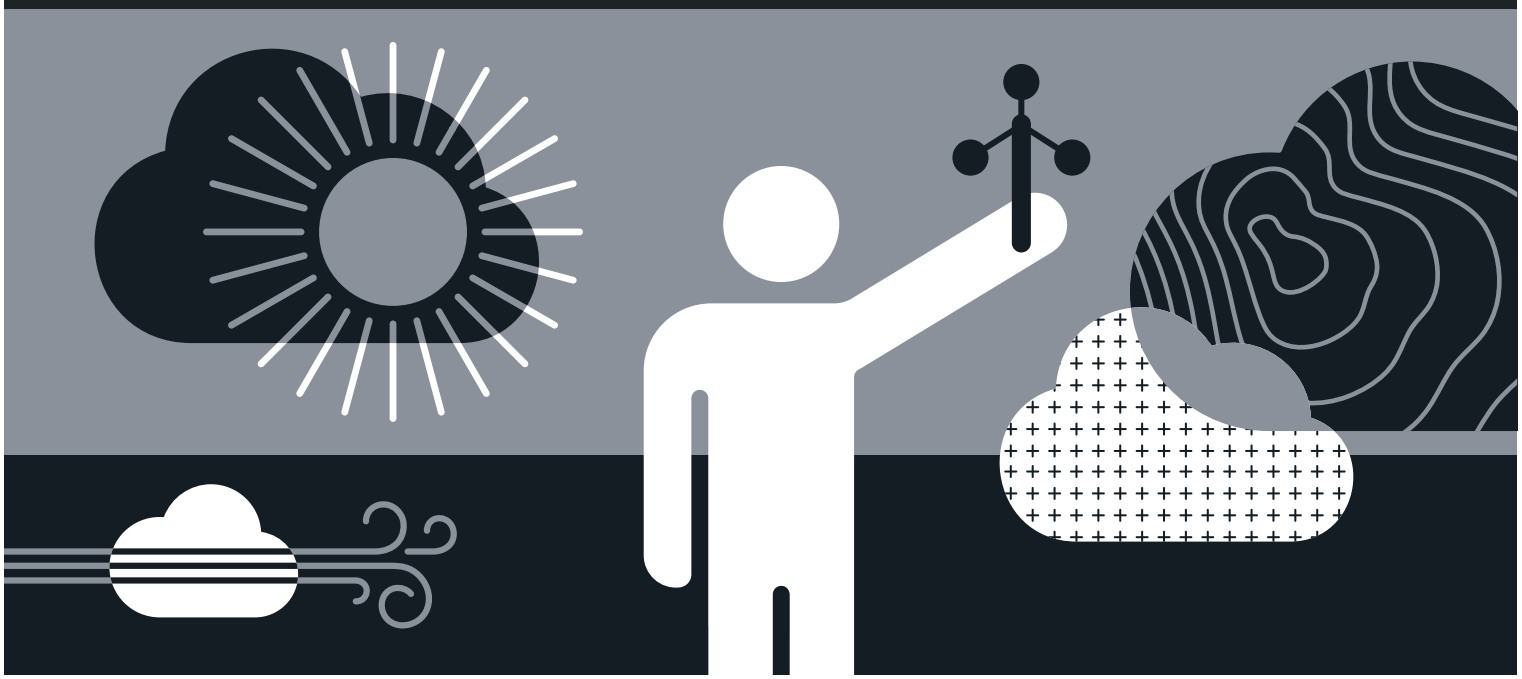

Exploring careers at the Met Office

1 Tell the group that there are a huge range of careers available at the Met Office. Explain that they are going to read a cartoon which will allow them to explore a range of careers in the Met Office. Ask everyone to read the 'Weather heroes' cartoon and circle or write down any job roles they can identify

2 Get volunteers to call out what they found or use the list below to help prompt the group. Explain that the characters in this story are based on real people working at the Met Office as:

- Field Services Engineer
- Manager in Upper Air Observations
- Radar Software Engineer

Based on each role in the story, can everyone guess what these jobs involve?

3 Explain that you're now going to delve into the backstory of each character's career. Split the group into teams of 3-4. Give each group a different 'Career back story' card (on pages 3 to 5) and ask them to read it in their groups

15 minutes

Groupwork

Career back story cards

Weather heroes cartoon

4 Ask each group to spend a few minutes discussing and recording answers to the following questions:

- How does this character's job help them work with their team solve the problem in the story?
- List all the skills they can find in the cartoon and their character's career back story. How do they demonstrate these skills in their work? E.g. Sophie shows good communication and problem solving by work closely with Aaron to find a solution
- Where do young people demonstrate similar skills in their own lives? E.g. Delivering presentations need good verbal communication, using their organisation skills to plan a birthday party or school event, developing teamwork through a sport or leisure

5 Come back together and ask each group to share a few of their answers

Optional extension

Ask groups to research alternative ways of getting into one of these careers, asking themselves:

- What qualifications are needed?
- What types of skill and attributes are important?
- Which subjects are useful to take for exams?
- Are there different training schemes available? They can use the following links as starting points for their research:
  icould.com
  prospects.ac.uk
  metoffice.gov.uk/about-us/careers/your-career

Reflect on how many different options and combinations can be explored. Encourage young people to use these techniques and questions when searching for other jobs they might be interested in.


20 minutes


Groupwork

Career backstory cards

Sophie Field Services Engineer

What does a day in your job look like?

My day can vary a lot depending on whether I'm working in the field (that means somewhere away from the office) or in the office. In the office, I'm usually building and testing weather observation systems or preparing equipment for installations. When I'm out in the field, most of the time I'm installing or fixing new equipment to make sure everything is working as it should to get important information back to HQ.

How did you get into your job?

I started at the Met Office after college, with no engineering experience at all. In my first year, I started an apprenticeship and completed a course in Engineering followed by a course in Electrical/ Electronic Engineering. I did this for two years while getting hands-on job experience. I also did some extra courses on radar systems.

What skills are needed for your job?

You definitely need to be a good team player and problem solver. Combining creativity with technical know-how can be a big bonus too – it really helps if you can look at a challenge and think creatively about potential solutions.

What do you love most about your job?

Getting to work with so many different teams, and travel to new, interesting places has always been a great part of the job. Every day is different! It's also been really helpful to train and earn at the same time – I've always felt really supported to keep gaining new skills and experiences.

Career backstory cards

Jaylin Manager in Upper Air Observations

What does a day in your job look like?

I look after everything to do with running the weather radars and making sure they work. My day usually starts with checking each radar; we have monitoring software which allows me to quickly see how they're performing. If something isn't right, it's my job to make sure the right people are informed and the right steps are put in place so that they can fix it as quickly as possible. I also do planned maintenance visits – the radars need regular upkeep, and to agree the schedule, I have to speak to field service engineering teams across the UK.

How did you get into your job?

Getting into my job, it was useful to have studied science at school. I especially enjoyed environmental science, and geography too, although I didn't really know what I wanted to do. I ended up joining the Navy as a meteorologist and oceanographer, which is where I started to learn my trade on the job. I also did a foundation degree at the Open University. That's what led me to get into the Met Office in their Observation Operations team.

What skills are needed for your job?

For my job, time management, organisation, being able to plan ahead and work well with others are all really important. It can be quite fast paced and you need to keep a clear head, listen carefully and feel confident in taking the lead. It all comes with practice though – if you love your job, these things will come in time!

What do you love most about your job?

One of things I love most about my job is getting to travel. Twice a year I get to go and meet with people doing my job in other parts of Europe – my last trip was to Iceland. Not only were the workshops really interesting, I got to see the northern lights!

Career backstory cards

Aaron Radar Software Engineer

What does a day in your job look like?

My day mostly involves using programming and writing code to improve the software that runs at the weather radar sites. This software controls everything the radar does – for example, how fast the dish spins, what frequency it transmits at for how long... I have to be careful, because even quite a small bug in the software could shut the radar network down if it isn't spotted in time!

How did you get into your job?

I studied maths and computing at A-level, then did Computer Science at university, which was definitely useful. When I left university, I spent four years working as a programmer which helped me learn about software engineering. I then did a master's degree in Oceanography.

What skills are needed for your job?

You definitely need to be a good problem solver, and it's really important to develop a calm, methodical approach to looking at puzzles and thinking through solutions. Being able to listen and communicate with other teams is really key as well.

What do you love most about your job?

It's always rewarding to see how software I've written makes the radar do something new and useful. It's also a good feeling to know that the work I do is helping keep people safe, by helping the radars to function and get important information to the right people. Going up to the radars is fun, too – it's nice to get a change of scene and you get great views because they're all located in towers on top of hills. It's pretty epic!