



Policy paper

National retraining scheme

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About the national retraining scheme

The national retraining scheme is the government's new programme to prepare adults for future changes to the economy, including those brought about by automation, and to help them retrain into better jobs.

The national retraining scheme is a manifesto commitment and was announced at the autumn 2017 budget.

The scheme is a part of the government's [industrial strategy](#) for building a country that works for everyone. It's overseen by a partnership made up of the Confederation of British Industry (CBI), the Trades Union Congress (TUC) and the government.

To support the development of the scheme, the Chancellor announced £100m in the autumn budget 2018. This is for the continued testing and development of the scheme, as well as delivering the first parts of the scheme to the public.

Eligibility

The national retraining scheme will initially support employed adults who:

- are aged 24 and over
- do not have a qualification at degree level

- are paid below a certain wage threshold – this threshold will be tested with people earning low to medium wages as we develop the scheme

We're investing in this group of people first as they:

- have comparatively less access to existing government support
- are most in need of adapting their skills so they can take advantage of new opportunities

The need for the national retraining scheme

We're introducing the national retraining scheme to respond to:

- the changing nature of jobs and the types of tasks people do at work
- the need for a multi-skilled workforce in the future
- make the most of the new opportunities that the future economy will bring

The sections below summarise some of the challenges the country will face.

Automation: benefits and challenges

While automation will lead to new jobs, it will also change many of the jobs of today.

Research on [the probability of automation in England: 2011 and 2017](#), suggests that around 7.4% of jobs (1.5 million) in England could be automated or partly automated in the future.

Some jobs will change significantly or will see reduced demand with up to 35% of [jobs being at high risk of automation](#) in the next 10 to 20 years.

Fewer adults undertaking training

Despite the range of [learning and training opportunities](#) currently available, the number of adult learners continues to fall.

Barriers to retraining

Our research with adults who have used early parts of the national retraining scheme during its testing phase shows that many people face a range of barriers that prevent them from accessing further learning or training. These barriers include:

- the financial cost of training
- training opportunities that do not fit the working patterns of people already in employment
- poor previous experience of education

Low productivity growth in the economy

The national retraining scheme aims to boost productivity by taking advantage of new technology.

The scheme is part of other measures the government is taking to increase productivity in the economy.

Longer working lives

As people work longer, there will be a greater need to:

- adapt to changes in the economy
- consider new careers throughout their working lives

What the scheme will include

The national retraining scheme aims to overcome some of these challenges, and prepare adults for changes to the workplace, by:

- supporting people already in work to move into better jobs through training and tailored advice
- complementing existing training programmes for adults
- encouraging people to develop their flexibility and resilience in the world of work, so they can take advantage of new opportunities

Further details about what we expect the national retraining scheme to offer when it's fully rolled out are available below.

Tailored advice and guidance

People will be able to access dedicated support from a qualified national careers service adviser.

This will support people while they're training and looking for new jobs.

Functional skills provision

Training offered through the scheme will initially focus on helping people to access English and maths training.

We'll develop this opportunity based on feedback from people using the service, so it meets their needs.

Improving English and maths skills will help remove a common barrier that some people face when applying for new jobs.

Online and blended learning

We are developing this flexible approach to training so it fits around working adults' busy lives.

Online and blended learning will have a broader reach and will mean more adults can access training.

Blended learning is a mix of online and face-to-face provision.

Technical training

We'll offer in-work vocational skills training, learnt on the job, as part of the national retraining scheme.

Get help to retrain

Get help to retrain is the first part of the national retraining scheme that we have started testing in the Liverpool city region.

It will help people to:

- understand their current skills
- explore alternative occupations and consider new roles
- find the training they need to access opportunities for a broad range of good jobs

Features of get help to retrain

The service will:

- offer descriptions of currently available jobs and potential better jobs to help people understand their skills
- identify specific local job and training opportunities to help people develop the skills they'll need
- get dedicated support from an adviser to use the service and find training opportunities

Development of get help to retrain

We've started testing get help to retrain in the Liverpool city region with a small number of adults who:

- fit the eligibility criteria
- have been invited to join the scheme through colleges and other training providers.

The initial version has limited functionality, but this will be scaled up as we test and develop the service.

We'll expand get help to retrain to other areas across the country, adding more functionality to every stage.

Get help to retrain will be available to all eligible adults in 2020.

Development of the national retraining scheme

Our approach

We're developing the scheme with a user-centred, 'test and learn' approach.

This means we'll:

- develop the scheme with the people and businesses who'll use it
- start small and scale up products and services following extensive testing with people using the scheme

This approach reduces risks, while developing a national retraining scheme that:

- uses lessons learned from previous retraining programmes
- offers value for money
- is fully tested before we roll it out nationally
- works for the people who'll use it
- can be developed to meet employers' needs and expectations
- offers the flexibility to make changes quickly based on feedback from people using it
- can be changed to meet the future needs of the economy

National retraining partnership

The national retraining scheme is led and overseen by the national retraining partnership which includes:

- government departments – led by the Department for Education (DfE), working with HM Treasury (HMT) and the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP)
- Confederation of British Industry (CBI)
- Trades Union Congress (TUC)

The national retraining partnership aims to help businesses and workers:

- provide feedback to develop the national retraining scheme effectively and meet users' needs
- adapt to the changes the future economy will bring
- be competitive in the future economy

Our research

Extensive research with potential users has helped us develop the first part of the scheme. This research has allowed us to meet the needs of employed adults who are eligible to use the scheme, as well as employers.

To do this, we conducted research with:

- over 340 working adults, including people with assisted digital needs (over 90 of these workers took part in a remote test of the service)
- 90 people representing around 35 employers across 7 different locations
- 17 careers advisers

We'll continue to use this approach with employers and working adults as we roll out the scheme.

Views from people who will use the scheme

From our research with people currently employed and who are eligible to use the scheme, we have found that:

- most people will only consider training if there is a clear route to a new job
- the current training and job landscape can be overwhelming
- most people would not sign up for training without further information and guidance first
- negative perceptions were common, for example, poor previous learning experiences
- the term a 'better job' means different things to different people
- online training often meets people's needs for flexibility, but many people lack the confidence using it
- existing online training is often targeted at the highly-skilled and motivated
- existing online training only meets users' needs to a limited extent as it represents only a small proportion of adult training provision
- people would pay or co-fund training if it led to a job

Employers' views

When speaking to employers, we found that they value:

- soft skills, such as good communications skills and a strong work ethic
- a scheme that was integrated with existing recruitment processes
- apprenticeships, but many have expressed an interest in a shorter, more flexible retraining offer

National organisations

We've worked with a range of national representative bodies at conferences and events, including:

- Association of Education and Learning Providers – national conference, June 2019
- Unionlearn – annual conference 2019 (as well as a range of regional events across the country)
- The Apprenticeship Ambassadors Network May 2019
- The Association of Colleges – including through their 2018 annual conference

Regional organisations

We've held meetings across the country so that our research is:

- representative of local areas
- captured a full range of views and experiences
- highlighted the strength and depth of existing provision

To do this, we spoke with:

- regional representative organisations, including chambers of commerce, local enterprise partnerships (LEPs) and other representative groups.
- training providers
- awarding bodies

Specialist advice

We are consulting behavioural change specialists on a research project that will provide clear recommendations for:

- getting eligible adults to consider retraining for a better job
- encouraging them to use the national retraining scheme to help them achieve this goal

We are taking forward a range of pilots and initiatives to inform the scheme. A summary of this work can be found in [National retraining scheme: associated projects](#) document.

Working across government

While DfE is taking the lead in the design and delivery of the scheme through the [national retraining partnership](#), we are working across government to make sure that the national retraining scheme complements existing initiatives and services that have been proven to work well.

This is one part of a wider strategy of government reforms which include:

- the [industrial strategy](#)
- [review of post-16 qualifications at level 3 and below in England](#)
- our ongoing support of the [apprenticeship programme](#)
- [in-work progression](#), working in partnership with DWP

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