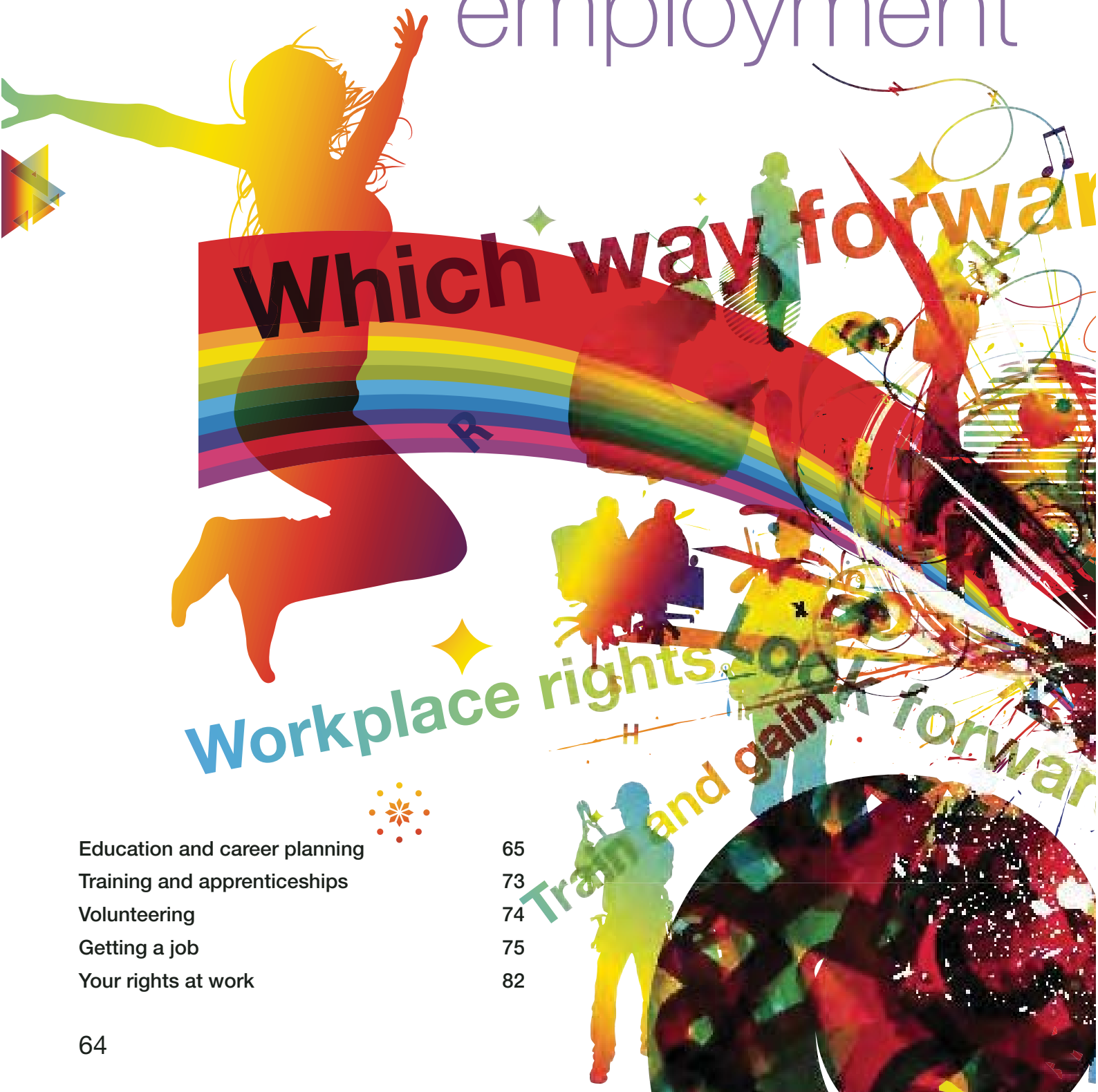


# Education, training and employment



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# Education and career planning

Education is important. It helps keep us mentally active. It helps us get better paid jobs, teaches us new skills and abilities and helps us develop and grow in our relationships and our communities.

For all these reasons, it's also very good for our mental health.

If you haven't had a good experience of education so far, don't be put off. You shouldn't give up education just because you've left school. Not all learning is about academic subjects. You may not have liked the subjects taught at school, or the way they were taught. Don't worry. There are lots of different topics and lots of different ways to study – and lots more still to learn.

If you want to continue learning and get more qualifications, take the time to think about what you want to do and why. Get help and advice to find the subjects and courses that will give you what you want and work best for you.

The education system is quite complicated, and there are lots of different opportunities, levels and kinds of qualifications available to young people aged 16+. It's best to get expert, up-to-date advice.





You can find out more about educational qualifications from the government website:

[www.direct.gov.uk/en/EducationAndLearning/14To19/index.htm](http://www.direct.gov.uk/en/EducationAndLearning/14To19/index.htm)

or from the Connexions website:

[www.connexions-direct.com/index.cfm?pid=10](http://www.connexions-direct.com/index.cfm?pid=10)

Talk to your local Connexions team. You can call Connexions on **0808 001 3219**. Calls from a landline are free. Calls from a mobile are charged but if you ring them on your mobile they will call you back.

## Deciding what to study

To get the most out of studying after age 16 (this is sometimes known as further education), it's important to take time to choose the right courses that will give you the qualifications you need. You need to think about:

- what you are good at, and what you enjoy – most people do better when they study a subject they like
- do you want to learn something different? For many courses, you may not need any previous experience or qualifications
- what course structure suits you best – do you prefer end-of-course or end-of-unit exams, or continual assessment (this is when everything you produce during the course – essays, coursework etc – is assessed for your final grade)? Some courses are a mixture of both
- what learning style suits you best – do you prefer lectures, classroom discussions, one-to-one tutorials, or practical workshops
- where you want the course to lead – does it fit in with your long-term career/working life plans?

## What qualifications can you get?

Qualifications of any sort are your passport to more opportunities in learning and employment.

You can study for academic qualifications, or go for work-related qualifications. Some qualifications combine classroom theory with work-related practice.

You can also take qualifications in Functional Skills – English, Maths and Information and Communication Technology (ICT). These are the essential skills that employers look for.

All qualifications are grouped in three qualification frameworks:

- the National Qualifications Framework – this sets out the standards for all qualifications and only officially accredited qualifications are included on it
- the Qualifications and Credit Framework – this is for vocational or work-related qualifications
- the Framework for Higher Education Qualifications – these qualifications include degrees, diplomas, certificates and other academic awards granted by higher education providers such as universities or higher education colleges.

Each qualification is graded at a particular 'level' – 1, 2, 3 etc – depending on how much you need to have learned and achieved to gain the award. The frameworks are a way of showing how the different types of qualifications compare in terms of the demands they place on learners.



**Which way forward?**

## General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE)

GCSEs are a stepping stone to further learning, training and employment.

You can do GCSEs in many different subjects, including some with a work-related focus. GCSEs are important if you want to go on into further and/or higher education. Your chances of getting a job are much better if you have five or more GCSEs at grade C or above.

## Diplomas

If you'd like to go down a more practical learning route, you can take a Diploma. You can take these instead of, or alongside, GCSEs.

Diplomas offer young people aged 14–19 the chance to combine classroom learning with fun, creative, hands-on experience in the workplace or at other colleges. They let you study the theory and the practice, so you get the best of both worlds.

Diplomas are just as good as GCSEs and offer a route into university as well as work.

Diplomas can be taken at three different levels (Foundation, Higher and Advanced). They take two years to complete. The aim is to help you explore the different career options available within the area in which you want to work, instead of training for a specific job.

Diplomas were introduced in 2010 so the range of topics is still quite small, but growing. They tend to be in subjects related to industries – for example, Retail Business, Information Technology, Hair and Beauty Studies, Travel and Tourism, Sport and Active Leisure.

You can combine Diplomas with GCSEs and A levels. For example, you can take GCSEs alongside a Higher Diploma, or A levels as part of an Advanced Diploma course.

In some parts of the country you can take Foundation and Higher Diplomas instead of GCSEs, although you may still have to take some GCSEs, such as Maths and English.

## A and AS Levels

A and AS levels are subject-based qualifications that help you to prepare for higher education, university and employment.

Universities require most applicants to have A level qualifications. Many employers also increasingly want applicants to have A level qualifications.

Most schools and colleges expect you to have four or five GCSEs at grade C or above before you can start an A level course.

A level courses generally take two years to complete. In the first year you can study three or four subjects at AS (advanced subsidiary) level. Then you can decide which of these subjects you want to continue to study into your second year.

There are around 80 subjects to choose from. Some have a work-related focus. These are called Applied A levels and lead to 'double awards', or the equivalent of two A levels.

## NVQs (National Vocational Qualifications)

NVQs are occupational qualifications and provide the practical skills and knowledge needed for specific jobs in specific sectors (in care work, for example).

They are assessed at a range of levels. Young people aged 16 to 19 usually work towards NVQs at Levels 1 to 3.

There are over 900 NVQs to choose from. They are split into units and each unit is assessed from your practical work and a portfolio of evidence that you have to put together.

You can use an NVQ as a stepping stone to further learning, training and employment.



### **HNC (Higher National Certificate) and HND (Higher National Diploma)**

If you want to go on to higher education and gain a recognised qualification to do a specific job, you can take an HNC or HND. HNCs and HNDs are work-related (vocational) higher education qualifications that focus on 'learning by doing'. They can lead into a new career, or help you progress in your current line of work.

They are highly valued by employers, both in the UK and overseas, because they are work-skills focused. They can also count towards membership of professional bodies and other employer organisations.

HNCs and HNDs are provided by over 400 universities and further education colleges. HNCs take one year to complete full-time and two years part-time (or by, for example, distance learning). HNDs take two years full-time and can also be taken part-time (which again takes longer).

If you complete a HND you can then go into higher education and complete the third year of a course to qualify for a degree.

### **Degrees (Higher Education)**

If you enjoy studying, and/or want to follow a career that requires higher qualifications, you can go on to university or a higher education college to study for a degree.

Degree courses provide an in-depth understanding of a subject. All degrees are highly valued by employers as they give you skills in analysing and evaluating evidence, problem solving, report writing and presentation. Some degrees – law, medicine, social work, for example – prepare people for particular professions.

Most full-time degree courses last for three years, or four if the course includes a year out in industry or abroad (if you are studying a language, for example). Courses in some subjects, such as medicine, veterinary science and architecture, last longer. You can study for a degree part-time over a longer period.



## Planning a career

When you are deciding what to study, you should think about how it fits in with your career plans.

### Which kind of career would suit you?

A good way to start deciding what career to follow is to think about what motivates you as a person.

Make a list of activities you enjoy – in school, college or work, and outside. Then list what it is about them that you like. For example, you might enjoy:

- music
- drama
- science
- sport.

You might like:

- getting to know more about a particular subject
- solving challenging problems
- performing to an audience
- working as part of a team
- meeting new people.

Once you've got a clear idea of your interests, the next step is to start looking for a career that matches up with them.



Connexions' Jobs4U online database has information on a huge range of careers, organised into 'job families':

[www.connexions-direct.com/jobs4u](http://www.connexions-direct.com/jobs4u)

### Choosing a career

Finding a rewarding career is important to most people – but it takes a little planning.

There's always room to change your mind, but having a plan will:

- make sure you're aware of all the routes into your dream career
- help you avoid ending up in a job you don't like
- make sure you know what you need to do at different stages in your life.

There's plenty to consider before you're ready to put your plans into action – including how to get the skills and qualifications you'll need.



## Help planning your career

It's important to get advice, to give you the best possible chance of getting into the career you want.

Teachers and lecturers will have a good idea of how the subjects you're studying will prepare you for a particular career. But they only know what you're like at school or college, and this might not be the whole story.

For example, outside school you may spend your spare time producing podcasts or working on the local hospital radio. If this is the case, there's nothing to stop you pursuing a career in radio.

It's worth getting advice from other sources as well. Most schools and colleges offer careers lessons and/or a careers service. Or you can also talk to your local Connexions team.

If you're in higher education, you can get advice on your options after graduation from your university or college careers office.

It can be useful to get advice from family and friends, who may know you best, but they won't always know a lot about the career you're interested in.

Remember – it's your career. You know what you're good at and you know what you want to do. Don't be put off if your dream career isn't the one your friends and family would choose for you. Do your research – if they see that you are really committed and can show how you can get to where you want to be, they should back you.

## Choosing where to study

Once you've thought about what you're going to study, it's worth thinking about the type of learning environment that would suit you best.

There are several different kinds of further educational institute. Each type of institution has its own structure and atmosphere, and will offer a different range of subjects and courses.

## Sixth forms

You may be able to study at your own school's sixth form, the sixth form of another school, or at a sixth form college. They offer a wider range of options than you've probably had so far, and the environment is usually more relaxed than in Year 11.

Sixth forms vary a lot in size, and in the courses and facilities they offer. Sixth form colleges tend to be larger and more informal than school sixth forms.

## Further education colleges

They may offer similar courses to sixth form colleges. They also vary a lot in size, and in the subjects and facilities they offer. Students can be of all ages.

## Specialist colleges

Some further education colleges specialise in particular subjects or particular students:

- subject areas such as art and design, agriculture and horticulture, or dance and drama
- courses and support for students with a particular disability or learning difficulty.

## Applying to sixth forms and further education colleges

Normally you don't need to apply to stay on in the sixth form of your school. If you want to change, you can apply to more than one sixth form or college. Many colleges let you apply online through their website, or you can contact them for an application form.

You should start applying for popular or specialist courses in the Autumn term of Year 11. For other courses, you normally apply in the Spring.

Your local 14–19 prospectus will tell you what subjects your local sixth form or college offers.

## Funding your further education studies

There is government funding available to support young people aged 14–19 to take further education courses.



For up-to-date information on funding, visit:

[moneytolearn.direct.gov.uk](http://moneytolearn.direct.gov.uk)

Or talk to your local Connexions team.

## University or college

Higher education offers a huge choice of topics in addition to the ones you studied at school, such as English, Maths etc. University and college are very different from school or further education. You'll be studying a subject or job you're really into. You'll have more control over how and when you study – but it will be up to you to make the most of it. You'll be expected to do far more work for yourself. You'll attend lectures and seminars, but you'll be expected to widen your knowledge through independent background reading.

## Applying to university or college

Going to university is a whole different experience from sixth form college and school. It may mean moving to a new city. You'll also get the chance to try out a load of new activities and pursue new interests, and you'll meet new friends and live much more independently than ever before. That can also bring some stresses and challenges.



You can find out about applying to university or college and the courses on offer at:

**[www.direct.gov.uk/en/EducationAndLearning/UniversityAndHigherEducation/index.htm](http://www.direct.gov.uk/en/EducationAndLearning/UniversityAndHigherEducation/index.htm)**

This website also offers useful advice on coping with life at university.





## Funding your university/college studies

Don't wait until you've been offered a place on a course to find out what funding is available.



You'll find up-to-date advice at:

[www.direct.gov.uk/en/EducationAndLearning/UniversityAndHigherEducation/StudentFinance/Gettingstarted/index.htm](http://www.direct.gov.uk/en/EducationAndLearning/UniversityAndHigherEducation/StudentFinance/Gettingstarted/index.htm)

If you're studying full-time, the main sources of funding are:

- student loans and grants from the government
- bursaries from your university or college.

All eligible students can get help with tuition fees and living costs through student loans.

These are intended to cover your tuition fees and your maintenance (accommodation and living costs).

Student loans have to be paid back – but you don't have to start making repayments until you've left your course and are earning over a certain amount.



You can find out more about students loans and repayments from:

[www.direct.gov.uk/en/EducationAndLearning/UniversityAndHigherEducation/StudentFinance/Gettingstarted/index.htm](http://www.direct.gov.uk/en/EducationAndLearning/UniversityAndHigherEducation/StudentFinance/Gettingstarted/index.htm)

or from your local Connexions team.

There are also grants and bursaries that you may be able to apply for that can provide you with additional funding to help you at university or college.



For information about these try:

[www.direct.gov.uk/en/EducationAndLearning/UniversityAndHigherEducation/StudentFinance/Applyingforthefirsttime/DG\\_171571](http://www.direct.gov.uk/en/EducationAndLearning/UniversityAndHigherEducation/StudentFinance/Applyingforthefirsttime/DG_171571)

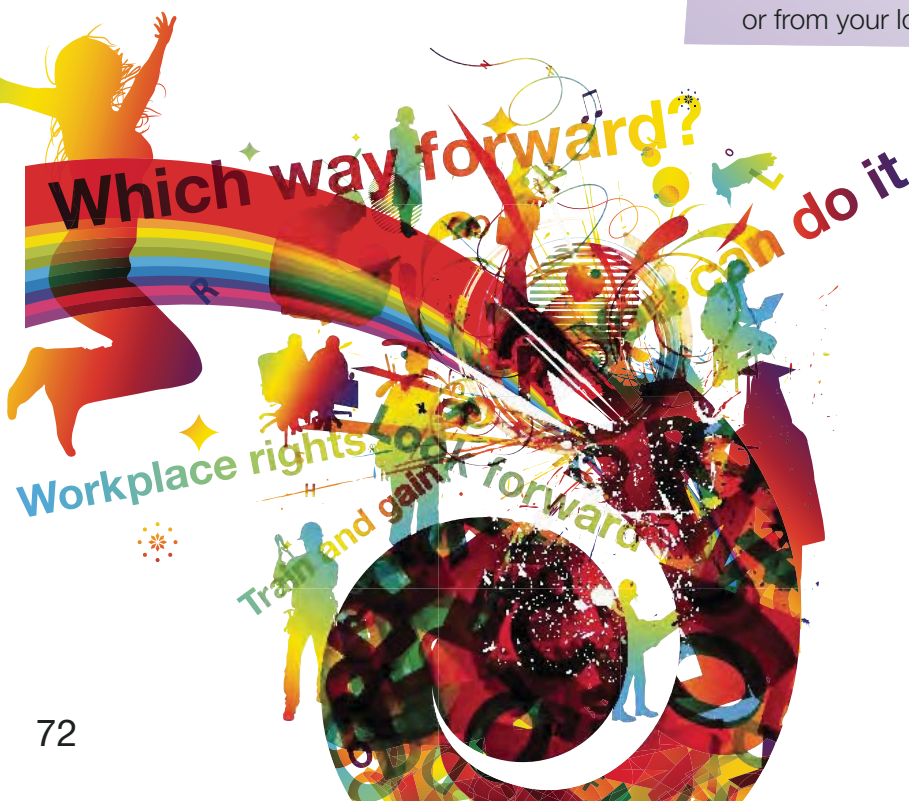
Not everyone is eligible for student finance. It depends on whether you and your course meet certain conditions. For example, eligibility can be affected by the country you've been living in, and your course must lead to a recognised higher education qualification.



You can find out more about funding eligibility here:

[www.direct.gov.uk/en/EducationAndLearning/UniversityAndHigherEducation/StudentFinance/Gettingstarted/DG\\_171574](http://www.direct.gov.uk/en/EducationAndLearning/UniversityAndHigherEducation/StudentFinance/Gettingstarted/DG_171574)

or from your local Connexions team.



# Training and apprenticeships

Further and higher education isn't right for everyone. There are other routes into work.

Whether you're looking for work and want to get the skills you need to find a job, or you're in a job already and want to develop your skills, or you want to set off in a new direction, there's a huge range of courses and training opportunities available. Some are free or you may be able to get funding.

You can get free careers and skills advice through the Next Step careers and skills service online at:

<https://nextstep.direct.gov.uk/Pages/Home.aspx>

You can also get advice face-to-face or over the phone on **0800 100 900**

You can get information about how to access training while you are in work from:

[www.direct.gov.uk/en/EducationAndLearning/AdultLearning/TrainingAndWorkplaceLearning/DG\\_070911](http://www.direct.gov.uk/en/EducationAndLearning/AdultLearning/TrainingAndWorkplaceLearning/DG_070911)

You can also find out about training opportunities for yourself. There's lots of information about courses on offer and how they will help develop your career at:

[www.direct.gov.uk/en/EducationAndLearning/AdultLearning/LearningOutsideTheClassroom/index.htm](http://www.direct.gov.uk/en/EducationAndLearning/AdultLearning/LearningOutsideTheClassroom/index.htm)

For information about accessing financial help while doing a course, visit:

[www.direct.gov.uk/en/EducationAndLearning/AdultLearning/FinancialHelpForAdultLearners/DG\\_10033133](http://www.direct.gov.uk/en/EducationAndLearning/AdultLearning/FinancialHelpForAdultLearners/DG_10033133)

## Apprenticeships

Apprenticeships are a way of learning while you earn.

They allow you to start working in a proper job and earn a (low) wage while learning the skills and gaining the qualifications that you need to develop your career.

You'll follow a structured programme of training, leading to a recognised vocational qualification, and you'll be paid a national minimum wage.

Apprenticeships are available at different levels, letting you choose the speed you wish to learn. Most apprenticeships last between one and three years and there are different types of available. You need to choose the right one for you, depending on your experience and what's available in your area.



To find out more about apprenticeships and what is available in your area, visit:

[www.apprenticeships.org.uk](http://www.apprenticeships.org.uk)

You can also find out more about apprenticeships at:

[www.connexionsdirect.com/index.cfm?pid=82&catalogueContentID=110](http://www.connexionsdirect.com/index.cfm?pid=82&catalogueContentID=110)



Train and gain

# Volunteering

Volunteering is a good way to learn skills and get hands-on work experience while giving something to your community.

It's also a great way to meet new people and make new friends.

If you have a specific career you are interested in, volunteering will help you find out if you really would like to pursue it. It's a way of trying out different kinds of work and areas of work, without having to commit to a paid job.

There are many ways in which you can volunteer. For example, you can:

- help out at your local leisure centre during the summer holidays as a play scheme supervisor
- be a conservation volunteer in a park or National Trust site
- volunteer to be a steward or help out at local festivals, sporting events and exhibitions
- become a mentor to other young people.



You can find out more about volunteering at:

[www.connexions-direct.com/  
index.cfm?pid=133&catalogueContentID=169](http://www.connexions-direct.com/index.cfm?pid=133&catalogueContentID=169)

<http://volunteering.direct.gov.uk>

[www.do-it.org.uk](http://www.do-it.org.uk)

or from your local Connexions office.

The Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB) offers volunteer placements to young people aged between 16-25 years.

[www.citizensadvice.org.uk/index/joinus/  
youth\\_volunteering.htm](http://www.citizensadvice.org.uk/index/joinus/youth_volunteering.htm)

If you're willing to do residential voluntary work, you might think about full-time volunteering through an organisation like Community Service Volunteers (CSV). They give volunteers an allowance and accommodation and food are free: [www.csv.org.uk](http://www.csv.org.uk)

## Time management

Time management is really important for managing your work–life balance.

These are some useful tips for time management.

- Keep a 'to do' list – it's a simple way to keep on top of what you need to do and there's great satisfaction from ticking off the tasks when you've done them. It also provides a record to show what you've done.
- Get a diary to record what you need to do (appointments, dates etc). It'll also provide a record of what you've done.
- It's tempting to put off the really boring tasks. Get them out of the way first. Then you can relax and enjoy yourself without having them hanging over your head.
- Get a watch – you really do need to know the correct time. If you start late, you'll just get later as the day goes on.
- Be early. If you are expected to be somewhere at a specific time, try to arrive early. If you get into a habit of always being late, it will look as though you aren't very interested and you'll get a reputation for being unreliable.

# Getting a job

Getting a job isn't easy. This isn't just about there being enough jobs. The job market is constantly changing and expanding, with new ways of working and new kinds of employment, as well as new skills.

It's not just the job itself you've got to consider. You need to think about the working hours, work environment, pay and training opportunities as well.

For example, not all workers are employed on full-time, permanent contracts by a company. Lots of people work on short and fixed term contracts.

Some people prefer to do temporary jobs through an employment agency. This means that they work for different companies for a short length of time.


Some people work freelance, meaning they are self-employed and do specific bits of work on short-term contracts for companies and organisations.

Some people do more than one part-time job.

Some jobs need you to work outside the usual 9.00–5.00 hours. Some will need you to do shift work.

When you're applying for a job, think about what sort of environment you work best in and the hours that fit with any other commitments (childcare, for example). This will make sure that you manage a healthy work-life balance.

There's no point going for a job if you know you won't be able to work the hours they expect of you.

 NCAS (the National Care Advisory Service) has published a really helpful guide to employment for young care leavers. You can download the guide free from [www.leavingcare.org.uk](http://www.leavingcare.org.uk)



## Looking for jobs

There are lots of different ways of looking for jobs.

You can find details of jobs on:

- job vacancy websites
- local or national newspaper adverts
- your local Jobcentre Plus or Connexions office
- recruitment agencies
- college and university career offices and noticeboards
- shop windows.

If you're aged 16–19, your local Connexions can help you find work near you. If you're over 19, you should go to your local Jobcentre Plus.

If you like an organisation and think you would like to work there, ask if there's a chance of a job. You can't lose anything and they will be pleased that you think highly of them.

Websites are a good way to do your own job search as you can access a very wide range of different jobs, and jobs outside your local area (if you are prepared to travel or move home). However, some employers won't use a website, so check out all the places where they may advertise.



The main government job search site is:  
**[www.direct.gov.uk/en/Employment/index.htm](http://www.direct.gov.uk/en/Employment/index.htm)**

The Connexions Jobs4You database is another good source:

**[www.connexions-direct.com/jobs4u](http://www.connexions-direct.com/jobs4u)**

Both these sites list job vacancies and have helpful information, advice and guidance in relation to work, the workplace, health and safety and your employment rights etc.

These are two sites that list all the recruitment agencies by area and sector:

- **[www.agencycentral.co.uk](http://www.agencycentral.co.uk)**
- **[www.gotorecruitment.co.uk](http://www.gotorecruitment.co.uk)**

These are some of the main search engines that you can use to find jobs by area and by sector:

- **[www.jobs.co.uk](http://www.jobs.co.uk)**
- **[www.totaljobs.com](http://www.totaljobs.com)**
- **[www.jobsite.co.uk](http://www.jobsite.co.uk)**
- **[www.monster.co.uk](http://www.monster.co.uk)**

These are all search engines that will provide you with thousands of job adverts in sectors that interest you.

## Applying for a job

The most common ways to apply for a job are by:

- application form – many employers have their own application form that they will want you to complete
- curriculum vitae (CV) and covering letter – employers often ask applicants to write a covering letter saying who they are and why they are applying for the job and send it in with their CV.

Most employers will provide applicants with a person specification listing the skills and knowledge needed or preferred for the post. This is very important. Make sure you read it and that your application answers all the points listed, as this is how the employer will decide whether or not to interview you.



## Tips for completing an application form

- Read the whole form before you start filling it out – it sounds simple but many people don't do this.
- Read the person specification and make sure you have provided information for all the skills and knowledge listed.
- Make a copy of the application form and fill this out first before copying it onto the final form.
- If your application is hand-written, write very, very clearly so it's easy to read, and always use black ink. Employers get lots of applications and they're going to go for the ones that they can read easily.
- Read the instructions on the form and make sure you follow them. A common mistake is not to write in CAPITAL LETTERS when asked to do so, and to use blue instead of black ink (it doesn't photocopy clearly).
- Don't leave sections of the form blank. If they don't apply to you, write NA (not applicable) or put a line through that section to show you have read it.
- Include volunteer activities and knowledge and experience that you have gained outside school, college or employment – these are all valid, if they relate to the requirements of the post.
- Provide references – you will usually be asked for two references to vouch for you as a reliable person. You could ask a teacher or college lecturer, or a former employer, or someone senior in an organisation where you have been a volunteer. You can't use family members or friends as a referee.
- Provide correct contact details – it sounds silly, but if your phone number or postcode is wrong, it won't say much for your attention to detail!
- Keep a copy of your application so you can check what you've said if you get invited for an interview. Interviewers often want you to go over what you've told them in the application form, so don't be surprised if you have to repeat what you've written.
- Get someone to read through the application and check for spelling mistakes and other errors.
- Be truthful – don't exaggerate, but do make sure you say how your skills fit those needed for the job.
- And last and most important, be positive. You have a lot of skills. Tell the employer how your skills can help them.

## Cover letters

Cover letters are formal letters introducing your CV and selling yourself to a potential employer. They should sum up the skills and qualifications you have that match the person specification. As with your application form, always get someone else to check your letter for spelling mistakes – and type it if at all possible (unless the employer asks for it to be hand-written – some do).

### Tips for writing a covering letter

- Be precise and professional – avoid long sentences and don't write more than two pages.
- If you can, get the name and correct job title of the appropriate person to write to.
- Check the spelling and punctuation and ask another person (who can spell) to check your letter, or use the spell check on the computer – though you need to keep a check on that too. The spell check sometimes offers some strange suggestions!
- Head your letter with the title of the post you are applying for.
- State why you are writing (ie. to apply for the post of...), and how/where you heard of the job.
- Say why you are interested in this post and this kind of work.
- Summarise your relevant experience and skills and how they are relevant to the job – base this on the person specification. Refer to your CV (ie. 'I enclose a copy of my CV giving full details of my relevant skills and experience').
- Sell yourself – but don't exaggerate!
- End the letter positively (ie. 'I look forward to hearing from you').
- Make a list of everything you want to say and write it out in draft first, so you don't forget anything important.
- Make sure you include all your relevant skills and experience – including those outside formal education and employment.

## How to write a CV

A curriculum vitae (CV) is a summary of your education, work experience, skills and interests.

Employers will use your CV to help them decide if they should interview you and if you are the right person for the job. They get a lot of CVs so yours needs to make a good impression straight away.

They will want to know:

- who are you?
- what can you do for me?

They will also want to be able to read your CV easily, and to find the information they need. So make sure it's typed, clearly laid out, and spelled correctly.

Your CV should include the following information. It doesn't have to be in this order, but this is the conventional approach.

### Education and qualifications

- List your most recent college/school first and work backwards from there.
- Write the name and address of each college or school and the dates you were there.
- If you have gained qualifications, list them, with the grades you obtained. Don't list any failed courses.
- If you don't have any qualifications, just put 'Education' as the heading and write down where you studied and the subjects you studied.

### Key skills and knowledge

List four to six skills that are relevant to the job, and give an example for each that shows how you have acquired and use these skills – for example:

- ability to use a computer
- good communication skills
- organisational skills
- flexibility
- ability to work as part of a team
- ability to work independently
- ability to speak another language
- full driving licence
- customer service experience
- reliability and punctuality.

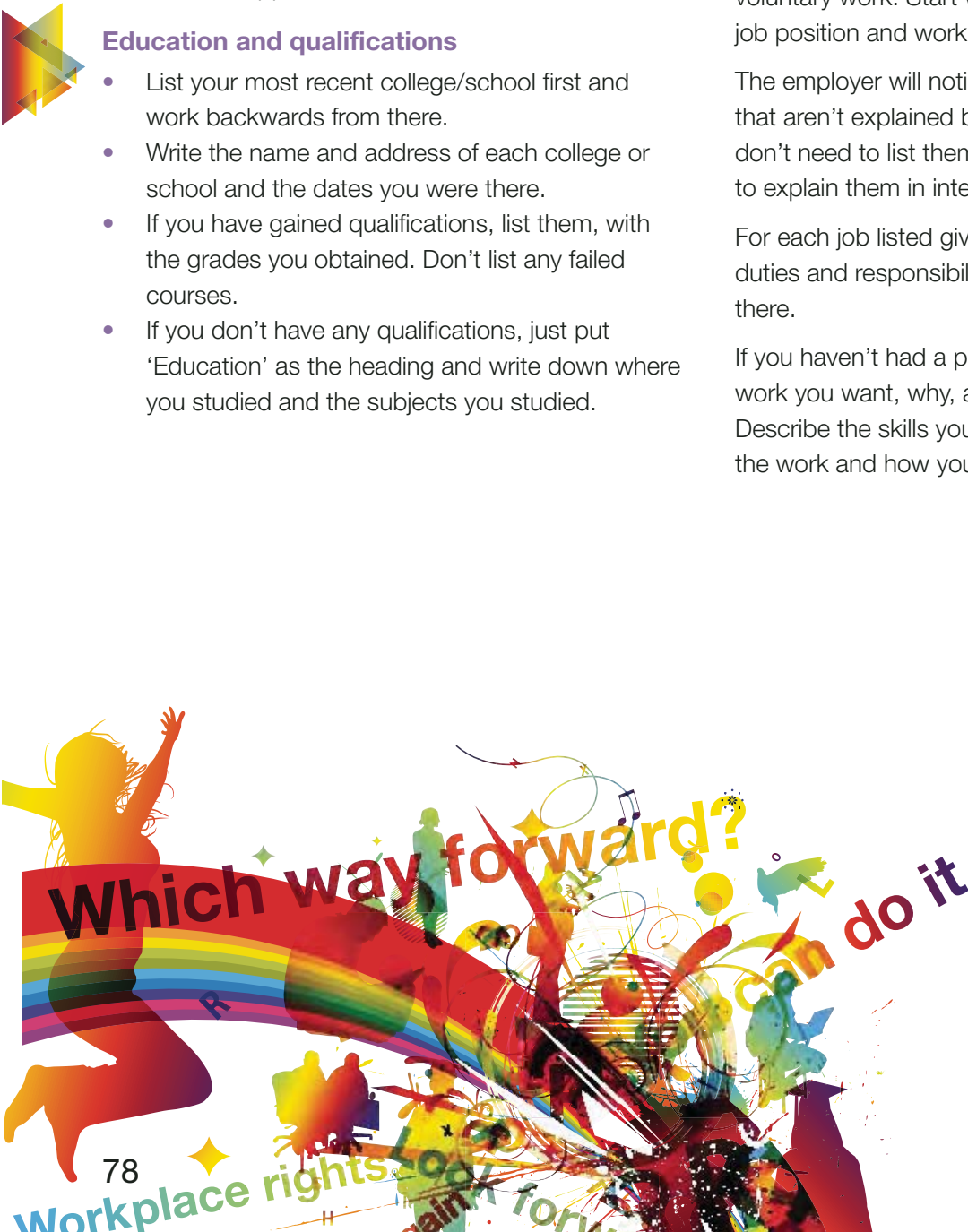
### Work experience

List all your work experience. Include paid and voluntary work. Start with your most recent or current job position and work backwards.

The employer will notice periods of unemployment that aren't explained by education or training – you don't need to list them in your CV, but you may need to explain them in interview.

For each job listed give the job title, employer's name, duties and responsibilities and the dates you worked there.

If you haven't had a previous job, describe the type of work you want, why, and your suitability for this work. Describe the skills you have that would be useful for the work and how you got them.



## Interests

This is your chance to show what a well-rounded person you are. List any hobbies, interests and activities that you think are relevant to the post – sport, music, drama, cultural activities, computer use, voluntary work etc.

Describe how these hobbies and interests give you skills or qualities that would be useful for the job – eg. team sports help you develop teamwork and leadership skills and commitment.

## Referees

Write down the name, address and telephone number of two people who can vouch for you. Make sure you ask their permission before you put them on your CV and tell them about the jobs you are applying for. If you are offered the job, your employer will ask them to write a letter vouching for your character and saying in what ways they think you are suitable for the post.

One referee should be someone who can comment on your education (eg. teacher or college tutor). The other should be someone who knows you well personally (eg. support worker, or a previous employer). Remember, you can't use a friend or family member as a referee.

If you don't want a referee to be contacted until you have been formally offered the job, say so. This may be very important if you have given your current employer as a referee.



You can create a CV online at:

<https://cvbuilder.connexions-cd.org.uk/>

There is also a great leaflet with advice and information on the Connexions website at:

[www.connexions-cd.org.uk/pdf/A4\\_howto\\_cv.pdf](http://www.connexions-cd.org.uk/pdf/A4_howto_cv.pdf)

or visit your local Connexions office for one-to-one advice and help.



You can find useful examples of CVs at:

[www.kent.ac.uk/careers/cv/cvexamples.htm](http://www.kent.ac.uk/careers/cv/cvexamples.htm)

But remember, these are examples, not templates.

Don't just copy them out. There is no single 'right way' to write a CV. It should reflect something of who you are, so CVs and covering letters should be written in your own words.

Coram also has contacts in organisations in various sectors who can help you write your CV. Ask your support worker or contact the Coram participation worker on 0207 520 300.





## The interview

Great! So you're over the first hurdle and have been invited for an interview. The employer is already impressed with the skills you described in your application. Now they want to meet you to see how you present yourself and your skills in person.

Remember the three Ps:

- prepare
- practice
- be positive.

### Top tips for the interview

- Be positive and professional – greet all the interviewers and shake their hands.
- Don't get stressed – this isn't easy, but try not to panic.
- Speak slowly and clearly.
- Dress smart.
- Arrive early and give yourself plenty time to get there.
- Know the interviewers' names and roles – you should be told this in advance, but ask if they don't introduce themselves.
- Re-read the job specification, your application, CV and cover letter before the interview.
- Research some background information on the organisation – it will impress them that you have taken the time to look into this.
- Prepare a few positive questions about the work and the organisation. Interviewers usually ask if you have any questions at the end, and this shows you are interested in the organisation and this job.



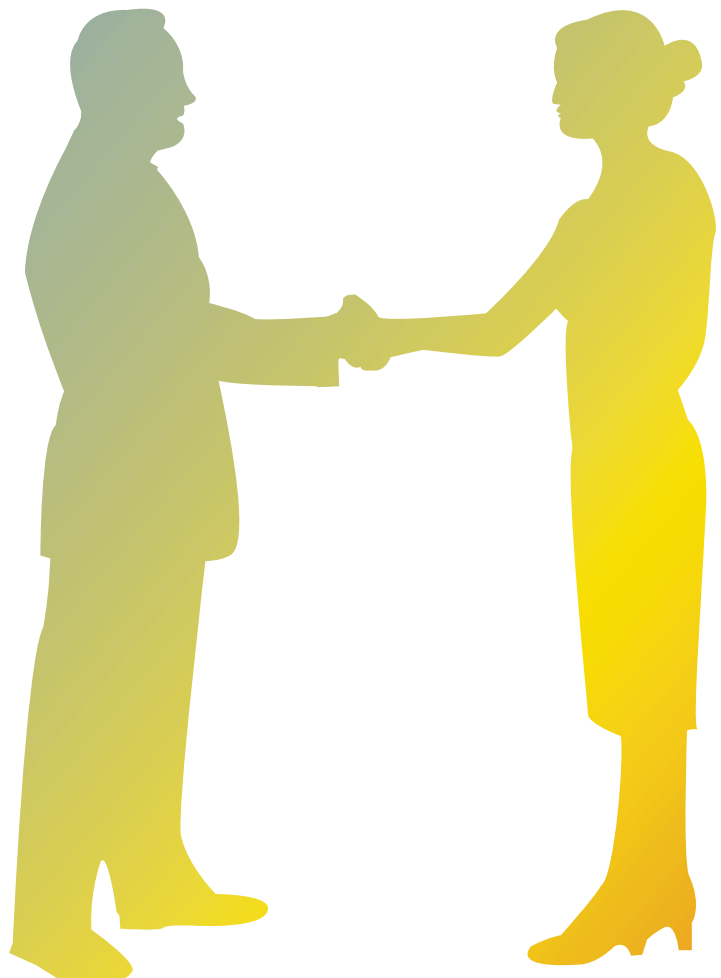
You can find more tips on interview skills here:

[www.wiredsussex.com/jobs/articles/interview.pdf](http://www.wiredsussex.com/jobs/articles/interview.pdf)

[www.jobsite.co.uk/articles/candidate/c1/s12/a602.html](http://www.jobsite.co.uk/articles/candidate/c1/s12/a602.html)

[www.connexions-direct.com/index.cfm?pid=75&catalogueContentID=119](http://www.connexions-direct.com/index.cfm?pid=75&catalogueContentID=119)

[www.direct.gov.uk/en/YoungPeople/Workandcareers/Gettingyourfirstjob/DG\\_066164](http://www.direct.gov.uk/en/YoungPeople/Workandcareers/Gettingyourfirstjob/DG_066164)



## Jobseeking safety

No matter where the job has been advertised, you should always follow these basic safety tips when going for interviews.

- Find out as much as you can about the company or the person the interview is with.
- Never dial a premium rate number (prefixed 070 or 090) for more information about a job vacancy.
- Never give an employer your personal financial details until you actually start the job.
- Do not give out other personal details, such as your national insurance number and date of birth, to an employer or recruitment agency until you have a legitimate job offer.
- Do not pay any fees upfront for help with job searches or training. Find out more about the employer or recruitment agency first to ensure they are a genuine organisation.
- Sort out how you will get to the interview and back.
- Tell a friend or relative where you are going and what time you expect to be back.
- For jobs that offer accommodation, always check out the accommodation before accepting the job. If possible don't go alone – take a friend or family member with you and ask them to wait outside.
- If the interview takes place outside normal working hours, try to arrange for someone to meet you there afterwards.
- Make sure the interview is at the company's place of work or in a suitable public place.
- Do not agree to be interviewed in your own home.
- Do not talk about personal matters that have nothing to do with the job.
- Do not accept a lift home from the person interviewing you.

If you have any concerns about the company, contact Connexions or your local Jobcentre Plus for advice.

**[www.direct.gov.uk/en/Employment/Jobseekers/LookingForWork/DG\\_173812](http://www.direct.gov.uk/en/Employment/Jobseekers/LookingForWork/DG_173812)**



# Your rights at work

Congratulations! You have a job! Now you need to know about the legal rights that protect you in a workplace.

Young people over school leaving age and under 18 are known as young workers. Young people can leave school on the last Friday of June in the school year in which they are 16.

There are special laws to protect the employment rights of young workers. These set out what your employer must do to protect your health and safety, what jobs you can do, when you can work, and how many hours you can work. An employer can be prosecuted for breaking these laws.

## Some key rights

### National minimum wage

You are eligible for the national minimum wage (NMW) when you're older than school-leaving age. The rate of NMW will then depend on your exact age.

### Working hours

The number of hours you can work and the types of jobs you can do will depend on your age.

A young worker cannot usually be asked to work more than eight hours a day or 40 hours per week. You'll only be able to work longer hours if it's necessary either to:

- keep the continuity of service or production
- respond to a surge in demand for a service or product

and provided that:

- there is no adult available to do the work
- your training needs are not negatively affected.

You will normally be entitled to paid rest breaks (lunch breaks, tea breaks and other short breaks during the day) – check your contract, as paid breaks are not a legal entitlement.

Young workers are legally entitled to a rest break of 30 minutes for every four and a half hours worked.



Workplace

## Night working

The laws around night working and night workers are very complicated. Generally, young workers can't work between 10.00 pm and 6.00 am (or between 11.00 pm and 7.00 am if this is agreed with you). However, there are exceptions – if you work in hospitals, agriculture, retail, hotels and catering, post or newspaper delivery, and cultural, sporting, arts or advertising, and if it's necessary to ensure continuity and productivity and no adult can do the work in your place.

## Holidays

If you are working full-time, you have the right to at least 5.6 weeks paid annual leave. This works out at 28 days in a year if you work five days a week. Some employers may offer more.

## Health and safety

All employers have a responsibility to make sure that their employees' health and safety are protected at work.

This means that you should expect to be given thorough training that shows you the right way to do your job safely.



You can find out more information about your employment rights here:

[www.direct.gov.uk/en/YoungPeople/Workandcareers/Yourrightsandresponsibilitiesatwork/DG\\_066272](http://www.direct.gov.uk/en/YoungPeople/Workandcareers/Yourrightsandresponsibilitiesatwork/DG_066272)

[www.adviceguide.org.uk/index/life/employment/young\\_people\\_and\\_employment.htm](http://www.adviceguide.org.uk/index/life/employment/young_people_and_employment.htm)



If you are having problems with your rights at work, you can ring the Pay and Work Rights Helpline:

<http://payandworkrightscampaign.direct.gov.uk>  
0800 917 2368 Text phone 0800 121 4042

Or contact the Citizens Advice Bureau. They offer expert advice and support on employment rights. Most CABs can also provide legal representation if you have to take legal action. You can visit the CAB site for young people aged under 25, which includes a very helpful employment rights section:

[www.citizensadvice.org.uk/advice4me.htm](http://www.citizensadvice.org.uk/advice4me.htm)

You can find your nearest CAB here:

[www.citizensadvice.org.uk/index/getadvice.htm](http://www.citizensadvice.org.uk/index/getadvice.htm)

