



Live. Love. Thrive. Belong.

Choosing a career

When we were children, we would often be asked what we wanted to do in the future. Some of us know exactly what career we want to have but some of us might not.

If you do know what your dream career is, it's important to understand the skills and experience you need to have to be able to do it.

It's also ok not to know what career you want to have. If you have a learning disability or autism, the Ready, Willing and Able supported employment coaches can help you to decide on the career you want to have.

To help you to start thinking about it, we've made a guide for you to follow. Read on to find out more.

Your education

For most of us, our journey to employment starts in school. As we grow older, we develop interests in subjects, some of which lead naturally into certain jobs. Using the prompts below, have a think back at what you did and why.

Chosen subjects

What subjects did you study and enjoy in school? For example, did you look forward to reading books or writing essays in English? Did you enjoy working out answers in maths? Did you enjoy swimming in physical education? Or were you great at making things in art or technical studies?

Understanding the subjects you liked will help you to understand what type of person you are. Whether you are more creative or intellectual will help you narrow down careers. For example, someone who works with computers may be more intellectual and someone who designs buildings may be more creative.

The grades you achieved

How well we did in our studies does not define what we're able to achieve, but it can help you see what you are naturally quite good at. Choosing a job that uses skills you're already good at will set you up for the biggest chance of success. Your grades may also limit your abilities to study further, which could mean that certain jobs are beyond reach without more studies.

Whether you want to study more

Some careers require going to college or university to study more. It's important to understand whether you want to carry on studying, which might be for quite a few more years. If you are happy to continue studying, research what further education you need to do and what requirements there are to do it, like achieving certain grades.

Activity

Make a list of the subjects you studied in school and order them from favourite to least favourite.

Now make another list of the subjects you achieved good grades in. These may not match up with your favourite subjects, but it will show you where your skills are. Your grades can also limit the types of job you do without additional studies, so it's good to know what you achieved.

Compare your answers. Is there a clear subject that you both enjoy and achieved good grades in? If so, consider the jobs you could do with this subject.

Your interests and hobbies

The careers we choose are not always driven by our education or the grades we get in school. Sometimes people choose jobs based on what interests them or the hobbies they do in their spare time. Consider the prompts below to help you narrow down what you'd like to do.

What interests you?

If you were to have a conversation with someone, what would you talk about? Would it be about current affairs or what you see on the news? Would it be about the programmes you've seen on tv or the films you've seen in the cinema? Perhaps you'd talk about sport like a recent match with your favourite football team. Write down everything that interests you and think about the jobs that could relate to them. For example, an interest in the news could suggest a job as a journalist or researcher might be for you.

What do you do in your spare time?

We all have hobbies. Some of us like to cook. Others like to read or play video games. Hobbies are closely linked to skills and are often the easiest way to figure out what job you'd like to do. It could even be that you like to go shopping. This might suggest that a retail job would be for you. Like your interests, you should write down everything you like to do and consider what jobs would allow you to also do that.

Your ability

We all have our limitations. Whilst Ready, Willing and Able advocates that nobody should be prevented from working, there may be certain frontline jobs that might be beyond reach due to the nature of the work. For example, the military and police have very strict entry requirements for active roles. If you find you're not able to meet those requirements, you could instead consider the administrative or support roles that these industries have that may still be possible to do.

Try before you apply

A good way to figure out what you want to do is to arrange work experience placements or to volunteer. This can give you an idea of whether the work is right for you. These placements are not often advertised so you may need to speak to an employer directly. Use your networks of friends, family or carers to find these opportunities. Your Ready, Willing and Able supported employment coach will also help.

Taking the first step

The journey to employment starts by identifying the career you want to have. You know you want to work, so with a little thought and support, you'll soon find the ideal jobs that you need to search and apply for. Remember though, it's ok change your mind. We won't all find our dream job first time round, so use your interests and skills and go from there.