

Adult retraining scheme rolled out to new regions

From today (16 October), the Government's Get Help to Retrain service will be offered to adults across the Leeds City Region, the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority, and the Heart of the South West to empower even more people to retrain and get on the path to a new job.

The pioneering online service is the first of a series of products that will make up the [Government's National Retraining Scheme](#), which is being developed to support eligible adults – particularly those whose jobs could change because of new technologies such as AI and automation – to kick start a new career.

The service helps adults to identify their existing skills, explore different types of job opportunities and find training courses to gain the skills they need to progress in the workplace. [The National Careers Service](#) is also providing dedicated support from qualified careers advisers to guide people through the process and provide expert advice.

Get Help to Retrain is now available in six major cities and regions across England after being successfully trialled in the West Midlands, North East and the Liverpool City Region. Eligible adults – those aged 24 and over, qualified below degree level and who are working below a certain wage threshold – living in one of the six regions can now try the service out for themselves and help to test and improve it further by visiting [here](#).

Education Minister, Michelle Donelan, said:

“The world of work is changing fast, which is why we are developing the National Retraining Scheme to help prepare adults whose jobs may change as a result of new technologies to thrive in the roles of the future.

“The Get Help to Retrain digital service is just the first step. We are rolling the service out gradually, testing and learning as we go. The good news is that eligible adults in all six areas can now try out the new service and help us make sure we get it right for those who need it.”

Following extensive user testing, adults accessing the service will benefit from new and improved features such as a more advanced skills matching tool to help them identify potential new job roles, and the ability to save their progress and return to their results.

Get Help to Retrain is being rolled out in stages so that it can be fully tested and developed further, before being made available nationwide in 2020. A series of additional products that will make up the full service are being developed and tested in parallel, before being released at different times.

The National Retraining Scheme – backed by £100 million of Government investment – is led and overseen by the National Retraining Partnership – a

unique partnership between Government, the CBI and the TUC – to ensure the collective voices of businesses and employees are heard.

Frances O’Grady, General Secretary of the British Trades Union Congress, said:

“All workers should have the chance to retrain and improve their skills. And this will be key as the labour market undergoes the transformation of new technology and automation in the coming years.

“The launch of this new phase of the National Retraining Scheme and its collaborative approach is good news. It will help to open up retraining to many more working people – preparing them for the jobs of the future.

“Union learning reps will play a crucial role in supporting workers to access advice and retraining opportunities available through the scheme.

“The challenge for the National Retraining Partnership is to develop a national programme that invests in the potential of all workers, delivering the skills we need for the growth sectors of the future.”

Matthew Fell, CBI Chief UK Policy Director, said:

“Seeing the Get Help to Retrain digital service rolled out to more locations across the country is promising news. Ensuring people’s skills are fit for the future is an essential part of improving productivity growth, wages and living standards up and down the country.

“As the world of work changes rapidly, the best way to help people access the high-quality training they need to succeed is by Government and employers working together. And once the National Retraining Scheme is well underway, it should kick start wider cross-government efforts to embrace technology in the workplace.”

The Government has also announced that, from today, technology companies and innovators can bid for a share of the [CareerTech Challenge Fund](#) – which is backed by £5.75 million of funding from the Government and innovation foundation [Nesta](#) – to develop cutting-edge solutions to improve the quality and efficiency of online training and guidance for adults looking for a change in career.

The [CareerTech Challenge Fund](#), previously known as the Adult Learning Technology Innovation Fund (ALTIF), will create innovative and engaging online solutions that help adults to upskill and move into exciting new roles.

Minister Donelan added:

“The CareerTech Challenge is a fantastic opportunity for innovators looking to put their ideas into action on a national scale.

“Everyone deserves access to high-quality teaching and, thanks to new technologies such as automation and Artificial Intelligence, there is

potential to drastically improve the quality of online learning for adult students.

“Investing in cutting edge technologies demonstrates our ongoing commitment to adult education and we hope it will encourage more adults to retrain and upskill in future.”

The ground-breaking CareerTech Challenge Fund is being developed in partnership with Nesta. Through the fund, innovators will be supported to test and apply the latest technology to develop bespoke, flexible, inclusive, and engaging online solutions that support more people into skilled employment.

Vicki Sellick, Nesta’s Executive Director of Programmes, said:

“As the world of work transforms, it is crucial that people feel confident in understanding what jobs will be available in the future in their local area and how to learn the skills to secure them.

“Technology offers a variety of exciting ways to equip people with the knowledge and tools to plan for secure and rewarding careers and improve working lives for people across England.”