongside a number of supporting organisations including: Citizens Advice, Mind, Shaw Trust, NECC, Jobcentre Plus and several training providers.

WHY CONTEXTUALISATION IS KEY SOURCE: OFFICE FOR NATIONAL STATISTICS

Contextual indicator	National average	North East	South Central
Job density	0.79	0.68	0.81
High-skilled level 4 workers (2014 figures)	35.8%	28.4%	38.6%
Proportion of population with no qualifications (2014 figures)	9%	10%	5%
Unemployment (2018 figures)	4%	4.3%	3.7%

6. COLLABORATION

COLLABORATING FOR IMPACT

Working together is a key element of our successful careers delivery. We put a focus on working collaboratively at every level with our customers, our partners and our clients. This is underpinned by an effective communication strategy and management structure as well as the values embedded throughout our network.

As both experienced prime contractors and major subcontractors for the National Careers Service, we see our collaborative approach as essential to successfully creating impact and getting results. We work transparently with clear communication and processes; our commitment to delivering the very best careers provision drives our performance in whatever capacity we are working. As a prime contractor we lead by example and build active partnerships and as subcontractors we add unique value and constantly seek to enhance our own expertise, supporting primary providers.

All subcontractors spoke highly regarding the relationship with staff within Education Development Trust. There is an understanding of their roles and responsibilities, they are approachable, accessible and very responsive to their needs. Communications are consistently open and honest, positive and supportive, with 'nothing being too much trouble'. They are confident to discuss challenges and issues with the contract and on occasions their business, for example staff absence, and feel well supported.

MERLIN STANDARD 2018

Our quality labour market information is testament to our collaborative working; by nurturing strong relations within the community, our dedicated local teams understand first-hand not only the challenges and opportunities faced on the ground by employers, but they also have a unique understanding of the micro labour market environment. We ensure our practice is always firmly embedded with other local actors such as Chambers of Commerce, the Federation of Small Businesses and Local Enterprise Partnerships as well as specialist charities working with our target groups.

These partnerships, whether local or national, complement key government priorities and help to strengthen Britain's talent pipeline. Our senior leaders are influencing external strategic thinking in the regions and as a data-driven organisation, we have the potential to assist policymakers at a national level.





LAURA BELL

Director of Careers

Education Development Trust

President

Career Development Institute

We commissioned this external review of our service so that we can continue to improve. I was absolutely delighted with our Ofsted grades of 'outstanding' and 'good' and we consistently deliver on our clients' KPIs; however, as a learning organisation, we wanted to go deeper.

Our report shows that our success is the result of a multi-faceted approach; success in this field, we believe, will only come with the right melding of people, technology, information and sheer determination to succeed, whatever the context.

In any economic cycle or situation, the role of easily accessible, relevant and useful careers advice and guidance is crucial in helping to channel the talent that exists towards the roles that will be most appropriate and rewarding for them, and to anticipate and meet the employer need for staff to contribute and thrive with them. Our provision of the National Careers Service helps to ensure that a society has a talent pipeline that is future-proofed and resilient – and what country doesn't want that?



ABOUT EDUCATION DEVELOPMENT TRUST

Education Development Trust is a not-for-profit organisation that transforms lives around the world by improving school systems at scale, and by delivering expert careers and employability services. We have been working with governments, donor agencies as well as with clusters of schools to effect and embed sustainable change for 50 years. Our specialist knowledge and our active programme of respected and authoritative research means we design and deliver effective, far-reaching solutions which are evidence-informed. We can be called upon for rapid strategic evaluation and insights through to designing and delivering longer term programmes which embed improved practices across a region or country – operating at scale with highly contextualised solutions.

We invest annually in our programme of education research which is available to download from our website; our research informs policymaking and supports practitioners around the world.

To find out more, contact:
careersinfo@educationdevelopmenttrust.com

ABOUT THIS REPORT

Education Development Trust's large-scale delivery is underpinned by evidence and research. As a registered charity, we reinvest a percentage of our surplus into a publicly available programme of educational research. We also invest in an ongoing research and development cycle to rigorously review the impact of our own programmes, generate new evidence on what works, and share insights to support broader debate and policy. The evidence and lessons shared in this brochure are part of this ongoing commitment to research and development.

