





## Responding to the unprecedented surge in unemployment

The RSA's [Cities of Learning Project](#) is a digital platform that helps people find new learning opportunities near them. It is a response to RSA's concern that [low skilled and young workers](#) are disproportionately affected by unemployment caused by Covid.

The RSA offers [four insights](#) into the future of lifelong learning:

-  Recognise learning wherever it happens: During the crisis, hundreds of thousands of people have engaged in volunteering activities, social organising, mutual aid and digital mentoring – learning and sharing new and vital skills. Most of that learning is invisible. Use digital credentials to define and recognise the skills people learn outside formal education environments.
-  Make learning connected, not just digital. Millions of people have joined online courses during lockdown. For example, FutureLearn's traffic increased by 100% in March 2020 and 74% in April 2020. But access to learning content and progression in learning are very different. Human feedback and encouragement are necessary to push us forward when learning gets tough.
-  Respond rapidly to change. If new skills or knowledge are required within a local economy, RSA can work with employers to rapidly build out credentials that capture those needs. Alongside that, they work with local learning providers to help learners access the skills they need and move towards employment. This is also possible at a national level. If businesses are willing to specifically define the skills that they need, learning brokers can quickly create meaningful credentials for those skills and connect them to learners.
-  Build pathways not courses. Courses are expensive and time-consuming to build and are completed by relatively few people. Skills or knowledge gained by learners who drop out before completion is undocumented. Cities of Learning is built on the idea of pathways rather than courses. Pathways are about connecting discrete micro-credentials (that can be earned in multiple settings and through different learning experiences) to create routes to employment, work placements and other destinations.