

# Thousands of new Work Coach vacancies open across the UK

- Employment Minister calls for those who want to make a difference in their communities to apply now.
- Thousands of new expert Work Coaches to boost support for jobseekers and build back an even stronger economy.

From today (Thursday 10 September 2020), jobseekers across the country will be able to apply for one of thousands of new jobcentre Work Coach vacancies being offered by the Department for Work and Pensions, as part of its pledge to double the number of Work Coaches to 27,000 by March 2021.

Getting Britain back to work as quickly as possible is vital, as the UK strives to build back an even stronger and more resilient economy. Thousands of new Work Coaches will be at the forefront of this recovery, and will be deployed in communities across the country.

These expert Work Coaches will be trained in how to get the best out of people and make sure they have the support they need to get back into work.

Through a rapid recruitment plan, the department will have 4,500 Work Coaches in place by October 2020, with a further 9,000 by March next year.

Minister for Employment, Mims Davies said:

Getting Britain back into work is key to our national recovery and our DWP Work Coaches are on the frontline of this effort – boosting their numbers means we can build back stronger.

Our Work Coaches not only deliver financial support to millions of claimants across the country, but take time to listen, encourage, advise, and ensure everyone has access to the best support available – helping those facing a tough time get back on their feet sooner.

If you are someone who cares about your community and are keen to take on a fresh role helping others, then you can make a real difference by becoming a Work Coach and [I want you to join our team today](#).

Work Coaches will deliver:

- New flagship programmes, such as the £2 billion Kickstart scheme, a key part of the Government's Plan for Jobs, which puts young people receiving benefits first in line for new, high quality, six-month roles provided by employers from all sectors. The placements give them a wage for the duration and the chance to build their experience and professional networks.
- Increased support for 40,000 jobseekers of all ages will also be available through DWP's Sector-based Work Academy Placements, which received a £17 million funding boost this summer and will help people learn new skills through a mixture of work experience and training.
- Work Coaches will also offer vital retraining opportunities to people looking to start a new career, as well as support for those who need to update their skills and CV, or simply prepare for an interview.

For more information on applications and deadlines in your region, please visit the Work Coach [recruitment site](#).

Today's announcement to boost the frontline comes as jobcentres across the country continue to offer more support for jobseekers in Coronavirus-secure offices, as part of the Government's Plan for Jobs. While many appointments will still be conducted virtually, jobcentres are now open for customers to meet safely with their Work Coaches face-to-face when necessary.

Media enquiries for this press release – 020 3267 5144

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## **NDA announces Social Value Specialist**



## Hazel Blears – the NDA's Social Value Specialist

In this new role, Hazel will provide advice to the whole of the NDA group on how to increase the social, economic and environmental impact of its work to decommission and clean up the UK's oldest nuclear sites.

Hazel is a nationally recognised expert in this field and is Chair of the Social Investment Business and a Trustee of the Social Mobility Foundation. Hazel is a former cabinet minister and, during her time as an MP, was one of the authors of the Social Value Act.

The NDA group has seventeen sites across the UK, including Sellafield – the world's most complex nuclear site. The NDA group employs 16,000 people across 10 separate businesses and manages an annual budget of over £3 billion. Our unique supply chain includes many of the country's leading engineering and construction companies, and it is estimated around 45,000 jobs in the UK depend on nuclear decommissioning.

The NDA group is a significant local employer in West Cumbria, Caithness and North West Wales, and Hazel's work will focus on these regions in particular.

In her new role at the NDA, Hazel will look at a number of important areas:

- Maximising social value and impact across all of the NDA's sites, businesses and operations
- Creating social value from how the NDA procures goods and services
- Further improving the NDA's Socio-Economic Strategy
- Measuring social value and impact to help ensure a sustainable long-term benefit

Hazel said:

Since moving to Cumbria four years ago I have seen for myself the pivotal role that the NDA plays in the local and national economy. As well as undertaking a vital mission for the country, the nuclear industry is a key driver of employment and prosperity.

I welcome this opportunity to help the NDA ensure that its decisions about how it conducts its business are fully informed by the additional impact it can make by maximising its social value. I would also like to pay tribute to the ground-breaking work done in West Cumbria over many years by Professor John Fyfe, which laid the foundations for social value and responsible business. I am delighted to be able to continue his commitment to the local communities where the NDA operates.

NDA Director of Communication and Stakeholder Relations, Paul Vallance, added:

I am delighted that Hazel will be helping us and I echo her comments about Professor Fyfe and his instrumental role in shaping the way we work within the communities around our sites.

The social value of our work is enormous and we always consider the economic and social legacy at our sites, but the added focus Hazel will bring in her new role will help maximise the positive long-term impact we can make.

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## Game changers – getting our robots to speak with one voice

The popularity of our Game Changers programme is increasing – and it is setting a record number of challenges to industry and academia.

This week its latest online event brought together 31 representatives from 26 organisations across the UK, who each think they could have a solution to a unique challenge for the Sellafield site.

The session asked those attending how they could help us get the different robotic technologies we use on our mission to talk with one voice.

Chris Ballard, robotics and artificial intelligence integrated research team lead at Sellafield Ltd, said:

Our work on the Sellafield site is complex and we bring in technology from all over the world to achieve it. But this then creates problems, as this tech is often running on different operating systems in different languages.

In most industries this isn't an issue – each machine does its job in isolation so there's no need to standardise.

Because of this we weren't sure whether there would be many organisations out there who could provide what we need – but the interest surpassed our expectations.

It is a busy time for [Game Changers](#), the innovation programme is run by the [National Nuclear Laboratory\(NNL\)](#) and [FIS360](#), which identifies challenges on the Sellafield site and then pushes them out to the supply chain to come up with solutions.

There are currently 3 challenges on the go, with a further 8 planned, more at one time than we've run before.

Not only are Game Changers busier than ever, for the first time they'll be issuing challenges for NNL themselves and joint challenges with Dounreay. This represents an expansion of the programme across the NDA estate.

The programme has been running technical talks at lunch times which have been attended by up to 100 people from Sellafield Ltd and other organisations. For Sellafield Ltd in particular, this means that more people working on the mission understand the programme and how it might be able to help them with their technical challenges.

We are also seeing more of the work being realised – there has already been an active trial on the Sellafield site for one of the early challenges.

The pandemic has had an effect on others that were planned, but what we have seen is projects demonstrating their potential, which is attracting more funding to take them further.

An example of this is Rawwater Engineering Company's specialist alloy seals – a leak solution which was originally developed for oil and gas and received Game Changers funding to enable development work to make it suitable for nuclear.

It was then picked up by TEPCO, who funded a trial, and the Ministry of Defence, who have also funded work.

We are now exploring a specific application to use the technology on the Sellafield site – so it's come full circle.

Sellafield Ltd technical manager, Andrew Cooney said:

The Game Changers programme is a vital component to the Sellafield mission.

At its core it helps bring in the new ideas and technology we need to help us empty our ponds and silos, clean up the site and decommission our facilities.

At its simplest we're asking other organisations 'do you have technology and expertise that can help us do this?'. They don't have to be part of the nuclear sector – that's what makes Game Changers so important to us.

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## Universities Minister addresses sector ahead of academic year

Good morning,

I am delighted to be speaking to you today.

It is a shame that I cannot address you in person but it is a sign of the times that we are now completely used to talking to one another by screens. Yet only six months ago this would have seemed quite strange.

Let's face it – there have not been many upsides to the pandemic. But the resilience and innovation that you have shown has not only been impressive, but has also led to changes in the delivery and accessibility of Higher Education forever.

So, I would like to begin by thanking you and congratulating you for the leadership that you have brought to bear in this global crisis.

Let's be honest, these months have been incredibly difficult, for everyone involved.

And I have recognised the speed and agility shown by universities, how you have moved provision online, in some cases in just 24 hours, to make sure all your students were able to continue their studies.

We know that universities have a reputation for innovation, after all, it is what you do, but to see it transforming the learning experience for thousands of young people, that has been a revelation.

Take St George's University of London, where they have created virtual ward rounds with virtual patients, to mimic clinical decision making for their medical students.

While Master's students at Imperial College went on a virtual trip to the Pyrenees, conducting field work from hi-res photographs, Google Earth, and drone-scanned models of geological formations.

And Performing Arts students at Northampton University continued rehearsals of Shakespeare plays on video conferencing apps and completed two 90-minute films for their final production.

And now – now you are accepting a record percentage of 18-year-olds into university this year and a record level of disadvantaged students this year.

So it is thanks to you, that so many young people will still be able to fulfil their dream of studying at university. It is thanks to you, that our country still punches above its weight in the global higher education

rankings.

But I do not for a minute think this has been easy – you have navigated through lockdown and we have worked together to admit as many students as possible this year.

On that note I want to say a special thank you. Thank you for bending over backwards to unlock the dreams and opportunities of this year's cohort.

I know we have supported you with this, but you are the ones that have delivered on our agreed pledge to take all students this year and only offer deferred places as a last resort.

This pledge was agreed at the Higher Education Taskforce that I set up last month bringing representatives together from across the sector, including UUK, UCAS and the Office for Students.

My number one priority was to ensure that we support you to increase capacity, so that as many students as possible can study at their preferred university which their grades unlock.

This is exactly why we announced the removal of student number controls; why we announced the removal of student number caps for medical, dentistry and veterinary medical places.

It is why I established a sub working group on placements and have also worked with the Health Secretary to ensure we could add more placements for students in areas such as medicine and nursing.

That's why we announced a £10million capital fund, so providers will be able to buy equipment, and undertake and accelerate capital projects to enable them to take on additional students. And that's why we announced additional T Grant funding for high costs subjects.

But now we face new challenges and more than ever I want us to put students first in this post-COVID age.

The next few months will be very different for you and I want to thank you for all the hard work that you have done to ensure that social distancing measures are introduced, plus blended learning and Covid-secure measures

We agree with you – it is absolutely imperative that both students and staff are kept safe. Which is why we have updated guidance based on the most recent SAGE advice for higher education.

The Prime Minister announced a cautious road map to unlocking our society and economy and Universities are a vital part in this.

In fact, the latest Higher Education guidance from SAGE points to ramifications of not opening on student health – stating: "There is evidence of physical and mental health impacts from missing or limited access to education."

However, all the rules and processes in the world will make no impact unless they are followed and together we need to reinforce this message to all students and staff.

We as government will lead from the front, building on our guidance with a communications plan. But we are also strongly looking to you to continue to uphold your duty of care and responsibility to student and staff health and wellbeing, by following our guidance, reinforcing the importance of it and also enforcing it – both for students and staff.

Because the reality is that campuses can only stay open if the guidance is followed.

We must be clear that the position is one of – use the measures & follow the guidance or lose access to an open campus. Because, safety is paramount for both universities and the communities they are embedded in.

Now I want to acknowledge that I realise in the midst of all this, the last thing any of you need at this time is a load of red tape to wade through.

Responding to a pandemic, making decisions swiftly – all this demands an agile and immediate reaction and a clear sense of purpose.

So for this reason, having worked closely with the science minister, Amanda Solloway and the minister for innovation, Lord Bethell, today I am announcing a range of measures to reduce the bureaucratic burden across higher education and to free up your time to prioritise frontline teaching and research.

I want to help you focus your time and efforts on putting students first, not endless data.

And I am pleased to tell you, that we have worked with the OfS, UKRI and the Department of Health and Social Care to identify a number of sources of unnecessary bureaucracy that will be removed immediately, and we are going to look to cut this further with a system-wide review over the coming months.

I want you to have the time to focus on delivering high quality education – not on filling out forms.

So the measures outlined in today's policy document include: reductions in the data universities and other HE providers will need to supply; reductions in monitoring measures, and reviews of data collections, including a wholesale review of the National Student Survey.

In addition, UKRI is implementing a set of major changes to how it works with applicants for funding, aimed at reducing the burden placed on researchers and innovators applying to UKRI whilst ensuring investment continues in the best ideas and people.

This builds on reforms that regulators, funding bodies and institutions are already making. This must be a continuing, collective effort in which you and all providers have a part to play.

In essence, my message here is clear – I do not want you weighed down with paperwork. Because you are in the business of educating, researching, as well as transforming and catapulting lives.

With this in mind, I also want to help you to maximise your role by enabling you to be more flexible and accessible.

Now I know universities are certainly no strangers to flexible learning from accelerated two-year degrees, degree apprenticeships, support for part-time learners, Institutes of Technology and other work to develop high quality higher technical education.

And we have exempted STEM subjects from restrictions on loan funding and introduced conversion courses in a wider range of subjects, including Artificial Intelligence for example.

Because in a rapidly changing technological environment it is vital that people have more opportunities to change career.

The Institute of Coding for example has developed bite-sized, short online courses in digital skills which launched in December 2019 and already has nearly 500,000 students.

But, we must build on this momentum.

You will know that I have spoken before about how our rigid Higher Education system needs to be opened up and I fully understand that we need to give you the tools and support to do this.

Our system incentivises and promotes the traditional three-year course. It does not enable readily accessible bitesized learning for people looking to upskill and reskill.

Yet the labour market today is made up of people who do multiple careers in one lifetime. So, I want to enable you to feed this need and also foster a culture of lifelong learning.

You will remember that the Augar review looked in detail at flexible learning and argued for widespread changes to the organisation and funding of higher education to enable that flexibility. And we will respond in parallel with the Spending Review. Rest assured, the global pandemic has not and will not throw us off course.

Because I am determined to ensure we support you to drive up the quality in Higher Education, increase the flexibility and accessibility plus continue to put students at the heart of all our decision making.

This brings me onto my final point today, something that worries me deeply. The mental health pressures that the past few months have placed on students – exacerbating and creating mental problems.

The mental health and wellbeing of students is one of my top priorities and let's face it – a critical part of each university's offer to students is

increasingly their wellbeing and mental health support.

Supporting young people as they make the step up from school or college is absolutely vital in helping them to get the most out of their experience at university.

But now – now they have experienced something so very different with months out of formal education.

Research shows the majority of young people arrive at university unprepared for what it is like to live independently. So, imagine how this year's cohort will feel?

I have worked with the Office for Students to help identify that providers can draw upon Student Premium funding worth around £256 million for the academic year 2020/21 towards student hardship funds, including paying for mental health support.

And when the pandemic struck, I wrote to all Universities and HE providers asking them to make sure that they continue to support students, including by bolstering welfare services.

And I want to thank you, and congratulate you, for your response. Welfare teams were quick off the mark in transforming mental health and wellbeing services and I have seen so many examples of good practice.

Such as, the University of Roehampton's proactive student support which saw over 5,000 students receive a phone call from their academic guidance tutor within the first three weeks of remote delivery. This was followed up by further calls and guidance to support them in getting access to the learning and university support services they needed.

Whereas the University of Northampton also moved their counselling services to over the phone, and provided video support and instant chat messaging. The team set up a service that mirrored the normal daily drop-in service, enabling students to book a drop-in slot by ordering a free ticket via Eventbrite.

And Just last month I announced some important additional support to students during this time.

The Student Space platform which has been funded by £3million from the Office for Students and is led by mental health charity Student Minds. It is designed to bridge the gaps in support for students arising from this unprecedented situation generated by the pandemic and works alongside existing services.

Students can access this support directly by phone or text and there are a range of resources available on the website. It also gives details of the support available at each university, and their tools to help students.

Mental health is an area I intend to keep shining a light on – to support our students with the challenges that they may face, arguably – more

important now than ever.

So, in conclusion I want to reiterate my thanks. From entirely online Freshers' fairs at Coventry University, to the 'Survive and Thrive' seminars at Buckinghamshire New University.

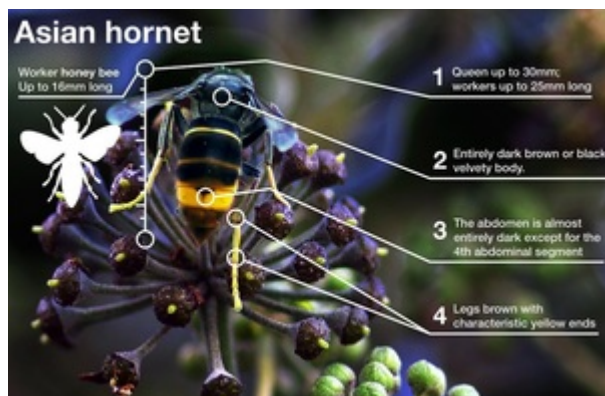
I am confident that you are all going the extra mile to put students during this pandemic, so thank you.

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## Asian hornet identified in Hampshire

### News story

Beekeepers and members of the public were today asked to remain vigilant after an Asian hornet was spotted in the Gosport area of Hampshire.



The National Bee Unit has confirmed the sighting and monitoring is underway to detect any other Asian hornets in the vicinity.

The Asian hornet is smaller than our native hornet and poses no greater risk to human health than our native wasps and hornets. However, they do pose a risk to honey bees and work is already underway to monitor for any hornet activity and to identify any nests nearby.

This is the first confirmed UK sighting since October 2019, when two related nests were detected and destroyed near Christchurch, Dorset.

Defra's Chief Plant and Bee Health Officer Nicola Spence said:

By ensuring we are alerted to possible sightings as early as possible, we can take swift and effective action to stamp out the threat posed by Asian hornets. That's why we are working at speed to locate and investigate any nests in the area following this confirmed sighting.

While the Asian hornet poses no greater risk to human health than other wasps or hornets, we recognise the damage they can cause to honey bee colonies and other beneficial insects.

Please continue to look out for any Asian hornets and if you think you've spotted one, report your sighting through the Asian hornet app or online.

It is important to take care not to approach or disturb a nest. Asian hornets are not generally aggressive towards people but an exception to this is when they perceive a threat to their nest.

If you suspect you have seen an Asian hornet you should report this using the iPhone and Android app 'Asian Hornet Watch' or by using our [online report form](#). Alternatively, e-mail [alertnonnative@ceh.ac.uk](mailto:alertnonnative@ceh.ac.uk).

Please include a photograph if you can safely obtain one.

[Identification guides and more information](#) are available and if you keep bees you should keep up to date with the latest situation on the [gov.uk sightings page](#) and [on BeeBase](#).

Notes to editors:

- The cost of eradication on private land will be met by APHA.
- The Great Britain Non-native Species Secretariat is a joint venture between Defra, the Scottish Government and the Welsh Government to tackle the threat of invasive species. [More information can be found on their website](#).
- For details on the appearance of an Asian hornet, please refer to [the BeeBase guide](#) or the [non-native species identification guide](#).
- Photographs of the Asian hornet are available on [our Flickr account](#).
- The Asian hornet (*Vespa velutina*) is not to be confused with the Asian giant hornet (*Vespa mandarinia*) which has been found in North America fewer than 10 times as of August 2020.

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