



NORTHUMBRIAN WATER'S

INNOVATION

FESTIVAL

BUILD

BACK

BETTER

DESIGN  
THINKING

# TRY APPROACHING YOUR CAREER WITH DESIGN THINKING



At Northumbrian Water's Innovation Festival we'll be using a great deal of design thinking to come up with ideas and solutions to real world challenges. We think a similar approach may be useful if you're not sure what to do with your future. Here are some ideas you can use to do some design thinking about your career.

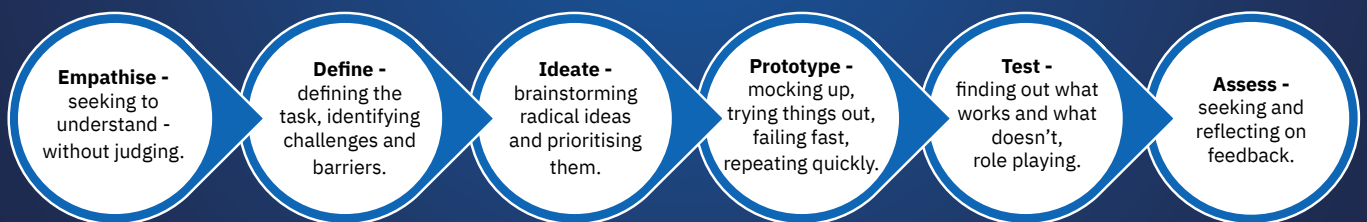
Covid- 19 may have caused significant disruption but it has also already created opportunities. How might you find them?

## What is design thinking?

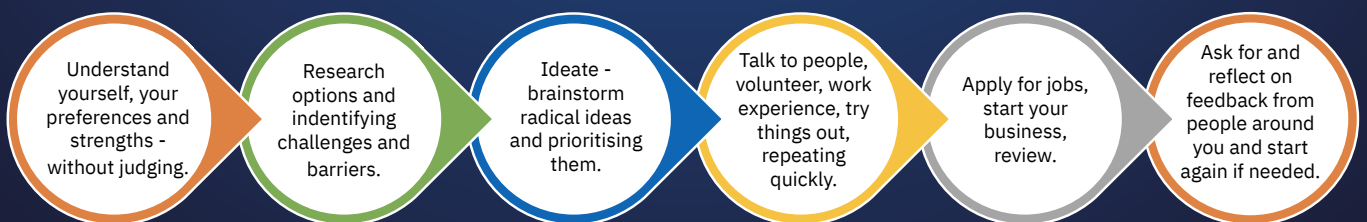
It is thinking 'out of the box'. Looking at things differently, not being constrained by traditional wisdom, existing approaches or assumptions. Like the little boy who when he saw a lorry stuck under a bridge asked why they didn't just let its tyres down rather than dismantle part of the bridge or the lorry to get it out, or the toddler who got his head stuck between railings and just stepped forward when his Dad couldn't get his head out the way it had gone in.

Many employers are looking for people who have design thinking skills to help make continuous improvements or innovate.

## The Design Thinking Process



## Design thinking your career



The design thinking process can be summed up by three broad phases. This is how you can apply them to thinking about your career:

UNDERSTAND	EXPLORE	MATERIALISE
<p>If you really understand yourself, your strengths, what's important to you, your values and what you aren't interested in you can make better decisions.</p> <p><b>Questions to ask yourself and others:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What is important to me?</li> <li>• What are my values?</li> <li>• What am I interested in?</li> <li>• What am I good at?</li> <li>• What am I not good at?</li> <li>• What do I enjoy?</li> <li>• How would I describe my personality and personal skills?</li> <li>• What don't I enjoy?</li> <li>• If I didn't need to worry about an income how might I spend my time?</li> <li>• When I retire, what do I want to be remembered for?</li> <li>• Why do people think what they think of you? What specific examples can they give you?</li> </ul> <p><b>Suggestion:</b> use post it notes, write lists, draw emojis, use stickers or colour to highlight what is most important to you or most like you.</p>	<p>There are many different employment options, what might fit you best?</p> <p><b>Questions to ask yourself and others:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What new opportunities and needs are arising as a result of the pandemic and new ways of living and working? What are people and organisations doing differently? How can I find this out?</li> <li>• Can I see and fill any gaps?</li> <li>• Might my career look very different to my parents' career? Might I be happy in the gig economy? How might I find out?</li> <li>• Who do I know or who could I connect with who will tell me about what they do and the organisation they work for?</li> <li>• Who do I know who knows someone who might tell me about their job and company?</li> <li>• Where can I find out about local, national and international employers?</li> <li>• Which companies and organisations have information on their websites about some of their jobs and what it's like to work there?</li> <li>• If I want to set up my own company how would that work?</li> <li>• Where can I find volunteering opportunities?</li> <li>• Do I need to find employers near bus routes?</li> <li>• Am I prepared to live somewhere new?</li> <li>• Could some further education help me?</li> <li>• How do I find out about different full and part time qualifications?</li> </ul> <p><b>Suggestion:</b> plan what you are going to do, keep a record of what you've done and what has helped and hasn't. Write down what skills you are using and developing and how you are feeling. You can use your job search as an example in an interview of how you've used particular skills and worked through a challenge.</p>	<p>How might you get yourself noticed and then successfully transition into work?</p> <p><b>Questions to ask yourself and others:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What are employers looking for?</li> <li>• Does the job fit with what is important to me and what I'm good at?</li> <li>• How do I make it easy for them to notice that I've got the skills and experience they want?</li> <li>• What specific examples can I think of to demonstrate I've got the skills and experience I say I have? Can I explain them clearly and briefly?</li> <li>• What research will they expect me to have done when I go for interview?</li> <li>• What do I want to know about a job to decide whether it is right for me, what can I ask at interview?</li> <li>• How will I know if it is a good job for me?</li> <li>• How do I stand out from the crowd?</li> <li>• How will I know what to wear and what to do on my first day?</li> <li>• How will I be successful in new job? How will I know?</li> </ul> <p><b>Suggestion:</b> use what you now know about yourself to decide if this is the organisation or job for you. Do you think you'll be able to be yourself at work or will you need to bend out of shape to fit in? Recruitment should be a two way decision.</p>