

# Identifying your needs and career goals

## Focus on skills

Finding a new job can be a daunting prospect.

However, planning and preparing yourself, both practically and mentally, will help you feel more in control of the transition process. Creating a transition plan will help focus your thoughts and ideas, and it will also help you maximise your time and efficiency and build your confidence. It's easy to feel overwhelmed by the options out there, so try breaking the process down into manageable stages.





## Identifying your needs and career goals

Consider all aspects of your life holistically, not just your job options. Ask yourself these core questions:



The time it takes to evaluate these factors varies for each individual. Everyone has different pressures in their job so where feasible, aim to give yourself three to 12 months for this research.

Try to be clear about your priorities for both the short and longer term.

Do you want a job that evolves into a long-term career, or just a job for the next five years? If you are thinking about starting your own business, what start-up costs would be involved, and what profits will you need to generate? If you are considering a complete change, are you prepared to retrain or complete further study? Look at which sectors are buoyant or developing with genuine opportunities.

What are your family circumstances and how will these impact your choice of role or any relocation?

Do you have children and schools to consider, elderly family members or other dependants who rely on your support? Also, think about what sort of a commute you are willing to undertake, either daily or as a longer weekly commute? It is true that the post-pandemic working world is already evolving with greater emphasis on flexible working, but bear in mind that you will most likely be expected to attend face-to-face meetings to build relationships with colleagues and clients, so location is still an important factor to consider.

Put together a home budget and determine what you need to earn to maintain your current lifestyle. Look at the likely earning potential of your preferred job roles and consider how your Armed Forces pension may affect earning requirements and taxation.



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### Some questions for you to consider

#### Roles

Do you understand how your skills and experience match targeted roles, and can you describe them succinctly on your CV?

Have you considered how these skills might evolve into a new career over the next three to five years?

Will the role be sufficiently stimulating and satisfying for you?

What are your salary expectations – do you know if the role will match them?

Can you find this role in your preferred location?

Have you identified any gaps in your learning? What qualifications might be advantageous?

Can you bridge any gaps sufficiently with the use of Enhanced Learning Credits on appropriate courses?

Are you networking with those already in target roles/sectors to find out more about new roles?

What are your priorities? Do you want a job that evolves into a career, or do you want a job for the next five years before retirement, or moving abroad?

Do you want to focus on a completely new sector or type of role? How will this affect your salary?

Do you want to start your own business or consultancy? How much funding is needed for the start-up and how long will it take to generate the required profits to meet your income needs?

Are you intending to build a portfolio career, and looking for Non-Executive Director roles?

Are you considering overseas roles? Have you assessed whether an overseas job role will permit you to work in a similar role back in the UK?

Full Time Reserve Service (FTRS) roles – how does this strengthen your profile when you look for non-military jobs?

#### Sectors

Consider your personal values and what is important to you. This will help guide you in your job choices and the companies you decide to work for.

Do you prefer the private, public or third sector?

Do you want a complete change? Are you prepared to go back to college and undertake more study (e.g., to train as a teacher or solicitor)?

Your values – How would you feel if you told your friends you worked for any of the following brands or organisations - John Lewis, Barclays, Tesco, Aldi, Lidl, Wills Tobacco, William Hill Bookmakers, Serco, Ann Summers, BAE Systems, police or the fire service?

Which sectors are buoyant or developing with genuine opportunities?

#### How much?

Do you have a minimum salary requirement for your next role?

Have you put together a home budget (including partner/spouse income), and considered what you need to earn to maintain your current lifestyle?

What is the absolute minimum you must earn to ensure household costs are covered?

How does your Armed Forces pension affect earning requirements and taxation?

How does any terminal grant affect your mortgage and earning requirements?

What about school fees or support for children at university?

Have you been networking to find out your true value and likely income in preferred roles? You may need to compromise during your initial transition stages.



### Different ways of working

Many jobseekers are looking to find a full-time, salaried job, however, both organisations and workers are learning to think differently about how work is now structured and delivered.

#### Contract and interim roles

Organisations are often focusing more on how problems can be solved, or projects delivered rather than the shape of specific jobs. This has led to many workers, particularly at a professional level, considering their careers as a series of projects. Interim professionals can cover a short-term contract or be retained for a longer period.

An interim assignment is often a good way of gaining sector experience that will allow you to move into a senior role in a new sector. If you complete a number of contract jobs, your CV will show a lot of job changes but this is not detrimental to your career provided you can explain the changes. Interim work is often provided via specialist interim management consultancies and the daily rate will depend on your seniority and experience.

#### Flexible working

Employers have become far more positive about flexible working and homeworking. You may need flexible working to accommodate family responsibilities, reduce commuting, or free up time for other activities. If you need flexibility or part-time hours, it's worth bearing in mind that many such roles are negotiated, rather than advertised, and can often be filled by word-of-mouth.

#### Portfolio career

This is a term used to describe a deliberate choice of mix and match work for those looking to achieve the right balance in their working life. It could comprise both part-time employed and self-employed work. For example, an IT consultant may also work as a board member or non-executive director within another organisation. However, portfolio working can be highly rewarding so the examples and combination of interests are wide ranging.

#### Self-employed

You might be considering self-employment or starting your own business. Thorough research in this instance is key and it's important to make a list of the pros and cons to establish if working for yourself is viable. You might consider things like work-life balance, job security, money concerns, variety, the importance of colleagues, control and the aspects of your work that you find enjoyable and motivating.



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[forcesemployment.org.uk/myforcesemployment/](https://forcesemployment.org.uk/myforcesemployment/)

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As well as further articles by our experts, chat groups and discussion forums, access to mentoring and resources to support mental well-being, financial assistance and more.

