Careers in dentistry
Providing dental care is a team responsibility, and each member of the dental team has a vital role to play in the promotion and maintenance of dental health.

The focus of dental care is prevention; educating the public on how to look after their mouths and teeth. When tooth decay does occur, however, dental team members can use a variety of sophisticated techniques to treat the patient’s problems. Members of the dental team can pursue their careers in a variety of areas: the high street dental practice, the salaried primary dental care service, dental hospitals, universities and the armed forces.

Dentistry provides a range of opportunities in an interesting and challenging vocation. The profession has undergone significant change in recent years, and more responsibility has been devolved to the dental team. Dental care professionals (DCPs), such as dental nurses, dental hygienists, therapists and dental technicians play an integral part in the services provided by the modern dental practice. To work in dentistry, dentists and DCPs must be registered with the General Dental Council (GDC), the profession’s regulatory body.
The dental team

Dentists

Dentists have the opportunity to pursue a career offering an intellectual and practical challenge, a service to society and a respected place in the community. Essential qualities are a liking for people and an interest in their welfare, as well as good eyesight and manual dexterity.

Oral and dental health is an important part of general health. The ability to smile, eat and talk without pain, discomfort or embarrassment contributes greatly to a sense of well-being. Dentists are healthcare professionals who are experts in the diagnosis and treatment of a range of problems that affect the mouth and teeth. This demands diagnostic, clinical and social skills. Some dentists are teachers or lecturers in dental schools; others are employed in hospitals or community clinics. The majority will work in general dental practice, often managing a team that could include other dentists, dental nurses, hygienists, therapists and receptionists - so good administrative and managerial abilities are needed.

Qualifications

There are fifteen dental schools located in major cities throughout the UK, which offer a total of around 1000 places each year. The dental degree course is usually five years long and leads to a Bachelor in Dental Surgery (BDS or BChD). The course includes a sound academic education combined with theoretical and practical training in all aspects of dentistry. Subjects studied include anatomy, physiology, biochemistry, pathology, behavioural sciences and dental materials science, as well as clinical skills in all dental disciplines. The academic requirements for entry vary between dental schools and typically include top grades in the sciences. You must check these with the individual schools; contact details and information on entry requirements are available at UCAS. Some dental schools offer a foundation year for suitable candidates lacking the relevant science subjects. Some dental schools now run a clinical aptitude test (UKCAT) as part of the selection process.

The Peninsula Dental School and Aberdeen Dental School restrict entry to graduates with a good honours degree in a biomedically related or health care professional subject. This is a four year course. Some of the other dental schools now offer the four-year degree in addition to the five-year degree.

Dentistry as a degree course is oversubscribed and competition for places is extremely high. Being able to demonstrate an interest in dentistry is essential, and all dental schools now require their applicants to have a minimum of two weeks’ work experience in a general dental practice. There is no central organisation providing work experience places in dental practices, so finding one is down to every individual student. You must be aware of patient confidentiality issues and also of the health and safety issues linked to dental practice when you agree to undertake such a placement; the practice will explain this to you.

Once qualified, dentists and all members of the dental team must keep their knowledge and skills up to date. This is called mandatory continuing professional development (CPD). The dental regulator, the General Dental Council (GDC) specifies the CPD requirements for all dental professionals. An extensive range of short courses is available, as well as courses leading to postgraduate qualifications, often on a part-time basis.

The GDC inspects all dental schools for quality-assurance reasons. It also specifies the curriculum. At the time of writing, the GDC has embarked on a review of the dental curriculum, replacing the list of subjects with a list of expected learning outcomes (to be finalised in the second half of 2011). Both documents can be seen on their website:

the current curriculum
the proposed new curriculum

The GDC also expects dental students to be aware of and behave in accordance with certain ethical standards. Dental schools have a role in instilling the profession’s principles in the dentists and dental care professionals of the future. The GDC’s guidance document Student Fitness to Practise, as well as the document on learning outcomes when it is finalised, will apply to all dentists and dental care professionals.
Practice
After qualification there are a variety of areas in which you can choose to practise.

General dental practice
Most dentists, after graduating, choose to work in general dental practice. The first step is to undertake vocational training/foundation training (VT/FT) - a one year period of paid, supervised training in an approved training practice. A second year in another field of dentistry - often in a hospital or community setting - can be added to provide a more complete overview of the career opportunities.

Following VT/FT, dentists usually enter an established dental practice as an associate, working on a self-employed basis in a practice owned by someone else. Associates working in the NHS in England and Wales are referred to as ‘performers’. Some dentists work on an employed basis as assistants (referred to as ‘employed performers’ if working under the NHS in England and Wales). After gaining experience of general practice, many associates opt to become practice owners by buying an established practice from a retiring dentist, starting a new one from scratch or buying into an existing practice as a partner. Working in general practice provides an opportunity to provide patients with continuing care. An aptitude for business is also essential; dentists are managers and team leaders running small businesses.

There is no formal career structure in general practice, so you can further your knowledge at your own pace and undertake courses in areas that interest you.

General dental practice allows you, to some extent, to choose where you want to work (opportunities are available throughout the UK) and determine your working hours. Most practices offer both NHS and private dental treatment, although some are exclusively private or NHS. Charges for treatment provided under the NHS are fixed nationally, whereas private charges are set by individual dentists and so vary between practices.

Being a self-employed dentist is demanding and the risks involved in running your own business can be stressful, but it can be an immensely rewarding area of practice with a high level of autonomy.

Hospital dentistry
Hospital practice is highly specialised and covers oral surgery, restorative dentistry, children’s dentistry and orthodontics. Hospital dentists tend to see fewer patients than those in general practice, as the treatment they provide is usually more complex. Patients with certain medical conditions, congenital abnormalities or facial injuries are sometimes referred to hospital for their dental treatment.

Unlike most dentists in practice, hospital dentists receive a salary. They generally work as part of a team and have access to specialised knowledge and facilities. However, the hours are not as flexible and some posts require dentists to be available ‘on call’, which can result in some long working sessions.

Within the hospital service there are defined career and training pathways, which require recognised postgraduate qualifications.

Salaried Primary Dental Care Service (SPDCS)
The SPDCS provides dental care for patients in the community with special needs: young children who need special help, the elderly and housebound and patients with mental or physical disabilities. Work in the SPDCS can be demanding but very rewarding and dentists often have the opportunity to undertake research and take on managerial responsibilities. As with the hospital service, these posts are salaried and there is a defined career structure. It is possible to undertake vocational training/foundation training in the SPDCS.

Armed forces
Dentists in the armed forces provide comprehensive dental care for service men and women, both abroad and in the UK. Dentists hold a commissioned rank and there is a structured career path. If you choose to practise in the armed forces, financial scholarships may be available during your dental studies. It is possible to undertake vocational training/foundation training in the armed forces sector.

Dentists in industry
Larger companies (oil companies and car manufacturers, for example) sometimes employ dentists to provide a dental service to their employees. These posts are usually salaried but the work undertaken is similar to that of a dentist in general practice. These positions are relatively rare.

University teaching and research
Research is undertaken at universities and is usually combined with teaching at the university dental school, providing the opportunity to pursue a particular interest in great detail. University dental teachers have postgraduate qualifications and can progress to become senior lecturers or professors.
Registration and professional ethics
On qualifying and before being able to practise, dentists must register with the GDC, the profession’s governing body. Dentists must follow ethical guidelines in their dealings with patients, and failure to do so may call their continued registration into question. Once registered with the GDC, a dentist must undertake 250 hours of CPD over five-yearly cycles to keep their knowledge and skills up to date throughout their professional career. Some areas, such as medical emergencies, infection control and radiology updates are mandatory subjects throughout the dentist’s life.

Further information
Information on individual dental courses is available from dental schools. The addresses are available on UCAS. Talking to your own dentist may be helpful; most are happy to discuss their work and its rewards. You may even be able to help out in a practice for a while to get a clearer idea of what the career offers.

Information on general issues in dentistry, for example on regulatory or political issues, can be found in the media section of the British Dental Association website.

Dental Care Professionals (DCPs)
Dental care professionals (dental nurses, hygienists, therapists, orthodontic therapists, dental technicians and clinical dental technicians) are members of the dental team working with dentists in a variety of settings caring for patients. They are registered with the General Dental Council (GDC) and have to comply with its standards and ethical guidance. They are also subject to mandatory continuing professional development (CPD) requirements. Each DCP must carry out 150 hours of CPD over a five-year cycle, and core subjects include medical emergencies, infection control and radiology updates.

Dental nurses
Dental nurses are an essential part of the dental team, helping to ensure that the patient is well cared for. It is important that a dental nurse has a welcoming and reassuring manner and is seen to be calm, friendly and efficient.

Chairside
A dental nurse works closely with the dentist, providing assistance throughout a patient’s visit. Assisting the dentist includes a variety of procedures such as ensuring the correct instruments and equipment are available, preparing the various materials required and cleaning and sterilising the used instruments. The dental nurse is responsible for implementing the infection control policy to ensure there is no risk of infection to anyone working in the surgery or attending the practice for treatment. Additional duties may include processing radiographs, helping the dentist to record information about the patient’s oral health, and stock control. There are also further options to develop skills and knowledge throughout the career.

Chairside work needs to be very precise, so a dental nurse should have a high degree of manual dexterity.

In general dental practice, a dental nurse may be asked to help at reception - making appointments, collecting money and getting involved in the administration of the practice. The varying roles that are undertaken will depend upon the individual practice and interests of the nurse.

Personality
A dental nurse is responsible for looking after the patient and helping the dentist to provide the treatment needed as efficiently and smoothly as possible, so needs to be flexible, adaptable and reassuring.

Surgery work is often pressurised and a dental nurse needs to be able to work quickly, keep calm and cope with changes of plan (often with little or no notice). Being able to work as part of a team with the dentist who is under equal amounts of stress is essential.

A dental nurse often has opportunity to put a patient at ease and to recognise if a patient is particularly nervous. Patients are sometimes more willing to confide in a dental nurse about any difficulties they are experiencing, which may be important for the dentist to know, especially if it affects their dental treatment. In this way, a dental nurse can improve communication between the dentist and patient.
Organisation
A dental nurse needs to be able to organise the surgery so that essential equipment and materials are easily accessible. Learning to anticipate the instruments and materials needed by the dentist will contribute towards a calm and efficient running of the surgery and lead to good teamwork with the dentist. An organised approach to work is therefore essential.

Training
Dental nurses must either hold a recognised qualification and be registered with the GDC or be working towards registration. The National Certificate in Dental Nursing and the National/Scottish Vocational Qualification in Dental Nursing (Level 3) are recognised. Other qualifications, such as the Certificate of Higher Education in Dental Nursing; Diploma in Dental Nursing, and Foundation Degree in Dental Nursing, are currently provisionally approved by the GDC. Qualifications are undertaken via a mixture of practical work experience and attendance at the course.

Dental nurse training can be undertaken through individual arrangements with a practice or via an apprenticeship.

Career
After gaining a qualification in dental nursing, various options for further training are available allowing dental nurses to undertake additional responsibilities. These include post-qualification certificates in oral health education, conscious sedation and radiography. It is also possible to become a dental nurse tutor, usually after obtaining a teaching qualification. Many dental nurses go on to train as a dental hygienists and therapists.

Workplace
Most dental nurses are employed in general dental practice but some are employed by the salaried primary care dental service, the hospital service, the armed forces and companies providing dental care for their employees.

Dental hygienists and dental therapists
Dental hygienists and dental therapists work in all sectors of dentistry providing clinical and educational care to help patients achieve and maintain good oral hygiene. Working closely with a dentist, who undertakes the initial examination of the patient, hygienists and therapists are uniquely qualified to assist in the prevention and treatment of oral disease, focusing on preventing gum disease by scaling and polishing teeth and developing home care plans with patients to maintain their oral health. Cleaning teeth efficiently is a far more complex and skilled procedure than most people realise. Hygienists and therapists must be able to identify those areas where patients have difficulty in removing plaque and work with them to modify their toothbrushing technique to ensure effective cleaning. Many patients need to be shown how to clean the surfaces between the teeth.

Dental hygienists and therapists need to have a flexible approach to team working. Good communication skills and a high level of manual dexterity to undertake complex oral treatments are essential.

Once qualified, hygienists and therapists need to keep their skills and knowledge up to date through continuing professional development (CPD).

Training
The majority of training establishments offer a combined course in dental hygiene and dental therapy leading to a combined diploma. Some combined courses have ‘stopping off’ points for students who are unable to meet the criteria for the full combined diploma. In these situations a diploma in dental hygiene or certificate in oral health studies may be awarded, depending on the extent of the studies undertaken. A few training establishments continue to offer courses in dental hygiene alone, where students receive no training in dental therapy. A list of the training centres and contact details can be found on the website of the British Association of Dental Hygiene and Therapy.

Training in dental hygiene and dental therapy can be undertaken in various ways:

- Diploma in Dental Hygiene & Therapy – a two-year full-time course
- BSc in Oral Health Science – three-year full-time course
- BSc (Hons) - four years full time (completion of this course will allow individuals to apply for graduate entry dentistry)

Entry requirements for these courses vary and can be seen at UCAS.
Registration with the GDC
Graduates of the Diploma in Dental Hygiene programme are entitled to register with the General Dental Council as Dental Hygienists. Graduates of the combined Diploma in Dental Hygiene and Dental Therapy are entitled to register with the General Dental Council as both Dental Hygienists and Dental Therapists (two registrations are required).

Where to work
The majority of dental hygienists and therapists work in one or more general dental practices, either on a full-time or part-time basis. Both NHS and private treatment may be provided. Dental hygienists and therapists are also employed in the SPDCS, the hospital service, the armed forces, industry and dental schools.

Orthodontic therapists
Orthodontic therapists are a relatively new group of dental care professional. They assist dentists in carrying out orthodontic treatment and provide some aspects of treatment themselves. A qualification as a dental care professional and at least one year’s practice experience is required to undertake the training. Training providers are listed at GDC - Orthodontic therapy programmes & qualifications.

Dental technician/technologist
Although their role is rarely recognised by patients, dental technicians are an essential part of the dental team. There are around 7,000 dental technicians registered in the UK today.

Dental technicians are responsible for making a wide range of dental appliances including crowns, bridges, orthodontic appliances and dentures, working to the prescription of the dentist for each patient. Without the help of a dental technician, dentists would be unable to offer the full range of services to their patients. A high degree of technical skill and a high level of manual dexterity are essential, along with some artistic flair.

There are four particular areas:

- Prosthodontic technicians design and make dentures, which can either be made of acrylic or chrome cobalt
- Conservation technicians provide crown and bridge work. A wide range of materials can be used, including metal alloys and gold or porcelain
- Orthodontic technicians make braces to correct tooth positions
- Maxillo-facial technicians (sometimes also known as maxillofacial prosthetists) work in hospital oral surgery, ophthalmic, cancer and burns units, helping to reconstruct the faces of patients damaged by accident or disease.

A dental technician can either choose to work as a generalist producing a wide variety of technical items or develop a special interest in one of the above areas.

Workplace
The majority of dental technicians are employed in commercial dental laboratories but they can also work within general dental practices, hospitals, the SPDCS and the armed forces.

Commercial dental laboratories range from single-handed businesses to large multi-site laboratories offering a comprehensive service. Technicians usually carry out work for local dentists although some laboratories offer a postal service, dealing with dentists from a wide area.

A technician working in a dental hospital may be attached to the maxillofacial department and be involved with making larger prostheses including eyes, nose and ears. It is also possible for technicians to be involved in research or teach undergraduate dental students some of the technical aspects of dentistry.

Career development
Additional qualifications allow a technician to become an instructor technician. Or there is the option of becoming a laboratory owner or a senior technician with responsibility for quality control or management within a larger laboratory. Further training as a clinical dental technician is also possible. Another option is within sales for a laboratory or trade company.
Education and training
Dental technicians must be registered with the GDC. The registrable qualifications are:

- BTEC National Diploma
- Diploma in Dental Technology
- Foundation Degree in Dental Technology
- BSc in Dental Technology

The entry requirements to training courses vary according to the qualification and course provider; information is available from GDC - Dental technology programmes and qualifications.

Clinical dental technicians
A clinical dental technician (CDT) is a qualified dental technician who has undertaken extra training to provide some, limited, treatment to patients. A prescription from a dentist is necessary for CDTs to provide services to a patient. There is one exception to this rule: CDTs can provide full dentures to patients without any teeth.

The dental trade
The dental trade is a major international industry providing a full range of products to the dental profession and dental laboratories. The awareness of dental health care is growing across the world, and it follows that the dental industry must grow to keep pace with the demand. This section deals with the market, products and general framework for the manufacture and distribution of dental products.

The market
Dental trade companies supply dental practices and laboratories with equipment, hand instruments and general consumables. Estimates in 2003 put the total retail market for professional dental products at £480 million, excluding over-the-counter sales of toothpaste, toothbrushes and other consumer dental products.

Production
The products are divided into groups which include:

- Burs and abrasives
- Infection control products
- Laboratory equipment
- Diamond instruments
- Radiographic equipment
- Precious and non-precious metals
- Filling materials
- Root canal instruments
- Handpieces
- Surgery equipment
- Impression materials
- Instruments

Most manufacturers specialise in just one or two of the product areas. A few large companies manufacture products in most of the areas listed above and a number of non-dental manufacturers produce specialised items for the dental market - e.g. local anaesthetic needles and X-ray films.

Distribution

Distributors, wholesalers and importers
Importers, wholesalers and distributors work together to ensure that products get to the end users. Some products need specialist handling - a range of diamond burs, for example, made by an overseas company will probably enter the country via a specialist distributor who in turn sells to dental dealers.

The manufacturer generally decides on the best distribution channel for the product. Some overseas companies establish their own distribution subsidiaries in the UK or appoint a specialist distributor. Distribution involves marketing and distribution functions:

- importing and keeping an adequate stock of the product
- commissioning national advertising, promotions and public relations
- demonstrating the product through exhibitions, meetings and personal visits to dentists and laboratories
- providing product training for dealer staff
- distributing products to end users via dental retailers who make the final sale.

Dental dealers
Dealers, sometimes referred to as retailers, are the final link in the distribution chain. They buy products from manufacturers and distributors, which they then sell - with their associated services - directly to the end user. Dental dealers hold products ranging from the smallest items such as burs and matrix bands, to large capital equipment, such as dental chairs, units and X-ray systems.
Dental dealers vary from small independents serving local areas to large companies covering the whole UK market. They are highly competitive; accurate interpretation and selection of orders combined with speed of delivery are essential. Many provide illustrated catalogues which customers can use for placing orders. Sales promotion material, announcing special prices or introductory offers, is often sent out with monthly statements to customers.

Regardless of the scale of their operation, dental dealers need to be well informed on the design, characteristics, benefits and use of the equipment they sell, as well as undertaking repairs and services. Some suppliers specialise in a particular area of dentistry, such as implants or orthodontics.

Sales representatives
Dealers and some manufacturers employ a sales force to visit dental practices, laboratories and hospitals regularly. The sales force consists of highly trained people with a wide-ranging knowledge of dentistry who can speak with authority about their company’s products and services.

Sales representatives sell new products, take orders for items required on a regular basis, answer customers’ questions and build up a rapport between their company and the customer. These visits are usually backed by telesales to take orders for routine usage items. This system allows the visiting salesperson more time to concentrate on new products and the customer’s wider requirements.

Careers
Further information on careers in the dental trade can be obtained from the British Dental Trade Association (see contacts section for contact details) which is a membership organisation for dental companies.

Useful contacts
Dental Schools
Dental schools and the courses on offer are listed on the website of the University and Colleges Admission Service (www.ucas.ac.uk). As the dental schools all set their own requirements, it is important to check this website as early as possible.

Dental hygiene, dental therapy and dental technology courses are also listed with UCAS. For dental nursing courses, the course accreditation bodies are the National Examining Board for Dental Nurses - for the National Certificate in Dental Nursing or the City and Guilds - for the National Vocational Qualification.

For information on dentistry, letters should be addressed to the Dental School at the University as listed below. If you require information on courses for dental nursing, dental hygiene or dental therapy then your enquiry should not be addressed to the University but to the School of Dental Nursing/Hygiene/Therapy at the NHS Hospital Trust at the addresses listed below.

Aberdeen
The University of Aberdeen (graduate entry only)
University Office
King’s College
Aberdeen
AB24 3FX
Tel: 01224 273 504
Fax: 01224 272 034
Email: sras@abdn.ac.uk
Web: www.abdn.ac.uk/sras

Belfast
Queen’s University Belfast
University Road
Belfast
BT7 1NN
Tel: 02890 973 838
Fax: 02890 975 151
Email: admissions@qub.ac.uk
Web: www.qub.ac.uk

Birmingham
The University of Birmingham
Edgbaston
Birmingham
B15 2TT
Tel: 0121 415 8900
Fax: 0121 414 7159
Email: admissions@bham.ac.uk
Web: www.bham.ac.uk
Careers in dentistry

Bristol
University of Bristol
Undergraduate Admissions Office
Senate House
Tyndall Avenue
Bristol
BS8 1TH
Tel: 0117 928 9000
Fax: 0117 925 1424
Email: ug-admissions@bristol.ac.uk
Web: www.bristol.ac.uk

Cardiff
Cardiff University
PO Box 927
30-36 Newport Road
Cardiff
CF24 0DE
Tel: 02920 879 999
Fax: 02920 876 138
Email: admissions@cardiff.ac.uk
Web: www.cardiff.ac.uk

Dundee
University of Dundee
Dundee
DD1 4HN
Tel: 01382 383 838
Fax: 01382 388 150
Email: ContactUs@dundee.ac.uk
Web: www.dundee.ac.uk/admissions/undergraduate

Glasgow
University of Glasgow
The University of Glasgow
The Fraser Building
65 Hillhead Street
Glasgow
G12 8QF
Tel: 0141 330 6062
Fax: 0141 330 2961
Email: student.recruitment@glasgow.ac.uk
Web: www.glasgow.ac.uk

Leeds
University of Leeds
The University of Leeds
Woodhouse Lane
Leeds
LS2 9JT
Tel: 0113 343 3999
Email: admissions@leeds.ac.uk
Web: www.leeds.ac.uk

Liverpool
The University of Liverpool
The Foundation Building
Brownlow Hill
Liverpool
L69 7ZX
Tel: 0151 794 2000
Fax: 0151 708 6502
Email: ugrecruitment@liv.ac.uk
Web: www.liv.ac.uk

London
Eastman (postgraduate only)
Eastman Dental Hospital
256 Gray’s Inn Road
London
WC1X 8LD
Tel: 020 3456 1038
Web: www.eastman.ucl.ac.uk

King’s College London (University of London)
Strand
London
WC2R 2LS
Tel: 020 7848 5454
Fax: 020 7848 7171
Email: prospective@kcl.ac.uk
Web: www.kcl.ac.uk

Queen Mary, University of London
Mile End Road
London
E1 4NS
Tel: 020 7882 5555
Fax: 020 7882 5500
Email: admissions@qmul.ac.uk
Web: www.qmul.ac.uk

Manchester
The University of Manchester
Oxford Road
Manchester
M13 9PL
Tel: 0161 275 2077
Fax: 0161 275 2106
Email: admissions@manchester.ac.uk
Web: www.manchester.ac.uk
Dental hygiene and dental therapy

Most of the dental schools listed above will provide training in dental hygiene and therapy. Additional training in this profession is also available at the following educational establishments:

Aldershot (for UK armed forces personnel only)
ICT Centre, Birmingham Research Park
Vincent Drive
Edgbaston
Birmingham
B15 2SQ
Web: www.mod.uk

Edinburgh
School of Health Sciences
Edinburgh Dental Institute
Level 4, Lauriston Building
Lauriston Place
Edinburgh
EH3 9YW
Tel: 0131 536 4937
Web: www.epdi.org.uk

Professional associations and other useful addresses

General Dental Council
37 Wimpole Street
London
W1G 8DQ
Tel: 020 7887 3800
Website: www.gdc-uk.org

British Association of Dental Nurses
PO Box 4, Room 200 Hillhouse International Business Centre
Thornton-Cleveleys
FY5 4QD
Tel: 01253 338 360
Email: admin@badn.org.uk
Website: www.badn.org.uk

Dental nursing

Many further education colleges in the UK provide courses in dental nursing. The accrediting institutions National Examining Board for Dental Nurses and City and Guilds can provide information on the courses they have accredited. Additional information on courses is available from the British Association for Dental Nurses or the General Dental Council.

Dental technology

Many dental technology course providers will be listed at UCAS. In addition it might be useful to check www.gdc-uk.org for further providers.
Vocational/foundation training 
organising bodies (dentists only)

Vocational training/foundation training is overseen by the regional deaneries throughout the UK. More information on the programme and the curriculum is available from the Conference of Postgraduate Deans and Directors. A list of regional deaneries is also available from their website.

Further information

A large variety of careers information is available for students undertaking GCSE and A-levels. Careers information centres, university admission offices, careers fairs run by schools and outside organisations, as well as the information provided by professional organisations will all be useful in helping students to consider their options. A new national careers service for England is also planned to open in April 2012, providing an online and helpline service to anybody seeking careers guidance.