

# CAREERS SERVICE

**PROFESSIONAL AND IMPARTIAL CAREERS  
INFORMATION, ADVICE AND GUIDANCE**



**AN ADULT'S GUIDE**

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## THE CAREERS SERVICE

**The Department for the Economy's Careers Service provides professional and impartial careers advice and guidance to help you make informed choices about your future career.**

Our service is delivered by professionally qualified careers advisers based in Careers Resource Centres, JobCentres and Jobs & Benefits Offices throughout Northern Ireland and you can also find information online at [www.nidirect.gov.uk/careers](http://www.nidirect.gov.uk/careers)

Are you:

- looking for education / training / employment opportunities?
- considering changing job or career direction?
- facing redundancy?
- thinking of starting your own business?

**Careers advisers can help you with the following:**

- choosing subjects for study at college or university
- current and future job trends
- job search techniques
- CVs
- application forms
- interview preparation
- working overseas
- seasonal / voluntary work

**Careers guidance can help you to:**

- know more about your career options;
- become aware of the skills required to achieve your career goals and be better prepared to achieve them;
- feel more confident about making decisions regarding your career; and
- understand the importance of considering current and future job opportunities in career decision making.

**How do I contact a careers adviser?**

- Log on to [www.nidirect.gov.uk/careers](http://www.nidirect.gov.uk/careers) to webchat with a careers adviser (Monday to Friday, 9.30 am to 4.30 pm) or email a query.
- Phone **0300 200 7820** to speak with an adviser (Monday to Friday, 9.00 am to 5.00 pm).
- Go to [www.nidirect.gov.uk/careers](http://www.nidirect.gov.uk/careers) for details of your nearest careers office.



## CAREERS GUIDANCE INTERVIEW

**A careers guidance interview is a one-to-one meeting with a professionally qualified careers adviser and can last approximately 20 - 45 minutes. The interview is not like a job interview – there are no right or wrong answers.**

### **Where will it take place?**

You can meet with an adviser in your local careers office.

### **What will be discussed?**

During a guidance interview the careers adviser can help you to:

- broaden and challenge your career ideas;
- identify your personal qualities and skills;
- identify the skills you would like to develop;
- identify occupations, academic courses and training opportunities;
- explore alternative career paths or educational options;
- explore current and future job opportunities;
- understand the processes of job search, writing a CV and going for interviews;

- explore your interests, likes and dislikes, family influences, barriers and work experience; and
- think about how study, previous work experience, home-life etc can all contribute to your employability.

### **The careers adviser can provide you with:**

- accurate and up-to-date information;
- the opportunity, if appropriate, to complete a personality-based assessment;
- alternative sources of information and help if required; and
- an action plan to help you move forward.



## Preparing for your interview

Think about:

- how much control you feel you have in making choices;
- what is important to you e.g. helping others, making money, travel...;
- anything you would like to change;
- qualifications or additional qualifications and experience required for the career you are interested in; and
- the ideas you already have and how you might achieve them.

## Career matching tools

If you do not have any career ideas before your interview you can work through one of the career matching tools on [www.nidirect.gov.uk/careers](http://www.nidirect.gov.uk/careers). Completing this will provide you with a personalised list of career suggestions and up-to-date information on over 1,800 career titles.



## SKILLS IN DEMAND

**When you are just starting out or taking a change in direction, it is important you make informed career choices. To fully explore all your possible options you should know where the jobs are now and where they are likely to be in the future.**

There are job opportunities across all occupational areas in Northern Ireland but there is higher demand in occupations relating to Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths (STEM).

As the world becomes increasingly technology dependent it is anticipated that the range of businesses emerging around the STEM areas will grow significantly. This will require people to get a good education in STEM subjects.

To find out more about what it's like to have a career in STEM check out the STEM Careers booklet at [www.nidirect.gov.uk/publications/stem-careers-booklet](http://www.nidirect.gov.uk/publications/stem-careers-booklet). This profiles people who have studied STEM and gone onto success in the sector.

Research has shown the following areas are extremely important to the Northern Ireland economy:

- ICT
- creative and digital media
- agri food sector
- business and financial services
- advanced manufacturing and engineering
- renewable energies and recycling
- health and life sciences

For more information on these job areas and the skills and qualifications needed, use the Careers A-Z tool at the web address below.

**[www.nidirect.gov.uk/articles/exploring-career-options](http://www.nidirect.gov.uk/articles/exploring-career-options)**

For additional detailed information on future labour market opportunities and the skills needed (including employment prospects by level of education and by subject area) for the Northern Ireland economy, you can refer to the **Northern Ireland Skills Barometer** at [www.economy-ni.gov.uk/publications/ni-skills-barometer](http://www.economy-ni.gov.uk/publications/ni-skills-barometer)



**If you are thinking about going into employment for the first time, returning to employment or considering a job change some preparation will be required.**

### **To prepare:**

- think about your skills and interests and consider how these will affect the type of career path you will follow;
- consider voluntary work as an opportunity to develop your skills and gain experience;
- attend mock interviews;
- complete mock application forms and CVs;
- check local and national newspapers for advertised jobs;
- investigate any contacts through family or friends;
- contact employers directly.

You could also check the following websites:

- [www.jobcentreonline.com](http://www.jobcentreonline.com)
- [www.nijobs.com](http://www.nijobs.com)
- [www.recruitni.com](http://www.recruitni.com)
- [www.nijobfinder.co.uk](http://www.nijobfinder.co.uk)

Registering with a recruitment agency may assist you in finding a job. For information on the benefits of recruitment agencies and how to get the most out of them, visit [www.nidirect.gov.uk/articles/recruitment-agencies](http://www.nidirect.gov.uk/articles/recruitment-agencies)

A list of recruitment agencies across Northern Ireland can be found at [www.yell.com](http://www.yell.com)

If you are finding it difficult to get a job, further education and training may enhance your future prospects. See pages 18 to 21 for further information.

### **Redundancy**

Being made redundant can be very stressful, but it can also be an opportunity to re-train, gain new skills and explore work opportunities in different industries. Advice on dealing with redundancy can be found at [www.nidirect.gov.uk/articles/coping-redundancy](http://www.nidirect.gov.uk/articles/coping-redundancy)



## SELF-EMPLOYMENT

Whatever your career option, you may want to work for yourself. The decision to become self-employed is a big step, especially if you're close to retirement. Plenty of advice is available and you can get help with planning, training courses and funding.

Useful information on starting up your own business can be found at [www.nidirect.gov.uk/articles/starting-your-own-business](http://www.nidirect.gov.uk/articles/starting-your-own-business)

In addition, the following organisations provide support to help people turn their business idea into a reality:

- [www.goforitni.com](http://www.goforitni.com)
- [www.princes-trust.org.uk](http://www.princes-trust.org.uk)
- [www.advantage-ni.com](http://www.advantage-ni.com)
- [www.nibusinessinfo.co.uk](http://www.nibusinessinfo.co.uk)





## TRANSFERABLE SKILLS

**These are abilities, aptitudes and qualities that can be transferred from one job or activity to another and are gained in a range of ways e.g. through work, interests, volunteering, hobbies, sports.**

In the current economic climate, job hunters face increasing competition for every vacancy. To be successful, you need to demonstrate to an employer you hold relevant qualifications and that you have the skills for the job. A good way to start is by recognising your transferable skills.

Transferable skills include:

- communication - being able to communicate by speaking or in writing
- teamwork - being a constructive team member
- leadership - motivating and leading others
- initiative - seeing opportunities and achieving goals
- willingness to learn - being open to new ideas
- solving problems - thinking things through in a logical way
- flexibility - being able to adapt
- being self aware - knowing your strengths and skills
- commitment and motivation
  - having energy and enthusiasm when carrying out projects
- interpersonal skills - relating well to others
- numeracy - understanding and using information such as numbers, statistics and graphs

### Identifying your current skills

You probably have many of these skills already. The next step is to become aware of them. Start by considering all your jobs, activities and experience to date.

Write down the tasks relevant to each of the activities in the worksheet provided. Once you have compiled this list of skills it can help create a personal profile which can be referred to when applying for jobs or changing careers.



# TRANSFERABLE SKILLS WORKSHEET

## Experience to date and related skills

<b>Jobs/Activities</b> (Previous Employment, Interests, Voluntary Work etc.) e.g. sales assistant	<b>Tasks</b> (List each of your job duties or activity) e.g. serving customers	<b>Skills</b> (List the skills used to complete the task) e.g. listening skills, managing money

## TRANSFERABLE SKILLS

The worksheet can also be used to rate your skills level (e.g. 1-5) and show areas you need to improve. You can also highlight the skills you enjoy using.

To develop skills in a variety of ways, you may want to consider:

- doing some voluntary work;
- taking part in a hobby, committee or group;
- doing some part-time / temporary work;
- going on a training course.

The “Career horizons” software programme will help you consider your skills and match them to certain careers.

To access this programme visit [www.nidirect.gov.uk/careers](http://www.nidirect.gov.uk/careers)

Remember that developing your skills helps you to find work, stay in work and get further in your career.

**Providing evidence of your transferable skills**

Once you are clear about your skills, ensure you include them in your CV and application forms. Interviews will give you the opportunity to make employers aware of them. Some suggestions are given below.

**Ability to work under pressure**

- Meeting deadlines in life / work
- Completing tasks within a set time frame

**Communication skills**

- Making presentations to peers / colleagues
- Contributing articles to the local paper / community magazine

**Flexibility**

- Combining study / hobbies with work commitments
- Able to make changes to when, where and how you work

**Initiative**

- Coping well with the unexpected
- Organising fundraising activities
- Starting your own business

**Leadership**

- Coaching members of a football team
- Being a representative on a committee

**Numeracy**

- Treasurer of a committee
- Producing statistics

**Teamwork**

- Taking part in team sports
- Voluntary work

Further information on transferable skills is available at [www.nidirect.gov.uk/articles/getting-job-make-most-your-skills](http://www.nidirect.gov.uk/articles/getting-job-make-most-your-skills)

# TRANSFERABLE SKILLS CHECKLIST

## KEY TRANSFERABLE SKILLS

- Ability to delegate
- Ability to plan
- Accept responsibility
- Computer skills
- Communicate in writing
- Efficiency
- Instruct others
- Manage money
- Manage people
- Meet deadlines
- Results orientated
- Solve problems
- Supervise others

## PRACTICAL SKILLS

- Assemble / build things
- Construct or repair
- Drive or operate vehicles
- Follow instructions
- Good time management
- Good with my hands
- Operate tools / machinery
- Safety conscious
- Use equipment

## USING WORDS AND IDEAS

- Accurate
- Articulate
- Create new ideas
- Design skills
- Editing
- Innovative
- Logical
- Remember information
- Research
- Understanding the bigger picture

## LEADERSHIP

- Arrange social functions
- Decisive
- Delegate
- Direct projects
- Empowering others
- Explaining things to others
- Mediation
- Motivate people
- Negotiation
- Plan
- Run meetings
- Share leadership
- Solve problems
- Take risks
- Think of others

## DATA SKILLS

- Analyse data or facts
- Audit records
- Balance money
- Calculate
- Classify data
- Compare or record facts
- Counting or compiling
- Research
- Stock taking
- Working with detail



# TRANSFERABLE SKILLS CHECKLIST

## PEOPLE SKILLS

- Adaptable
- Caring
- Counselling
- Demonstration skills
- Diplomatic
- Energetic
- Helping others
- Interview skills
- Listening skills
- Open minded
- Patient
- Persuasive
- Pleasant
- Supportive
- Tactful
- Understanding

## CREATIVE, ARTISTIC

- Artistic
- Dance, body movement
- Draw
- Expressive
- Music appreciation
- Perform
- Play instruments
- Present artistic ideas



## APPLYING FOR JOBS

**When applying for a job you may be asked by the employer to complete an application form or submit a CV and covering letter.**

### **Job Application Forms**

An application form ensures the employer gets the information they need from an applicant and it also enables them to compare applicants more easily. Further information and tips on how to complete application forms can be found at [www.nidirect.gov.uk/articles/job-application-forms-and-letters](http://www.nidirect.gov.uk/articles/job-application-forms-and-letters)

### **CVs**

A CV is a short list of facts about you and your work history, skills and experience. A good CV is essential when looking for work. It is important to tailor your CV to the needs of the employer and to the particular job. Advice on creating a CV can be found at [www.nidirect.gov.uk/articles/cvs-and-cover-letters](http://www.nidirect.gov.uk/articles/cvs-and-cover-letters). To access a template which will enable you to create, edit, download and print a CV go to [www.nidirect.gov.uk/services/cv-builder](http://www.nidirect.gov.uk/services/cv-builder)

### **CV Tips**

There are many websites providing advice on CVs. You may find the following useful.

Comprehensive tips and dos and don'ts on CV writing, as well as example CVs and covering letters, can be found at [www.kent.ac.uk/careers/applcn.htm](http://www.kent.ac.uk/careers/applcn.htm)

For information on writing a CV and enhancing your CV content go to [www.nijobfinder.co.uk/advice](http://www.nijobfinder.co.uk/advice)

Graduates looking for advice on CVs may wish to refer to the following:

- [www.prospects.ac.uk/careers-advice/cvs-and-cover-letters](http://www.prospects.ac.uk/careers-advice/cvs-and-cover-letters)
- [www.gradireland.com/careers-advice/cvs-and-applications](http://www.gradireland.com/careers-advice/cvs-and-applications)

### **Covering Letter**

The covering letter is vital to your CV. It demonstrates your writing style, and allows you to show the employer that you have the qualities the job calls for, and makes a statement about yourself and your suitability for the job.

Go to [www.nidirect.gov.uk/articles/cvs-and-cover-letters](http://www.nidirect.gov.uk/articles/cvs-and-cover-letters) for more information.

## APPLYING FOR JOBS

### Interviews

Being invited to an interview means that your application must have made a good impression. An interview is a discussion between you and an employer to find out if you can do the job. You need to prepare yourself for the interview to make sure that you are successful.

More information on how to plan your interview can be found at [www.nidirect.gov.uk/articles/preparing-interview](http://www.nidirect.gov.uk/articles/preparing-interview)



## VOLUNTARY WORK

Volunteering can be personally rewarding and helps you contribute to your community. It can also give you a better chance of getting paid work, improving your career prospects or getting a place at university.

### Benefits of volunteering

- **Decision making:** Voluntary work is an excellent opportunity to help you decide the type of career you wish to follow, no matter what your circumstances are.
- **Making friends:** It is a great way of meeting new people whilst in a working environment.
- **Confidence building:** Volunteering work can be quite challenging and a useful way of developing skills, which in turn can increase confidence and self esteem.
- **Improving your CV:** Employers recognise the value of voluntary work experience. It can demonstrate initiative, commitment, motivation and the ability to work well as part of a team.
- **Networking:** Voluntary work can help you network with others who might be in a position to turn your voluntary work into a paid career. It may be an opportunity to get the work experience you need to get a job.
- **Taking on a challenge:** It can be a real challenge to take on something new. Volunteering can help you achieve your personal goals.
- **Making a difference:** Many people get great satisfaction from being able to help others who are less fortunate than themselves.
- **There are even health benefits too:** It can give you an increased sense of physical and mental well-being.





## VOLUNTARY WORK

Voluntary work is not something to take on lightly and you should ask yourself a number of questions before you decide to go ahead and make a commitment.

- **Time commitments:** Consider how much time you can give, taking into account your other responsibilities such as work, study, sport or family. Can you make a regular commitment? Volunteering can vary from a few hours to a full time commitment. Be realistic about how much time you can spare.
- **Consider your skills:** Assess your skills and find out which organisations could make good use of them while giving you experience which will help your career aspirations. There are many voluntary positions which require no special skills or talents and many more where training would be provided.
- **Travel and costs:** If the location of the organisation is not on your doorstep, think about how you are going to get there and how much it is going to cost.

### Further Information

Useful information on volunteering can be found at [www.nidirect.gov.uk/volunteering](http://www.nidirect.gov.uk/volunteering)

For details of volunteering opportunities in your area, visit the Volunteer Now website at [www.volunteernow.co.uk](http://www.volunteernow.co.uk). This website also provides information on the Millennium Volunteers national programme which is designed to promote and recognise volunteering among young people aged 14 to 25.

For information on volunteering opportunities abroad, visit the Global Vision International website at [www.gvi.co.uk](http://www.gvi.co.uk)



If you want to change your career, develop new skills or just meet new people, then getting back into learning could be the answer.

### Adult Learning

Learning can be enjoyable and it's a great way to catch up on anything you missed out on at school or prepare for your next career move. Skills are becoming more and more important in today's workplace and doing a course could open up new job options. Whatever your reasons for returning to learning, there's lots of support available to help you.

Check out [www.nidirect.gov.uk/information-and-services/education-learning-and-skills/adult-learning](http://www.nidirect.gov.uk/information-and-services/education-learning-and-skills/adult-learning) for further information on adults returning to learning, including what to study, where to learn and financial support available. You can also seek advice from a careers adviser.

For those who are interested in further and higher education the following gives an overview of each option.

### Going To College

Both further and higher education courses are available at FE colleges and study can be full time or part time. You can visit college open days (usually in February and March of each year) where you will be able to speak to tutors for additional information on courses and the workload involved. This will help you to choose a course which will be of interest to you and that you will enjoy studying. It is important to get your application in early as some courses are very popular. If you change your mind you can always withdraw at a later date.

For more information on the colleges throughout Northern Ireland check out the following websites:

- **Colleges NI:**  
[www.collegesni.ac.uk](http://www.collegesni.ac.uk)
- **College of Agriculture, Food and Rural Enterprise (CAFRE):**  
[www.cafre.ac.uk](http://www.cafre.ac.uk)



### Going to University

If you are thinking about going to a university it is important to understand the application process and research fully the range of universities, courses and methods of study / assessment. Most universities have a significant number of 'mature' students and will often consider a range of qualifications when looking at applications. You may also find that you're given credit for previous work experience.

For more information check out:

- **[www.ucas.com](http://www.ucas.com)** – Universities and Colleges Admissions Service (UCAS)

UCAS is the central organisation through which applications are processed for entry to higher education in the UK.

- **[www.cao.ie](http://www.cao.ie)** – Central Applications Office (CAO)

CAO is the central organisation through which applications are processed for entry to higher education institutions in the Republic of Ireland.

- **[www.open.ac.uk](http://www.open.ac.uk)** – Open University

The Open University's distance learning enables you to study in your own time, at home or wherever you choose – reading, watching or listening to material supplied, doing course activities and assignments with regular support from your teacher.

### Qualifications

Find out about different types of qualifications and what opportunities they may open for you by going to **[www.nidirect.gov.uk/careers](http://www.nidirect.gov.uk/careers)**

### Funding

Details of support available to adult learners can be found at **[www.nidirect.gov.uk/information-and-services/adult-learning/financial-help-adult-learners](http://www.nidirect.gov.uk/information-and-services/adult-learning/financial-help-adult-learners)**

Information on support available to those in Further Education, including funding, can be found at **[www.nidirect.gov.uk/articles/further-education](http://www.nidirect.gov.uk/articles/further-education)**

For a guide to the various types of student finance you may be entitled to when in Higher Education, how to apply for them and how to repay a student finance loan, visit **[www.nidirect.gov.uk/information-and-services/higher-education/student-finance](http://www.nidirect.gov.uk/information-and-services/higher-education/student-finance)**

## APPRENTICESHIPS AND TRAINING

**If you are thinking about completing an apprenticeship or training, you will need to choose an occupational area in which to train or work.**

### ApprenticeshipsNI

**[www.nidirect.gov.uk/campaigns/apprenticeships](http://www.nidirect.gov.uk/campaigns/apprenticeships)**

ApprenticeshipsNI offers opportunities in many occupational areas. For some apprenticeships you will have to meet entry requirements e.g. some require you to have GCSEs.

To complete an apprenticeship you need to be employed or be about to take up paid employment as an apprentice with a Northern Ireland based company. To find a job, check local and national newspapers. Investigate any contacts through family or friends, contact employers directly, visit the JobCentre / Jobs & Benefits Office or visit **[www.jobcentreonline.com](http://www.jobcentreonline.com)** to check for vacancies.

For information on the National Minimum Wage and rates of pay for apprentices, visit **[www.nidirect.gov.uk/articles/national-minimum-wage](http://www.nidirect.gov.uk/articles/national-minimum-wage)**

### Higher Level Apprenticeships

A Higher Level Apprenticeship is an apprenticeship with a targeted qualification between Level 4 (HNC equivalent) to Level 8 (PhD equivalent). A Higher Level Apprenticeship can help you develop professional and technical skills, as well as gaining recognised higher qualifications while in paid employment.

Find out more at **[www.nidirect.gov.uk/articles/higher-level-apprenticeships](http://www.nidirect.gov.uk/articles/higher-level-apprenticeships)**

### Training Programmes for Adults

#### Essential Skills

If you would like to improve your:

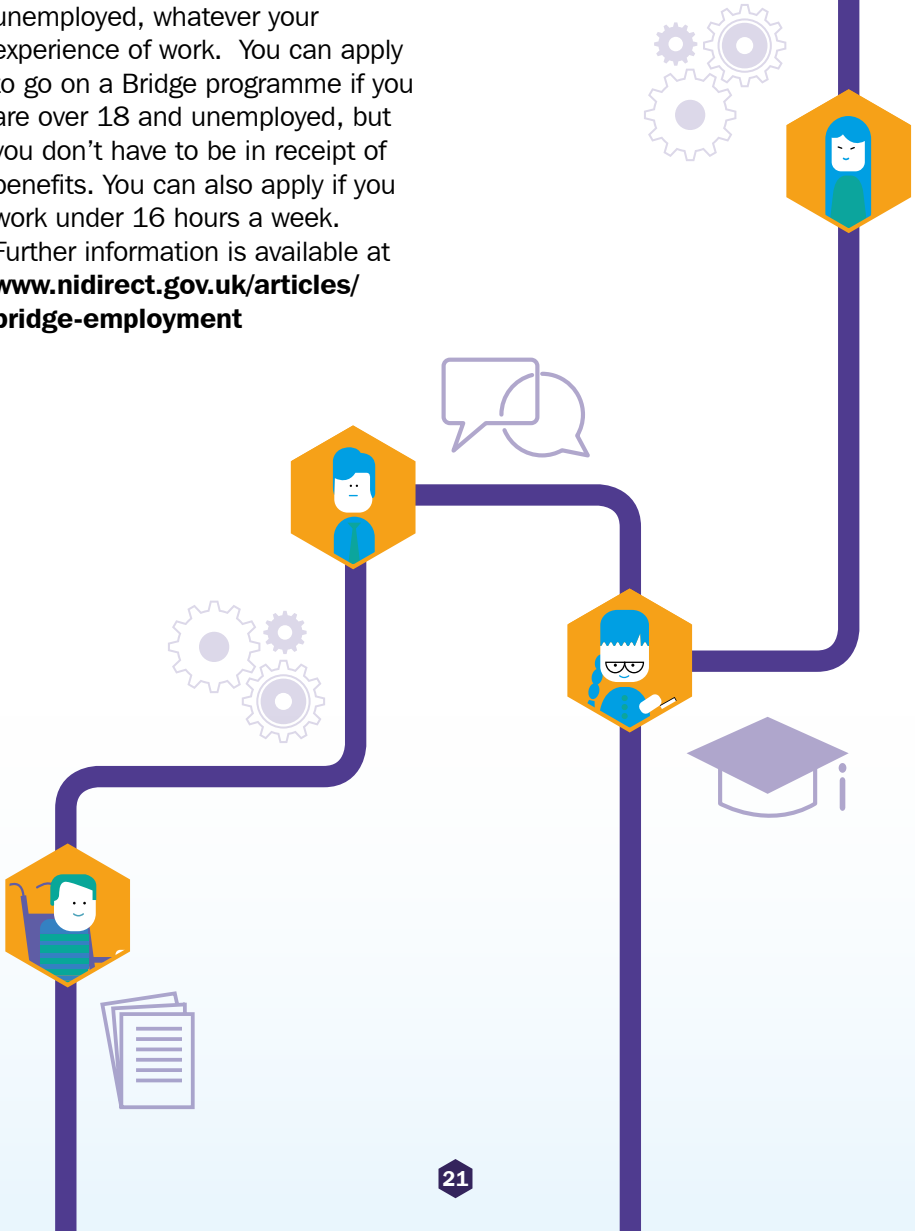
- reading, writing, speaking and listening;
- working with numbers; or
- use of computers and technology; an Essential Skills course may be beneficial.

All Essential Skills courses are free. You can do them in a college, at work or with a community organisation at different times of the day. Go to **[www.nidirect.gov.uk/articles/essential-skills](http://www.nidirect.gov.uk/articles/essential-skills)** to find out more.

## APPRENTICESHIPS AND TRAINING

### Bridge to Employment

Bridge to Employment (Bridge) is a pre-employment training programme to help you find a job if you are unemployed, whatever your experience of work. You can apply to go on a Bridge programme if you are over 18 and unemployed, but you don't have to be in receipt of benefits. You can also apply if you work under 16 hours a week. Further information is available at [www.nidirect.gov.uk/articles/bridge-employment](http://www.nidirect.gov.uk/articles/bridge-employment)







**My Careers Adviser is:**

**and is based in:**

**Telephone:**

**Email:**