**Wider Horizons – Careers / Personal Development Support**

**Navigating the career waters ahead..…**

Navigating your career and transitions along the way can be confusing and that’s before you add in the impact of cancer. Through your experiences with the Trust we want to help you feel more confident in your next steps, whatever they might be. We hope you’ve enjoyed the Wider Horizons Virtual Summer with all the blog posts and interviews. What’s really struck me is all the all the valuable and transferable skills people have gained through their involvement with the Trust whether that’s through fundraising or as a Graduate Volunteer. To round up we thought it might be helpful to pull together some careers advice and guidance to help you with your next steps, whatever stage you maybe at.

To help navigate these confusing waters, it can be helpful to spend some structuring your thinking around the following questions and offer a career plan as a template (see attached) to record your ideas;

1. **Where am I now?** - What skills do I already possess? What are my interests, values, what motivates me, what do I like doing?
2. **Where do I want to be?** What do I want for your career, next step?
3. **How might I get there?** What steps can help me along the way?
4. **Who can help me?** Who are my supporters?

We’ll consider each of these in a bit more detail.

1. **Where am I now?**

A good starting point when thinking about your career and next steps is spending a bit of time considering where you are at currently – thinking about your current skills, experiences and personal values. Being self aware can help you to make better decisions about your next steps. Ask yourself what are the things that you enjoy doing, what seems to come naturally to you, reflect on your past experiences and think about situations that have given you a sense of achievement or satisfaction, this could, for example, be helping other people on a Trust trip. Think about some of the challenges you’ve overcome and what you have learnt from these situations and how this might help to influence your future decisions. It's important to understand yourself so you can find a career path that is rewarding and satisfying to you.

One way to start this is by listing the skills you have used and developed during your studies, any jobs roles, hobbies, life experience, volunteering, Trust trips and then assess whether you think you proficient in using that skill or need further development. Next, spend some time identifying the skills that you have enjoyed using in most contexts. These skills are your [strengths](https://www.myworldofwork.co.uk/what-are-my-strengths-0), and if you can find a career that will allow you to regularly use your strengths, then you are more likely to be happy in what you do and feel energised and motivated to get out of bed in the morning. You might have a strength that you are fully competent in yet, such as teaching others, but feel enthusiastic about developing this skill further. There are various self assessment tools and online quizzes that can help in building your self awareness and we’ve listed links to some of these tools below.

**Strengths Tools**

<https://www.myworldofwork.co.uk/tools/strengths/start>

**Skills Assessments**

[Skills Assessment](https://nationalcareers.service.gov.uk/skills-assessment)through National Careers Service

[Skills Development Scotland](https://www.myworldofwork.co.uk/tools/skills/start) Range of Career Tools

**Personality / Work Style Preferences**

Reflect on what gives you a buzz?[Try the Buzz Quiz](https://icould.com/buzz-quiz/)

[Understanding me](https://www.myworldofwork.co.uk/tools/about-me/start) offers a useful starting place for understanding your preferences.

Psychometric Tests, are used by some employers as part of the recruitment process, but they can also help you to consider your skills, knowledge and personality preferences, find out more [here](https://www.prospects.ac.uk/careers-advice/interview-tips/psychometric-tests)

**Values self assessments**

It’s a useful exercise to recognise and communicate your values, there are several web sites with exercises deigned to help you identify your values. Try this [Values exercise](https://www.mindtools.com/pages/article/newTED_85.htm%22%20%5Ct%20%22_blank) from MindTools to help you with this.

**Interests Exercise**

What are your interests / passions? What do you do in your "down" time?  Are you a member of any clubs or groups? You might find this a helpful activity:

* Spend 5-10 minutes making a list of what you do when not at school / work.
* Now reflect on which of these activities you enjoy doing.
* Focus on these and think about what it is specifically about the activity that you enjoy. Is it:
	+ the subject / topic?
	+ a sense of achievement?
	+ engaging with the physical world / your physical self?
	+ being with / away from people?
	+ being in a different environment, such as out on the water?
* What other activities/interests would you pursue if you had more time?
* Make a record of your thoughts in a way that makes sense to you, some like to list their responses, some like to use pictures or a mood board or record their responses on the phone.
* Reflect on your responses and consider how these interests might influence your future choices

For more detailed Career Planner tools that assess a range of skills and competencies try:

[Prospects](https://www.prospects.ac.uk/planner) and [Target Jobs](https://targetjobs.co.uk/careers-advice/skills-and-competencies)

**2. Where do I want to be?** **Exploring your career options**.

What do you want from your career? Use your responses from the self-assessments above to help you consider your next steps. It’s okay to not know what you want to do next but use the time to start exploring and researching a range of possible options so you start to gain an idea of what opportunities are available and how they may match your knowledge, skills and strengths. Be curious, there are lots of ways to explore career options – listen to podcasts, explore online career resources, read blogs, talk to friends and family, teachers/tutors, mentors, careers advisers. Below are some useful starting points:

Exploring Career Options and Job Profiles some useful websites whatever stage of your career:

[National Careers Service](https://nationalcareers.service.gov.uk/explore-careers)

[Skills Development Scotland](https://www.myworldofwork.co.uk/my-career-options/job-categories)

[icould](https://icould.com/explore/)

[Prospects](https://www.prospects.ac.uk/job-profiles)

Depending on what stage you are at the links below might help you explore your next steps:

**Exploring Subject Choices at School**

Here are some useful resources

[Subject Choice](https://www.myworldofwork.co.uk/my-career-options/choosing-my-subjects) Guidance through Skills Development Scotland

[Choosing GCSE’s](https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/articles/zrjh92p)

**Exploring your options post 16 options:**

[Career Advice / Choices at 16](https://nationalcareers.service.gov.uk/careers-advice/career-choices-at-16)

[Career Stories after your GCSEs](https://icould.com/stories/choices-after-your-gcses/)

**Exploring your options post 18 years:**

[The National Careers Service](https://nationalcareers.service.gov.uk/careers-advice/career-choices-at-18) has a section explaining options at 18 from Apprenticeships, Further training, university, employment as well as starting up your own business.

These are also explained in [all about school leavers](https://www.allaboutschoolleavers.co.uk/school-leaver-options).

[Not Going to Uni](https://www.notgoingtouni.co.uk/blogs) offers alternatives to university -

**3. How am I going to get there? What are the skills I need to develop?**

Thinking about where you are now and where you want to be, it’s likely that you may need to develop your skills to bridge the gap and gain further experience. Volunteering is a great way to help develop your transferable skills and listening to the Sound Waves podcasts we’ve heard how volunteers gain huge amounts from their experiences with the Trust. To help enhance or develop your skills you may want to check out some of the links below:

**Skills Development**

[Explore free online courses](https://www.myworldofwork.co.uk/learn-and-train/find-free-online-courses)

[Explore free online digital and numeracy personal development courses](https://nationalcareers.service.gov.uk/find-a-course/the-skills-toolkit)

[Skills to Succeed Academy](https://s2sacademy.com/) –

[Barclays Life Skills](https://barclayslifeskills.com/i-want-virtual-work-experience/school/virtual-work-experience) – also supports virtual work experience

[Future Learn](https://www.futurelearn.com/)

[Developing your transferable skills](https://nationalcareers.service.gov.uk/careers-advice/how-to-develop-your-soft-skills)

**Marketing yourself**

If you are looking for work experience or a paid internship or applying for jobs it is important to be able to identify and describe your skills and strengths and market yourself to others. Often people have a tendency to underestimate their skills, but this is not the time to be modest, go back and look at those self-assessment exercises, what are your strengths? think about the challenges you have overcome, maybe you’ve been a graduate volunteer think about your transferable skills, what did people value about your support? Highlight these transferable skills on your CV or maybe you are working on a personal statement for college or university – check out resources [here](https://www.ucas.com/undergraduate/applying-university/how-write-ucas-undergraduate-personal-statement).

**CVs**

There are lots of useful websites to help you prepare your [CV](https://nationalcareers.service.gov.uk/careers-advice/cv-sections) and [Cover letter](https://nationalcareers.service.gov.uk/careers-advice/covering-letter), such as [Prospects](https://www.prospects.ac.uk/careers-advice/cvs-and-cover-letters)

Depending on what stage you are at with your career you may want to create a LinkedIn profile to help market yourself, find out more [here](https://career-advice.jobs.ac.uk/professional/how-to-use-linkedin-to-full-advantage/)

**Applying for Jobs**

Searching and applying for jobs takes time, to help prepare [here](https://www.prospects.ac.uk/careers-advice/applying-for-jobs) are some useful tips, with further resources [here](https://www.ucas.com/careers-advice/getting-job). To find out more about job hunting during a pandemic[**here**](https://www.prospects.ac.uk/careers-advice/getting-a-job/job-hunting-in-a-pandemic)

**Got an Interview Coming up? –** Here are some useful websites to help you to prepare

[Prospects](https://www.prospects.ac.uk/careers-advice/interview-tips)

[National Careers Service](https://nationalcareers.service.gov.uk/careers-advice/interview-advice)

[Preparing for online or telephone interviews](https://www.myworldofwork.co.uk/getting-job/video-and-phone-interviews)

**4. Who is going to help me along the way?**

There are lots of people happy to help you along the way - Friends, family, teachers/ tutors, scout and guide leaders, mentors, careers advisors, contacts through the EMCT family and other charities like Clic Sargent and [Teenage Cancer Trust](https://teenagecancertrust.org/advice/employability-webinars-hosted-morgan-stanley). Build on your existing networks to find out who else might be able to help you. Find out more about networking [here](https://nationalcareers.service.gov.uk/careers-advice/networking)

You are also your best ally, be kind to yourself and be proud of all you have achieved. Sometimes doing something totally new can help you discover strengths you never knew you had, and really help to build your confidence and a positive mindset. We heard Izzy in the Sound Waves podcast talk about how she tops up her cup of confidence each time she is involved in a trip, building her confidence from each new experience with the EMCT.

To help you keep on track you when thinking about the future you might want to use the attached Career Plan.

Whatever stage you are at we’d encourage you to talk a qualified careers guidance professional, whether that’s at your school, college, university, workplace or talk to someone through the National Career Services of England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland:

[National Careers Service](https://nationalcareers.service.gov.uk/contact-us)

[Skills Development Scotland](https://www.myworldofwork.co.uk/)

[Careers Wales](https://careerswales.gov.wales/)

[Careers Service Northern Ireland](file:///C%3A%5CUsers%5CHayley%20Skinner%5CAppData%5CLocal%5CMicrosoft%5CWindows%5CINetCache%5CContent.Outlook%5CI3H6VPPA%5CCareers%20Service%20Northern%20Ireland)

Or if you are still struggling, email hayley.skinner@emcancertrust.org who will connect you with a careers adviser volunteering at the Trust.

Best of luck with your next steps.