

Finding Your Career Direction

Understanding strengths, interests, working needs and your next steps

Finding a direction without pressure

Choosing a career is rarely a single decision. People may have changing interests, different energy levels or limited access to opportunities. A useful starting point is to discover what matters to you now. You do not need to have a perfect plan or know your ideal job before beginning.

Interests: start with curiosity

Think about subjects you return to, activities that hold your attention and things you would like to learn. An interest does not have to become a job. Consider whether you enjoy working with people, ideas, practical tasks, information, technology, nature or creative work. Some careers combine several of these areas.

Strengths beyond qualifications

Skills may develop in education, employment, volunteering, home life and caring roles. Being persistent, noticing details, helping someone understand information or managing complex routines can all demonstrate strengths. Write down examples of what you have done, not just labels such as organised or creative.

Needs and working conditions matter

Career exploration should include accessibility, finances, travel, support, sensory environments and working patterns. A job may sound interesting but not be sustainable in its current form. This does not mean the whole profession is unsuitable. Different employers, roles and reasonable adjustments can change what is possible.

Exploring possibilities carefully

Use job descriptions, trusted careers information and conversations with people already working in the area. Compare everyday tasks, training requirements, entry routes, likely hours, pay and progression. Avoid ruling yourself out solely because you do not meet every desirable criterion; equally, check any essential professional qualifications.

Questions to guide research

What does a typical working day involve? Which parts of the role appeal to me? What skills do I already have? What could I learn? What physical, sensory, communication or processing demands might arise? What changes or support could help? How could I try a small version of this work through a conversation, shadowing, a course or volunteering?

Neurodivergence, disability and wellbeing

Everyone deserves an accessible and realistic exploration of work. Some people benefit from clear instructions, reduced interruptions, flexible routines or alternative communication methods. Support needs should be explored with dignity and without assumptions. Employment is not the right immediate goal for everyone, and exploration does not create an obligation to apply for work.

From reflection to action

Choose one small research action rather than a large list of tasks. For example, read two job descriptions from the same sector, note questions about training, or ask a careers adviser about routes into a role. Record what you discovered and whether your preferences changed. Revisiting the plan is part of the process.

Personal reflection worksheet

1. Three activities that interest me: _____
2. Strengths I can give examples of: _____
3. Working conditions that help me: _____
4. One job or sector I want to investigate: _____
5. Questions I need answered: _____
6. My first manageable step: _____
7. People or services who may help: _____

Useful UK starting points

National Careers Service: nationalcareers.service.gov.uk — career exploration and advice.

Access to Work: gov.uk/access-to-work — information about potential practical employment support.

Acas: acas.org.uk — employment rights and workplace guidance.

Space to Breathe Therapy: spacetobreathetherapy.co.uk — individual therapeutic and coaching support.

A note about the interactive resource

The companion Career Direction Finder is a self-reflection activity, not a standardised assessment, diagnosis or automated career recommendation. When used on a shared device, download what you need and clear the saved answers. Career plans can change as needs and circumstances change.