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## **132m WORKING YEARS WASTED BY BRITISH EMPLOYEES IN THE WRONG JOB**

New research from the Skills Commission released ahead of the publication of its information, advice and guidance inquiry has revealed the vital need for good lifelong careers advice in Britain.

The study showed that a fifth (21 per cent) do not feel they are in a job that makes best use of their skills and a further 41 per cent have been in such a job in the past.

Such is the impact of this wasted talent that each of these people spends on average 4 years and 10 months in a job which doesn't make the best use of their skills. Combined this means a total of 132m working years in Britain have been spent by people in the wrong job.

And while just four per cent who escaped such a job used formal careers advice services to move on to their next position, almost two-thirds (59 per cent) of those currently in such a dissatisfying job feel good quality careers advice could improve their lives. Among the general working population 47 per cent feel that receiving good careers advice now would help their career prospects.

Additional research also revealed the levels of engagement and satisfaction with official careers advice provision:

- 65 per cent of all people have received formal careers advice during their life
- 27 per cent of 18-24s have received advice from Connexions, 15 per cent from Jobcentre Plus, 63 per cent from school and 66 per cent from college or university
- 6 per cent of people have received advice from Learndirect, 13 per cent from Jobcentre Plus, 41 per cent from school and 37 per cent from college or university
- Two-thirds (66 per cent) found this formal advice very or fairly useful, with 7 per cent finding it not useful at all.

Andy Powell, member of the Skills Commission and CEO of Edge, commented:  
"These findings demonstrate the very real need for high quality formal careers advice in the UK. We are shocked at the sheer depth of dissatisfaction Britons seem to feel for their work and how their skills are under utilised on a massive scale.

"We urge the government to listen very carefully to the recommendations of the Skills Commission. Information, advice and guidance for all adults and young people must be given the appropriate funding and political support it deserves."

The role of informal advice and guidance to 67 per cent of the population was also highlighted by the research:

- 41 per cent sought informal advice from friends (76 per cent of 18-24 year olds)
- 37 per cent from the internet (61 per cent of 18-24s)
- 32 per cent from their parents (70 per cent of 18-24s)
- 25 per cent from other family members (47 per cent of 18-24s)

Professor Michael Thorne, Chair of the Skills Commission's inquiry into information, advice and guidance and Vice Chancellor of Anglia Ruskin University, said:

"In the new world order, informal sources of advice from social networking sites, mentors and employers will become increasingly important. These results highlight how essential a mix of formal and informal sources of advice are to the public."

Visit [www.policyconnect.org.uk/skills/sc](http://www.policyconnect.org.uk/skills/sc) or [www.edge.co.uk](http://www.edge.co.uk) for more information.

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All research figures, unless otherwise stated, are from YouGov Plc. Total sample size was 2,087 adults. Fieldwork was undertaken between 11th - 13th March 2008. The survey was carried out online. The figures have been weighted and are representative of all GB adults (aged 18+).

There are 44,020,057 18+ adults in GB. 62 per cent of these (27,292,435) are, or have spent time, in a job which they feel does not make the best use of their skills. The average time spent in such a job is 4.85 years.  $4.85 \times 27,292,435 = 132,368,311$  years.

**About the Skills Commission:** The Skills Commission is comprised of a select group of key individuals with a stake in skills policy and is co-chaired by Barry Sheerman MP and Dame Ruth Silver. It brings greater direction and focus to skills

policy and acts as a steering body for the National Skills Forum and Associate Parliamentary Skills Group. The Commission's inquiry into provision of information, advice and guidance in England has been sponsored by the Edge Foundation and is chaired by Professor Michael Thorne.

**About Edge:** Edge is dedicated to raising the profile of practical and vocational learning. It wants educational standards raised through applying practical experience to learning and providing opportunities to excel through vocational, as well as academic, studies. Edge believes that this is essential for the future competitiveness of the nation