

A parents guide to...

POST 16 PATHWAYS

Supporting Your Teen's Next Step and beyond



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Welcome to Your Parent Guide to Post-16 Options

As a parent or carer, supporting your child through the transition from school to their next steps in education, training or work can feel both exciting and overwhelming. With more choices than ever before, it's natural to have questions — and this guide is here to help.

Whether your child is thinking about staying in school, moving to college, starting an apprenticeship, or exploring other training routes, the decisions they make now can shape their future pathway. But they don't have to make those decisions alone — and neither do you.

This guide has been created to give you a clear overview of all the main post-16 options available to young people in England. You'll find explanations of qualifications like A-levels, T-Levels, BTECs and Apprenticeships.

Inside, we'll cover:

- An overview of all the pathways after Year 11.
- Key facts about each option — what they involve, who they suit, and where they can lead.
- How these options can benefit your child or young person.
- Where to find reliable, up-to-date information and advice.

Every child is different, and there's no one-size-fits-all route. Our goal is to give you the knowledge and confidence to guide your child through this important stage, whatever their interests, strengths, or ambitions.



Y7 to Y10 - PREPARATION TIMELINE

From Year 7 to Year 10 your child begins their careers journey, building confidence, exploring opportunities and preparing for future choices. This timeline shows what to expect at each stage. Talk with your child's Careers Leader about the school's programme and how it can help them explore their interests

YEAR 7 - EXPLORING & DISCOVERING

- Discover your strengths, skills and interests.
- Learn about a wide range of jobs and how school subjects link to them.
- Meet role models and guest speakers.
- Take part in career-themed activities and assemblies.
- Start thinking about what you enjoy doing and how it could link to the future.

YEAR 8 - EXPANDING HORIZONS

- Explore different career sectors and pathways (college, apprenticeships, university, training).
- Learn how subjects connect to jobs in the real world.
- Take part in workplace visits, employer talks, or enterprise projects.
- Begin using online tools (like Morrisby, Unifrog, or Start) to explore your career interests.
- Reflect on your strengths and skills, building confidence.

YEAR 9 - MAKING CHOICES

- Learn about GCSE option choices and how they connect to future careers.
- Get support from careers advisers and tutors when making subject decisions.
- Explore Labour Market Information (LMI) to see which jobs are growing locally and nationally.
- Meet employers, apprentices and college/university reps.
- Build skills such as teamwork, problem-solving and communication through school activities.

YEAR 10 - PREPARING FOR THE FUTURE

- Take part in meaningful work experience or workplace encounters.
- Learn about CVs, applications, and interview skills.
- Visit colleges, sixth forms, training providers, and apprenticeship events.
- Attend careers fairs and taster days.
- Reflect on your career ideas and set personal goals for Year 11.
- Understand the importance of resilience, exam preparation and backup plans.

Y11 - PREPARATION TIMELINE

Year 11 is when your child makes key choices and prepares for their next steps. This timeline shows what happens across the year, from exploring options and applying, to exams and moving on.

SUMMER TERM YEAR 10

- Think about your future strengths and favourite subjects.
- Find out more about careers that interest you.
- Think about how your strengths might fit with your career ideas.
- Discuss your ideas with people whose opinions you value.
- Do some online research into the local college and training options.

AUTUMN TERM YEAR 11

- Build confidence in strengths and favourite subjects.
- Go to information events and learn about all the different options.
- Book some taster sessions.
- Check college application deadline, Some colleges might require an application this term.
- Make contact with employers if seeking an Apprenticeship.
- Complete applications (key dates will be given out in Y11) but most application are complete by the end of January.

SPRING TERM YEAR 11

- Concentrate on exam preparation.
- Attend interviews.
- Attend additional taster events.
- Work hard to secure an Apprenticeship placement (if seeking an Apprenticeship)
- Make sure you have a back-up plan.

SUMMER TERM YEAR 11

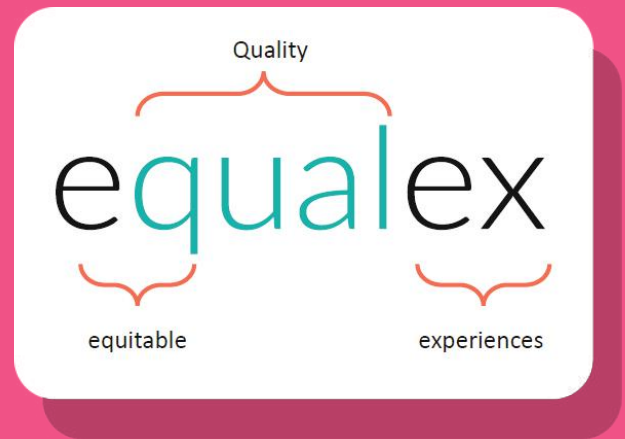
- Continue to prepare for exams and revise in between exams.
- Finalise your placement if intending on starting an Apprenticeship.
- Attend any summer transitions days (after exams). Many college run welcome events.

What is Modern Work Experience (Equalex)

Equalex is a structured framework developed by the **Careers and Enterprise Company** to support high-quality, meaningful work experiences for all young people.

It includes:

- Progressive learning outcomes: clear and concise aims for activities.
- Learner-level objectives: specific and measurable goals that guide delivery and assess impact.
- One week's worth of work experience activities in Year 7-9.
- One week's worth of work experience placements in Year 10-11.



Equalex sets out five outcomes for modern work experience. From a parent's point of view, here's how they help your child:



Inclusive Access: Every student should have the chance to take part. If your child has extra needs — like travel support, a health condition, or SEND — Equalex ensures adjustments are in place so they feel included.



Multiple Experience: Instead of just one placement, your child should have several across different year groups. This helps them explore different jobs and grow step by step, rather than feeling all the pressure in one week.



Clear Learning Outcomes: Placements are designed to build skills such as teamwork, communication, and problem-solving. Your child's daily diary connects directly to these outcomes, helping them reflect on progress.



Employer-Led Design: Employers help shape placements so they are real and meaningful. This means your child is more likely to do genuine tasks, meet inspiring role models, and see how school learning links to work.



Meaningful for All: A good placement benefits everyone — your child learns and gains confidence, schools strengthen careers education, and employers support the next generation of talent.

Preparing Your Child for Work Experience

Work experience gives your child the chance to spend time in a real workplace, experiencing what it's like to be part of a team and trying out different tasks. It's often their first step into the world of work — and a valuable opportunity to learn and grow.

Why Does Work Experience Matter?

Work experience helps your child:

- See what different jobs are really like.
- Build confidence in new environments.
- Develop important skills like teamwork and communication.
- Make contacts that could help with future jobs or apprenticeships.
- Reflect on their interests and career ideas.

How You Can Help Your Child Prepare

Research the employer together - Find out what the company does, what tasks your child might be doing, and any dress code.

Plan the journey - Make sure your child knows how they will get there and how long it takes.

Know who to contact - Help your child note down their main supervisor's name and contact details so they have someone to reach out to if needed.

Encourage goal-setting - Talk about what your child hopes to learn or achieve during their placement.

Rights & Responsibilities

Your child should:

- Arrive on time every day.
- Follow health and safety guidelines.
- Ask questions if unsure.
- Treat everyone with respect.

Employers should:

- Provide a safe and supportive environment.
- Treat your child fairly and equally.
- Support their learning throughout the placement.

Supporting Your Child with Their Daily Diary

Encourage your child to complete a simple diary each day, including:

- What they did that day.
- What they learned.
- Skills they practiced (like teamwork or problem-solving).
- What they found interesting or challenging.
- Any questions for the next day.

BEFORE THEY START

In some cases, your child will be expected to attend an interview a few days before you start. Even if this is not the case, your child will find it very helpful if they phone or meet with their placement supervisor beforehand.

PRE-PLACEMENT PHONE CALL

Phoning an employer is different to phoning a friend, so help your child to work out what they want to say before they ring. Make the call in plenty of time before the placement, ideally two weeks before they are due to start.

Make sure they have plenty of credit if they are phoning from a mobile, have a pen, their placement details, some paper to write notes on and this logbook. Then help them to find a quiet place to make the call.

Introduce yourself and say you are ringing to confirm arrangements for your placement or to arrange an interview.

Either during the phone call or in their interview, if they have one, they will need to find out answers to the following questions.

- Where should they go on their first day e.g. reception or a particular entrance?
- What time should they arrive, What time will they finish work?
- Who should they ask for when they get there?
- What are they expected to wear?
- Do they need any special equipment?
- What sort of things will they be doing?
- Will they be able to go out to buy lunch or do they need to bring a packed lunch?
- Do they expect them to have any particular skills?
- Don't forget, remind them to tell the employer if they have any health problems which may affect their work experience e.g. if they have any allergies or asthma.

DEVELOPING SKILLS

Developing key workplace skills such as communication, teamwork, and problem-solving is essential for success in any career, helping your child to build confidence, adaptability, and employability for the future.

With your child discuss why the following essential skills critical for success in careers with the employer they are completing work experience with?



How can they develop these skills working with this employer?



STARTING OUT



As your child begins their placement, this page helps them capture first impressions and new tasks. Equalex reminds us that every young person should feel **welcomed and included** from day one.

Tasks I completed today

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Skills I used (from the list of Essential Skills) and how I demonstrated them

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

What I did well and am proud of today...

On reflection, I would have done this differently...

Today I felt included when...

BUILDING MOMENTUM



Now that they've settled in, this diary encourages your child to reflect on how they're using and developing skills. Equalex focuses on giving every student **real opportunities to learn and grow**.

Tasks I completed today

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Skills I used (from the list of Essential Skills) and how I demonstrated them

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

What I did well and am proud of today...

On reflection, I would have done this differently...

Today's tasks helped me practise...

MIDWAY REFLECTIONS



Halfway through, this page prompts reflection on what's going well and any challenges. Equalex highlights the importance of **supportive employers** who help all young people succeed.

Tasks I completed today

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Skills I used (from the list of Essential Skills) and how I demonstrated them

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

What I did well and am proud of today...

On reflection, I would have done this differently...

One way my employer supported me was...

SHARPENING YOUR SKILLS



By this stage, many children are taking on more responsibility. Equalex encourages celebrating progress and keeping expectations high, so every young person can feel **proud of their achievements**.

Tasks I completed today

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Skills I used (from the list of Essential Skills) and how I demonstrated them

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

What I did well and am proud of today...

On reflection, I would have done this differently...

I can see my progress in...

WRAPPING UP



The final day is about looking back on the whole experience. Equalex ensures placements end with a sense of **fairness, inclusion, and meaning**, helping your child carry their learning forward.

Tasks I completed today

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Skills I used (from the list of Essential Skills) and how I demonstrated them

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

What I did well and am proud of today...

On reflection, I would have done this differently...

This experience was meaningful to me because...

WORK EXPERIENCE REVIEW

Help your child think about:

- What they enjoyed most.
- Anything that surprised them.
- Skills they developed.
- Whether their career ideas have changed.
- If they would recommend the placement to others, and why.

Summary of the main tasks your child carried out during their placement:

These were the high points of their placement:

These were the low points of their placement:

My child is strong in these skills:

My child needs to work on the following skills:

SKILLS SELF-ASSESSMENT

How well does your child think they performed during work experience?

Using the information recorded in their diary, work together to rate their ability in each skill on a scale of 1 😞 to 5 😊

Can your child share some examples of when they used each skill during their work experience placement?

Skill	Rating (1-5)	Examples of when your child has used this skill.
		
		
		
		
		
		
		
		



Post-16 Pathways



What is Post-16 Education?



There are lots of exciting options available after Year 11 – this stage is called post-16 education.

It's your child's or young person's chance to choose a path that suits their interests, goals, and the way they like to learn.

After Year 11, all young people must continue in education or training until they turn 18. But this doesn't just mean staying at school.

This education could include:

Full-time education

like school, college or independent training providers.

Work-based learning

like an apprenticeship or supported internship.

Part-time education or training

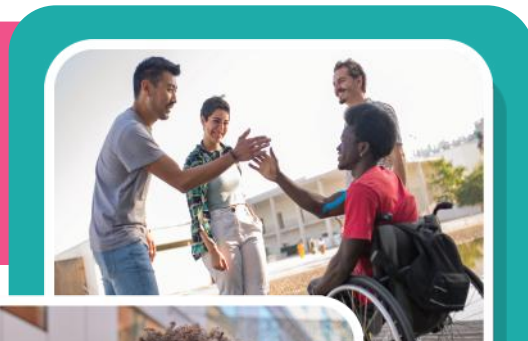
if you are employed or volunteering at least 20hrs per week.

The information in this booklet is just one of the things that can help young people and their families to choose which post-16 education option is best.

Young people aged 16 to 18 who are not in education, training or employment are offered support to take up post-16 education by the **nine London boroughs** (Barking & Dagenham, Bexley, Bromley, Enfield, Greenwich, Havering, Newham, Redbridge, Waltham Forest).

Preparing for Post-16 Transition

Support to develop ideas can come from many people including family members, school staff, school career leads, careers advisers and other professionals who might work with you. By starting early and working together, you can help your child or young person navigate this journey with confidence.



The following checklist offers practical steps to guide you through the preparation process, ensuring your child or young person's needs, interests, and aspirations remain at the heart of every decision.

Where do I start?

- **Start early** – begin in Year 7 and review regularly. By Year 9, focus on pathways.
- **Work with school staff** – keep in touch with teachers, SENCO, and the careers adviser.
- **Visit options** – arrange visits or tasters at colleges, training providers, and workplaces.
- **Listen to their voice** – make sure interests and aspirations guide decisions.
- **Explore pathways** – A levels, T Levels, apprenticeships, vocational courses, supported internships.
- **Track deadlines** – applications, interviews, and reviews.
- **Ask about support** – e.g. travel training, mentoring, transition programmes.
- **Link with professionals** – social care, health, and SEND services if needed.
- **Celebrate progress** – small steps build confidence.
- **Involve wider professionals where needed** – link with social workers, health professionals, or local SEND services to create a joined-up plan.
- **Celebrate progress** – recognise achievements and milestones to boost confidence and motivation.



What support is available?



Education, Health, and Care Plans (EHCPs)

- If your child or young person has an EHCP this will outline the additional support that they need as they move into post 16 education.
- There will be annual review meetings to discuss progress and support needs as they move through school into post-16 learning.

Local Offer

- Every local authority has a Local Offer on their website. This provides a single place to go to for the information, services and resources that you might need as a parent or carer of a child or young person with SEND.
- This includes education, health, and social care services.

Transport

- Your local authority may provide travel training or assistance with transport to and from post-16 education settings. Some young people may qualify for the 16 to 19 Bursary which can also be used to help with travel costs.

Specialist Careers Advice

- Careers advisers trained in SEND can help identify suitable pathways.

Getting the most out of EHCP review meetings

If your child or young person has an EHCP, then you will be invited to attend annual review meetings. The school may also invite other people involved in supporting your child/ young person, for example the SEN case officer, a teaching assistant, a speech and language therapist, or a specialist advisory teacher. A Social worker or any health practitioners may be involved- in practice, who attends will depend very much on your child's needs and circumstances.



These meetings are an opportunity for yourself and your child/ young person where appropriate to discuss their aspirations for the future, and how they need to be supported to achieve this. The aim is for young people with SEN to be supported towards greater independence and employability.

From Year 9 onwards the annual review meeting must include a focus on preparing for adulthood and independent living. Outcomes will need to have a greater consideration of independence and planning for the future. This may include managing money, travel training, skills for independence, social opportunities and keeping healthy.



If it is likely that your young person will need support in daily life post 18 you may consider contacting Adult Social Care as they approach adulthood.

What is a local offer?

A local SEND offer is a guide that explains the support available for children and young people (aged 0-25) with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) in a specific area. Every local authority in England is required to publish a Local Offer, which provides details about:

- **Education** – Support in nurseries, schools, and colleges
- **Health** – Services like speech therapy, physiotherapy, and mental health support
- **Social Care** – Help for families, short breaks, and support groups
- **Transport** – How children with SEND can get to school or college
- **Activities** – Clubs, sports, and leisure opportunities

The local offer is designed to help parents, carers and young people easily find information, services, and resources to help them understand their rights and where they can go for support.

Barking & Dagenham

Supports children and young people with SEND by signposting local services, education, and activities to help them thrive.



Bexley

Offers information for children and young people with SEND on local education, support services, and activities to build confidence.



Bromley

Connects children and young people with SEND to nearby services, schools, and community opportunities for personal development.



Enfield

Provides SEND families with local details on education, care, and inclusive activities that support children and young people.



Greenwich

Shares essential information on local education, services, and activities for children and young people with SEND.



Havering

Helps children and young people with SEND find local learning, care, and activity options to support their progress.



Newham

Gives access to local SEND services, including education and activities that help children and young people grow.



Redbridge

Supports children and young people with SEND by linking them to education, services, and inclusive community activities.



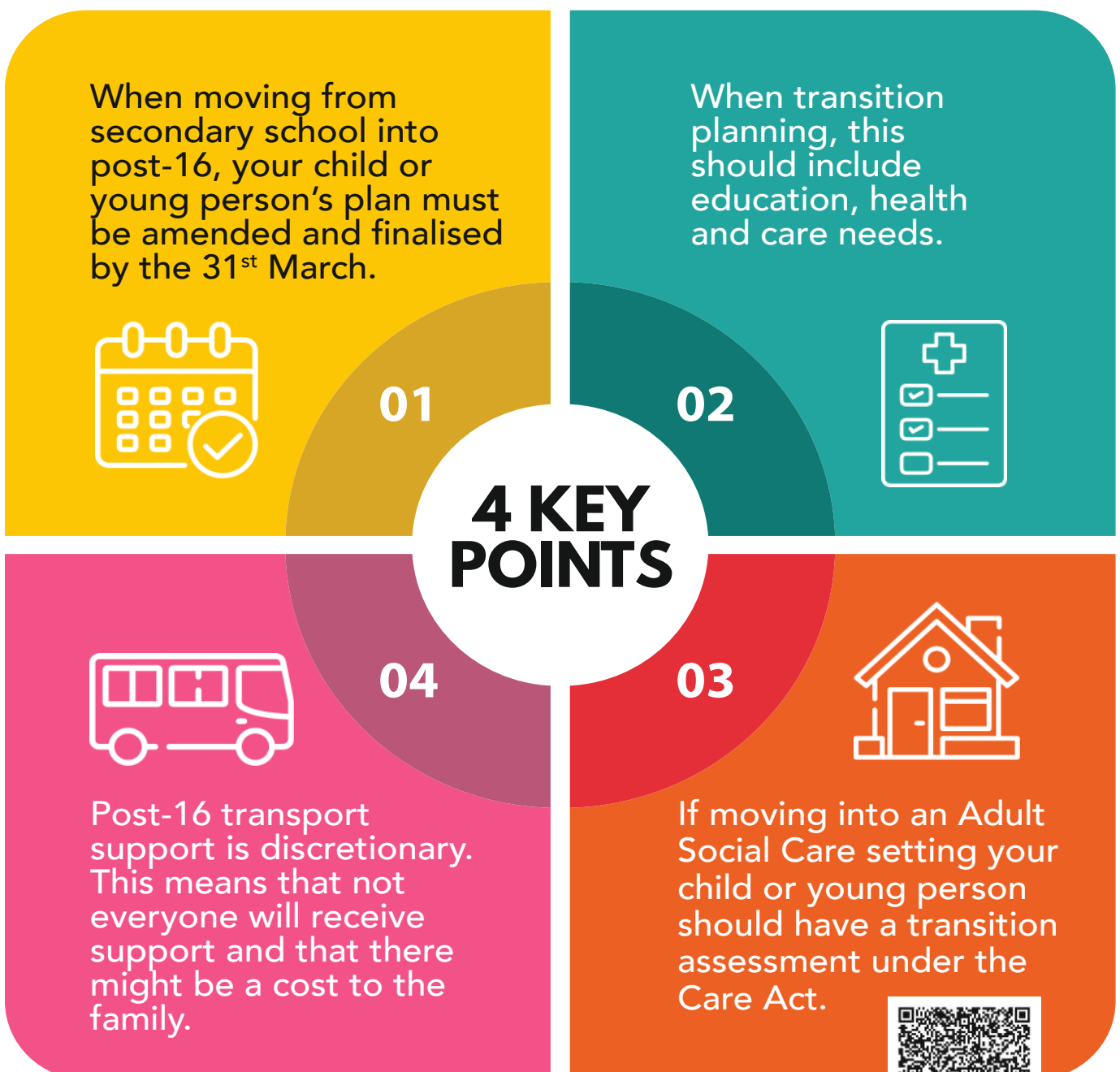
Waltham Forest

Offers guidance on local SEND resources, education, and activities for young people and children to reach their potential.



Transition from one setting to the next when your child has an EHCP

You can find information about moving into post-16 learning through your local offer pages, and there may be a local Preparing for Adulthood guide available in your area – but here are a few key pieces of information:



What is a Study Programme?

Post-16 education is known as a study programme.

This usually includes:

- **an academic qualification** (e.g A Levels) or a **vocational qualification** (T-Levels, BTECs) or a substantial work placement.
- **continuing to improve English and Maths** skills, working towards GCSE grade 4 and functional skills, where appropriate.

A young person who is taking a full-time study programme will usually be at their place of learning for an average of **16 hours per week**.

This might fit into **3 x full days** or could be spread over **5 x days**.

Some young people might be able to access up to 5 x full days of provision where appropriate. For young people with an EHCP this would need to be discussed and agreed through the annual review process and might include provision across education, health and care.



What types of post-16 education & training are available?

There are many post-16 education options, and young people can switch pathways. For example, a student might start at sixth form, move to a training provider, and later find a job.

Think of it like a journey: some take the bus, others walk or drive. The route can change, but the destination remains the same.

No option is better—it's about what works best for your child or young person.



Types of Courses

Courses after Year 11 usually fall into three main categories:

- **Academic**
- **Vocational and/or Technical**
- **Work-based**

Some young people might combine these options, depending on what suits their learning style and future plans. It's helpful to talk to your child or young person's careers adviser, teacher, or family members to explore what would be the best fit for them.

In the next few sections, we'll outline the differences between these types of courses to help you support your child or young person's decision-making.

Academic Courses

These courses are more focused on the study and theory of a subject:

- They include qualifications such as GCSEs (Secondary school), A-levels (Sixth form), and Degrees (University).
- Over 40 different subjects available at A level with thousands of different Degree subjects at University.
- These type of courses are usually delivered by schools, colleges, or universities.

Vocational and/or Technical

These are work-related qualifications designed to help learners gain the knowledge, practical skills, and experience needed for specific jobs:

- They range from Entry Level up to Level 8.
- Common areas include Animal Care & Land-based Studies, Business, Engineering, Health & Social Care, Hair & Beauty, Construction, and Digital Media.
- They are typically delivered by schools, colleges, or Independent Specialist Providers.

Work Based

These programmes take place in a work setting and focus on building skills and gaining experience. They include Supported Internships and Apprenticeships, both of which help develop work skills and increase experience.

- Apprenticeships are supported by training providers and employers.
- Supported Internships are usually supported by a college and an employer.

Types of Courses

Post-16 Pathways

16 YEARS OLD

ACADEMIC COURSES	VOCATIONAL / TECHNICAL	WORK BASED		
A-Levels	BTEC Lvl 1-3, T-Levels & Foundation Courses	Supported Internships	Apprenticeships & Inclusive Apprenticeships	Employment or Volunteering

Where can you find these options?

Further Education Colleges	Further Education Colleges	Further Education Colleges	Further Education Colleges	Local Businesses
School Sixth Forms	School Sixth Forms	Independent Training Providers	Independent Training Providers	Local Charities & Community Centres
	Independent Training Providers	Specialist Settings	Local Businesses	
	Specialist Settings			



Entry Requirements

If your child doesn't quite meet the standard entry requirements, there's no need to worry. Colleges and sixth forms are used to supporting students in this situation and will take personal circumstances into account when recommending the right course.

Achieving a **Grade 4 or above in English and Maths** is especially valuable, as it creates more options for the future. If your child doesn't reach this level straight away, they'll continue to study these subjects alongside their main course.

Some courses may ask for particular GCSEs at grade 4 or above, depending on the subject. Tutors will explain these requirements during the application process and discuss suitable alternatives if needed.

Entry requirements do vary from course to course, but the guide below provides a general overview of what's usually expected.

Level	P16 Pathways	What you'll need...
Level 3	A-Levels T-Levels BTEC's Apprenticeships	You typically need to have five GCSEs or equivalent grade 9-4 , inc English & Maths grade 5/4.
Level 2	BTEC's Apprenticeships	You typically need to have three to four GCSEs grade 9-3 .
Level 1	BTEC's Foundation Courses Inclusive Apprenticeships	You typically need to have three to four GCSEs at grades 1-2 .
Entry	BTEC's Foundation Courses Supported Internships	No GCSEs.

What if my child doesn't get the grades?

There's always a next step - heres what to do:

Results Day

Did they get the grades for their chosen course?

Yes

Go ahead with enrolment at college or sixth form.

Enrolment Day

Confirm place, finalise options, meet tutors and support staff.

Preparing for College / Sixth Form

Plan travel, organise equipment, check timetable and induction details.

Settling In

Attend induction week, explore clubs and enrichment and meet the pastoral/careers team.

Looking Ahead

Explore future pathways: university, apprenticeships, or work with ongoing careers support.

Professional Development

Speak to your employer to find out what CPD opportunities and support are available.

No

Don't worry - here are a few suggestions that can help.

1

Resits & Foundation

Ensure English/Maths resits are built into the programme. Consider Entry Level or Level 1 courses.

2

Apprenticeship

Learn on the job, earn a wage, build skills and confidence in a job that your child is interested in.

3

Vocational Courses

Start at the right level and progress upwards this can include BTECs, City & Guilds, T Levels at Level 1-3.

4

Alternative Training Providers

Explore smaller training centres to help develop practical skills, employability, and confidence.

5

Contact your local authority

If you need extra support, you can contact your local authority for help and guidance.



ACADEMIC COURSES

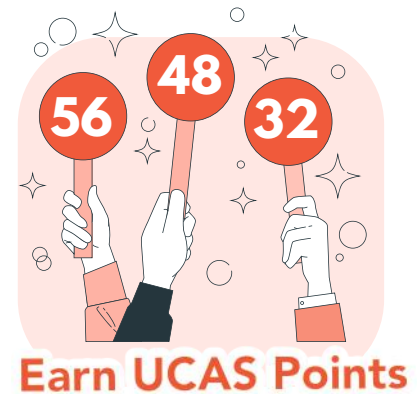
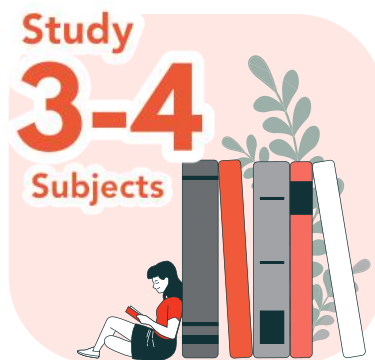


A-LEVELS



Scan the QR code to find out more.

A-levels are short for 'Advanced' Level and come after GCSEs. They are academic subject-based qualifications which are usually assessed by exams.





Whether your child studies at a school sixth form or at a college, A-Levels remain one of the most popular post-16 pathways. They are highly valued by both universities and employers, offering a well-recognised academic route that can lead to a wide variety of careers and higher education opportunities.

A-Levels allow young people to specialise in subjects they enjoy or want to explore further. Most students take three subjects over two years, with choices ranging from traditional academic areas like maths, sciences, and history to creative options such as art, drama, or design. This flexibility means students can shape a programme of study that reflects their interests and future ambitions.



Alongside subject knowledge, A-Levels help young people develop essential transferable skills — including **independence, time management, research, and critical thinking** — all of which are crucial for success in further study and the workplace.

Assessment is mainly exam-based, giving students the chance to demonstrate their understanding under structured conditions. This prepares them well for university, where independent study and self-discipline are key expectations.

Choosing A-Levels provides a **strong, flexible foundation** that keeps doors open, whether a young person decides to progress to university, an apprenticeship, or directly into employment.

How can this benefit my child?

Short Term

Develop independence and communication skills.

Medium Term

The option to gain an in-depth knowledge of a range of subjects.

Long Term

Earn qualifications to advance in education and access higher studies.



VOCATIONAL / TECHNICAL



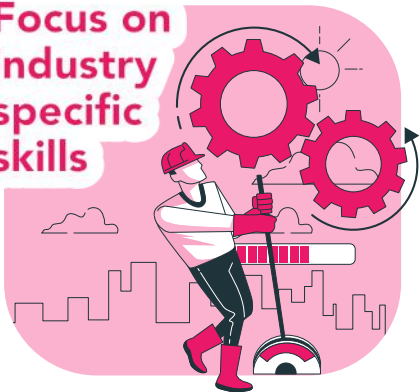
VOCATIONAL TECHNICAL QUALIFICATIONS (VTQs)



Scan the QR code to find out more

VTQs are practical qualifications designed to give you the skills and experience you need for a certain job. They might be for you if you have a strong interest in a particular industry.

Focus on industry specific skills



Move onto further study



Get work ready



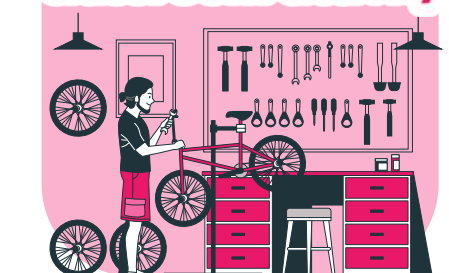
Develop transferrable skills



Gain Level 1, Level 2, or Level 3 Qualifications



Mainly practical with some classroom activity



Progress into a Higher or Degree Apprenticeship



Some L3 courses attract UCAS Points



Go to University



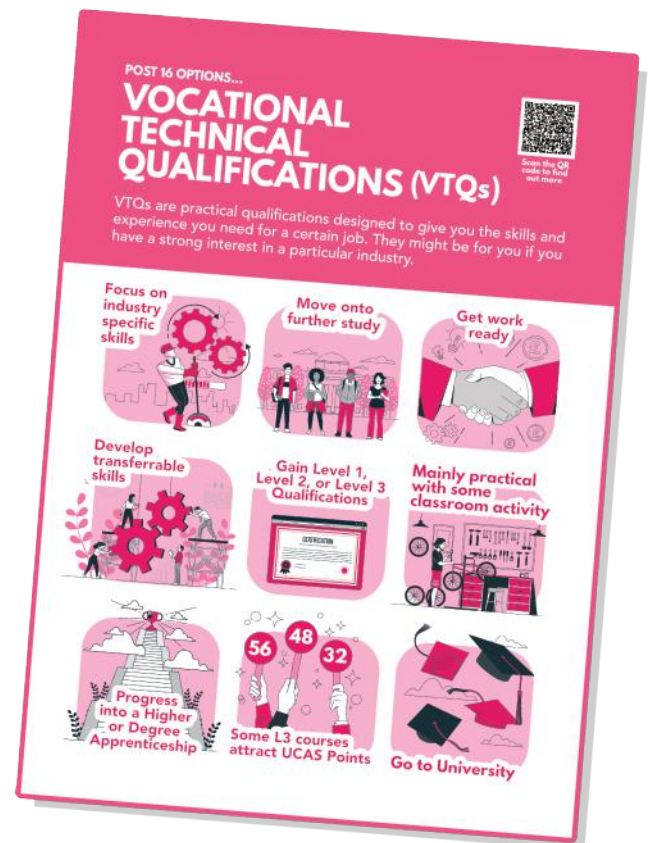


Vocational qualifications (also referred to as BTECs) are designed to give young people the chance to learn in a way that combines **practical skills with classroom learning**. They are most often studied at college, but may also be available through some school sixth forms or independent training providers. Many courses include opportunities for **work experience or industry projects**, helping students see how their learning applies in real situations.

These qualifications are available at different levels (1, 2 and 3), with entry requirements depending on the course and level of study. At Level 3, vocational qualifications are often taken as an alternative to A Levels and can be studied full-time or alongside other subjects.

As well as developing **specialist industry knowledge**, vocational programmes support the growth of **independence and life skills**. Assessment usually involves a mixture of coursework and practical projects, with some courses also including exams.

Vocational qualifications provide a **flexible pathway to the future** — many students move on to **skilled employment, apprenticeships, or university-level study**. At Level 3, some vocational qualifications carry UCAS points and can be used to apply directly to higher education.



How can this benefit my child?

Short Term

Explore different careers or develop skills for a chosen job.

Medium Term

Gain a qualification relevant to a specific industry or job.

Long Term

Leads to career opportunities or further training or higher education.

T-LEVELS



Scan the QR code to find out more.

A T-Level gives you a mix of learning in the classroom and on the job. Businesses and employers helped design T-Levels to teach you the skills you'll need.

Alternative to A-Levels

Get work ready

Level 3 Qualifications

80% Study
20% Work

1 T-LEVEL vs **3 A-LEVELS**

2 YRS to complete

45 day work placement

Progress into a Higher or Degree Apprenticeship

Progress to University



T Levels are a **high-quality, career-focused alternative to A Levels**, designed for young people aged 16 to 19 who want to develop practical skills and real workplace experience. Each T Level is a **two-year programme**, broadly equivalent to three A Levels, and was developed in partnership with employers, universities, and training providers.

Students spend most of their time in the classroom, learning technical theory and developing industry skills, alongside a **45-day industry placement** that provides real-world experience. This mix helps learners apply knowledge in practice, build confidence, and make professional connections.



Courses are available in a range of sectors — including **digital, healthcare, construction, education, and business** — and all include training in problem-solving, teamwork, communication, and professionalism, as well as continued development in English, maths, and digital skills.

T Levels are recognised by employers and universities, offering clear routes into skilled employment, higher apprenticeships, or further study in higher education.

How can this benefit my child?

Short Term

Builds confidence with support.

Medium Term

Develops skills through real experience.

Long Term

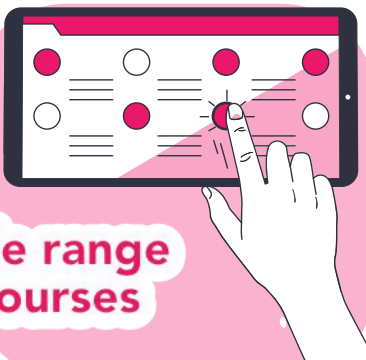
Opens doors to work or study and higher education.

FOUNDATION COURSES



Scan the QR code to find out more

Engaging in a foundation course is a way to boost your confidence, enhance your knowledge, and develop essential skills. You can pursue these studies at a college or with an independent training provider.



Wide range of courses

Boost your confidence



CV Writing

Supported Learning



Interview Techniques




Entry Level 3 to Level 1



Move onto further study



English & Maths



Develop Life Skills



For young people who need a bit more support as they start college, many providers offer a wide range of foundation courses. These are designed to help students settle into further education, build confidence, and prepare for the next step.

The exact courses available will vary between colleges. They might have different names, cover different learning levels, and set different entry requirements. Some courses are designed to link directly into other programmes within the same college, giving learners a clear pathway forward once they are ready.

Most foundation courses include:

- **Employability skills** – building confidence for the workplace
- **English and maths** – improving essential qualifications if needed
- **Work experience** – or practical activities that develop workplace skills
- **Personal and social support** – helping learners overcome barriers, stay engaged, and achieve their goals



What all of these programmes have in common is the extra support they provide. They are designed to act as a stepping stone — giving young people time, guidance, and the chance to succeed before moving onto the next stage of their education or training journey.

How can this benefit my child?

Short Term

Experience a range of jobs or learn skills related to a preferred job.

Medium Term

Gain qualification relevant to a specific industry or job.

Long Term

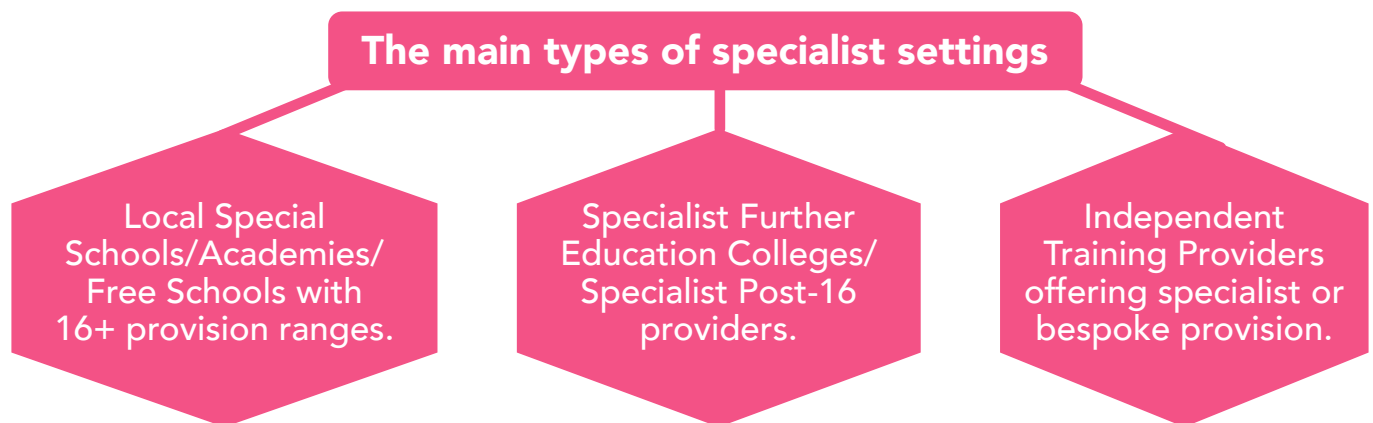
Learn practical skills related to real life work.



Specialist Settings

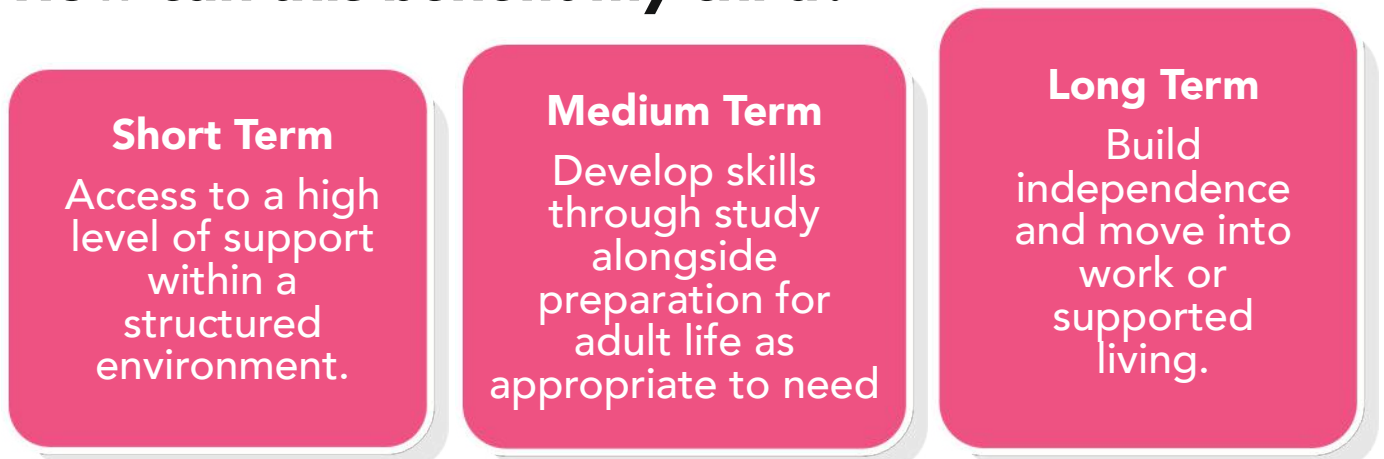
There are different types of setting which would be described as **Specialist**. A possible placement at a specialist setting would normally be discussed through the EHCP annual review process, as young people considering a specialist setting for their post-16 education would usually have an EHCP. The offer of a placement at a specialist setting will need to be agreed by statutory SEND teams based on a young person's Special Educational Needs.

There might be a range of academic and vocational courses on offer as well as a focus on independent living skills, personal development and employability. Different settings will cater for different age ranges.



Use this link for a detailed explanation of education setting types: [Types of schools and other settings | \(IPSEA\) Independent Provider of Special Education Advice](#)

How can this benefit my child?





Specialist FE College / Specialist Post-16 Providers

Specialist Further Education Colleges/Specialist post-16 providers cater for young people with more complex or specific needs. Different providers are equipped to support certain levels and types of need and may have a particular specialism. This can include severe and complex needs, physical disabilities, neurodivergent conditions and behaviour that challenges.

The links overleaf are for Specialist Further Education Colleges/Specialist post-16 providers that are located within north east and south east London and are currently on the Section 41 list.

To get the most up to date information and to find out more about specialist provision across a wider area including all **open specialist schools and colleges**, you can also talk to your local authority SEND team and check:



- Your local offer pages - **Page 20**
- The Natspec college search tool [Search - Natspec](#)
- The current Section 41 list [Independent special schools and post-16 institutions - GOV.UK](#)
- The full list of special schools and colleges in your local authority area. [Get Information about Schools - GOV.UK](#)
- Your local SENDIASS service is also a good source of information and support.

Interview Questions

Here are some key questions you can ask during college interviews and when exploring other post-16 options. These will help you and your child make informed decisions about their future education, training, and career pathways.

- How is the course assessed? (e.g. exams, coursework, practical)
- How will my child or young person get feedback on progress? (e.g. annual reviews, daily/weekly communication)
- What can my child progress onto?
- What support is available for students with Special Educational Needs?
- What resources, equipment and facilities are you using on the course?
- What does the college day/curriculum look like? Ask to see a sample timetable
- What work experience placements can you offer students?
- If appropriate could the young person progress to a supported internship?
- What links do you have with local companies/employers?
- Will I need to buy any books, equipment, or special clothing for my child? Costs?
- What financial support is available for support with travel, equipment, safety clothing or books?
- What enrichment activities are available?
- Can my child or young person get to college by bus/train?

Top Tip:

Don't be afraid to ask follow-up questions during the visit. College staff expect and welcome this—it shows you're thinking ahead and want the best fit for your young person. Bring a shortlist of what matters most to them and use these questions to find the answers that really count.





WORK BASED



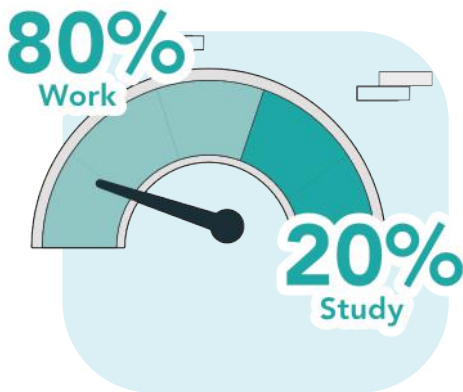
WORK BASED

Scan the QR code to find out more



APPRENTICESHIPS & INCLUSIVE APPRENTICESHIPS

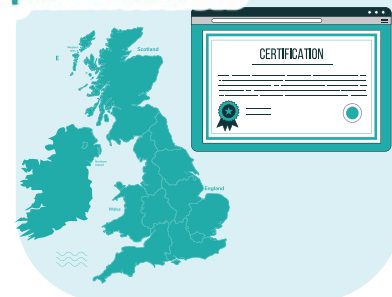
An apprenticeship is a paid job with training where you work alongside experienced staff, gaining job-specific skills and earning a wage. You follow an apprenticeship standard outlining the knowledge, skills, and behaviours needed for success.



A real contract



Gain a nationally recognised qualification



Work Based



An apprenticeship allows a young person to **earn a salary while working towards a nationally recognised qualification**, all while gaining valuable hands-on experience in the workplace. They are a great option for those who want to start building their career straight away, rather than studying full-time at college or university.

There is a **wide range of apprenticeships** available across many different sectors — from health, construction, and digital, to creative industries, business, and engineering. Apprenticeships are offered at different levels, from intermediate (Level 2) right up to higher and degree apprenticeships (Levels 4–7), meaning they can provide progression opportunities all the way to university level and beyond.

Most apprentices split their time between working with an employer and completing study or training with a college, university, or independent provider. This style of learning suits young people who prefer **practical, applied learning** and who are motivated by earning while they learn.

Training providers offer support for learners with additional needs, and those with an **Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP)** may be able to take an **Inclusive Apprenticeship**, with adjustments made to ensure their needs are met.

Choosing the right apprenticeship means considering both **career goals and learning style**. With the right match, apprenticeships can provide a strong pathway into skilled employment, professional qualifications, or further study.

How can this benefit my child?

Short Term

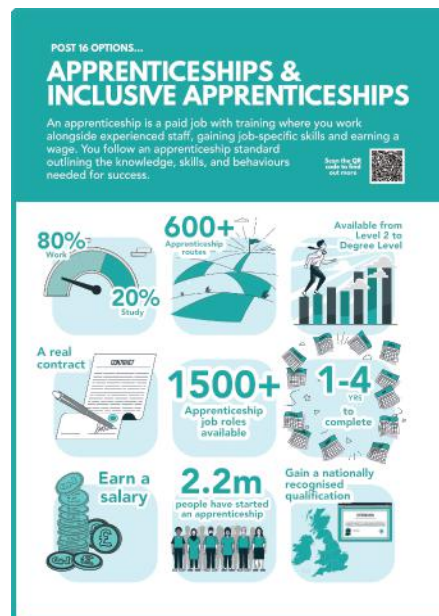
Earn a wage while learning.

Medium Term

Gain recognised qualifications and train for future careers.

Long Term

Earn £100k more on average than unqualified workers over your career.



Search and apply for apprenticeship vacancies at: www.gov.uk/apply-apprenticeship.

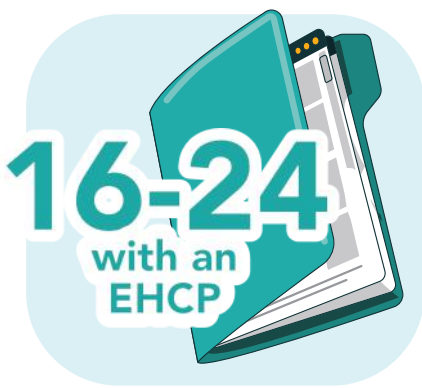
WORK BASED

SUPPORTED INTERNSHIPS



Scan the QR code to find out more

For young individuals aged 16 to 24 with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) who possess an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP). This structured, work-based study program aims to provide a valuable work experience facilitated by a dedicated job coach.



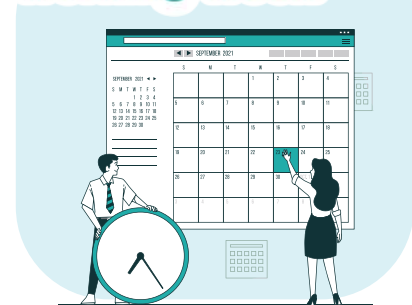
**Supportive
Job
Coach**



**Move into paid
employment**



**Study during your
working week**



**Develop
key skills**



**Work with
experienced staff**

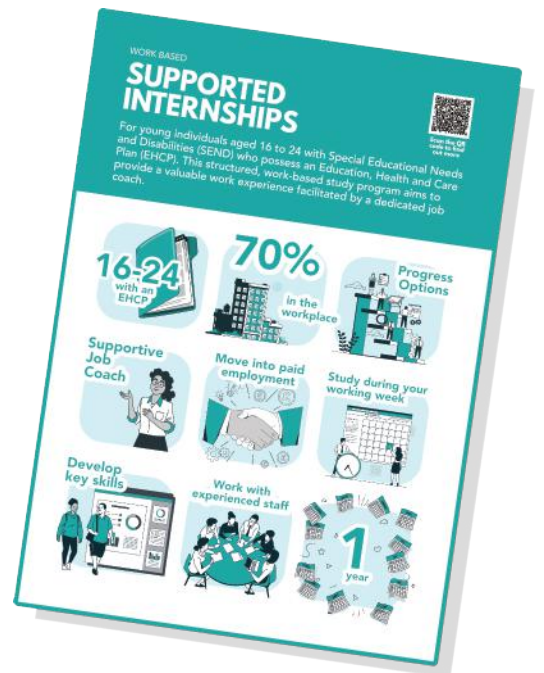


Work Based



Supported Internships are designed specifically for young people who have an **Education, Health and Care (EHC) Plan** and who want to move into **sustainable, paid employment**.

These programmes are highly personalised, giving each young person the chance to **learn directly in the workplace** while receiving the support they need. Alongside time spent with an employer, students may also work towards relevant qualifications at a suitable level, depending on their individual needs and goals.



A Supported Internship typically lasts for around a year and includes at least six months of meaningful, **unpaid work experience**. The key difference from an apprenticeship is the **additional support provided** — for example, many interns are supported by a **job coach** who helps them develop the confidence, skills, and independence needed for work.

By combining real-world experience with tailored support, Supported Internships help young people build the skills and confidence to progress into paid jobs and achieve greater independence in their adult lives.

How can this benefit my child?

Short Term

Improve communication skills.

Medium Term

Develop confidence and a wider social network.

Long Term

Progress towards life goals and aspirations, such as getting a job.



The Access to Work fund - Page 54 - can be used to provide additional support/equipment, including a job coach and/or the extra costs of transport if it is not possible to use public transport.



Employment or Volunteering

Young people must remain in some form of **recognised, accredited education or training until age 18**, but this doesn't mean they have to stay in school or college full-time. For those who would rather be in the workplace, it is possible to combine **paid or voluntary work (at least 20 hours per week)** with study towards a **nationally recognised qualification**. This option can suit young people who are ready for work and want to keep learning in a more practical, flexible way.



How can this benefit my child?

Short Term

Gain valuable work experience.

Medium Term

Work towards nationally-recognised qualifications.

Long Term

Develop communication and interaction skills for jobs.



Your child or young person can become self-employed and still count as participating, as long as they are doing part-time accredited education or training as well.

Helping your child to find an Apprenticeship

Use the below step by step guide help your child secure an apprenticeship – whether through a college, a training provider, or direct with an employer.

STEP 1: START YOUR SEARCH

Look on these sites:

- Find an Apprenticeship (gov.uk)
- Get My First Job
- Not Going to Uni
- Rate My Apprenticeship
- Careermap



TOP TIPS

Set up alerts for your area and your chosen industry so you never miss a new opportunity.

Colleges and training providers often **help match students** with local employers – **don't be afraid to ask!**



STEP 2: HELPFUL EXTRAS TO BOOST YOUR PLAN

1

Apply Direct to Employers

- Make a list of companies in their chosen industry.
- Visit the websites/social media channels and check any careers pages.
- Help your child email their CV, course details, and enthusiasm.
- Follow up if you don't hear back in a week or two.

2

Apply via a College or Training Provider

- Apply for an apprenticeship subject their interested in.
- Ask if the college helps match students with employers.
- Complete an application for a full-time course too (as backup).
- Attend open days or taster sessions.

3

Start a Full-Time Course First

- Choose a course linked to your future apprenticeship goals.
- Build confidence and skills in a classroom or workshop.
- Improve English, maths, and employability skills.
- Look and apply for apprenticeships during the course.



What If You Don't Find an Employer Right Away?

- Join the course anyway — colleges & training providers often help you find an employer.
- Keep applying for apprenticeship vacancies.
- You can switch over once you find an employer.

YOUR SAFETY NET CHECKLIST

Have you:

- **Applied for more than one route?**
- **Got a backup full-time course offer?**
- **Asked about employer help?**
- **Used Find an Apprenticeship?**
- **Spoken to a careers adviser?**



Where to go for more help...



Supporting your child if they have learning difficulties or disabilities

Helping your child plan their career is an essential part of their post-16 journey.

Here are some ways to support them:

Explore Interests and Strengths

- Encourage your child or young person to talk about what they enjoy and what they're good at.
- Use tools like interest questionnaires and skills assessments tailored to SEND students.



Research Career Pathways



- Explore how different pathways align with your child or young person's interests and strengths.
- Investigate progression routes from entry-level roles to advanced opportunities.

Encourage Work Experience

- Work experience can provide valuable insight into different careers and help build confidence.
- Supported work placements are often available for SEND young people.



Teach Employability Skills



- Focus on communication, teamwork, time management, and problem-solving skills.
- Encourage activities that build these skills, such as volunteering or group projects.

Promote Independence

- Encourage your child or young person to take an active role in their career planning and decision-making.
- Support them in building confidence and self-advocacy skills.



Set Realistic Goals



- Help your child or young person set short-term and long-term goals based on their abilities and aspirations.
- Break these goals into manageable steps to track progress.

Utilise Support Networks

- Work with your child or young person's school, SENCO, and careers adviser to explore opportunities.
- Connect with local charities or organisations that specialise in supporting young people with SEND.



TALKING FUTURES

Talking Futures is a national campaign that helps parents and carers support their child when it comes to thinking about life after school or college. It's full of free, practical resources designed to help you feel more confident having those all-important career conversations – even if you don't know all the answers.

Why Conversations at Home Matter

Research shows that young people **trust their parents and carers most** when making big life decisions. Whether you're exploring sixth form, college, apprenticeships or training, Talking Futures helps guide the conversation.

What You'll Find on the Talking Futures Website

- **Conversation Starters** – Easy ways to open up career discussions at home
- **Planning Tools** – Create a shared action plan for their next steps
- **Interactive Activities** – Fun and thought-provoking prompts for families
- **Real Stories** – Watch how other families are supporting their young people
- **Information on Pathways** – Understand what options are available post-16 and beyond

Top Tips for Parents & Carers

- **Be curious, not controlling** – Ask questions that invite reflection
- **Keep it positive** – Focus on strengths, interests and potential
- **Use resources together** – Sit down and explore the Talking Futures tools as a team
- **Be honest** – It's okay to say, "I'm not sure – let's look it up together!"

Try This at Home



Ask: "What's something you've enjoyed doing recently – and why?"



Explore: Use the Talking Futures Planning Tool to map out options together



Reflect: "What skills do you think you've developed this year?"

Need More Help?

If you are between 16 – 17 and need further help, contact your Local Team who is there to help you find your best next step.

Borough	Contact	Telephone
Barking & Dagenham	educationCoreTeam@lbbd.gov.uk	020 8227 2400
Bexley	bya@prospects.co.uk	020 3045 5555
Bromley	youthsupportprogramme@bromley.gov.uk	020 8461 7165
Enfield	youthhub@enfield.gov.uk	020 8379 5039
Greenwich	Help-me-with-my-future@royalgreenwich.gov.uk	0208 921 4266 or 0208 921 3025
Havering	haveringenquiries@shaw-trust.org.uk	030 0303 3111
Newham	ourNewham-Work-NEETTeam@newham.gov.uk	020 8430 2000
Redbridge	connexions@redbridge.gov.uk	020 8708 2600
Waltham Forest	participationservice@walthamforest.gov.uk	020 8496 1920

Making Contact: Not Sure What to Say?

It's normal to feel unsure about what to say when contacting your local post-16 team. They're friendly and used to helping young people figure things out.

Here are a few ways to start the conversation:

General help

"Hi, I've just left school and I'm not sure what to do next — can you tell me what help is available?"

"I'd like to talk about courses, training or apprenticeships near me."

Looking for opportunities

"Can you help me find an apprenticeship or local college course?"

"Are there any options if I didn't pass my GCSEs?"

Need a bit of support

"I'm feeling stuck and want to get back on track — who can I speak to?"

"Can someone help me with my CV or interview confidence?"

Before you finish

"What happens next?"

or

"Can you send me some information?"

(Tip: Parents can encourage their young person to make the call, but stay nearby for support if needed.)

USEFUL WEBSITES

Use the following websites for information and support to help inform your decision.

General Careers Information & Post-16 Information

National Careers Service - Providing information, advice and guidance to help you make decisions on learning, training and work. <https://nationalcareers.service.gov.uk>

Skills for Careers - use this site for a clear overview of the different options that are available to young people.

[Young People | Skills for Careers \(education.gov.uk\)](https://www.skillsforcareers.org.uk/)

Careers Pilot - Careers information and tools for 11-19 year olds.

<https://www.careerpilot.org.uk>

Icould - Find inspiration and explore your ideas using real-life career videos.

<https://icould.com/>

BBC bitesize careers - a really good range of articles and information from the BBC with career stories, videos, quizzes to help young people with their careers ideas.

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/careers>

Careers Advice for Families (Youth Employment UK) – Guidance for parents and carers to support young people in making career decisions. <https://www.youthemployment.org.uk/careers-advice-for-parents/>

<https://www.youthemployment.org.uk/careers-advice-for-parents/>

T Levels - use this site to learn more about what T Levels are and how they work.

<https://www.tlevels.gov.uk/>

Prospects – a great source of information mainly aimed at young people who might consider university graduate level careers in the future or for those who are already at university. www.prospects.ac.uk

UCAS - Universities and colleges admissions service, offering support and advice so you can make an informed decisions about your future. www.ucas.com/further-education

Informed Choices - iThe tool created by the Russell Group of universities to help you link University ideas to your A level choices. <https://www.informedchoices.ac.uk/>

Careers Advice & Resources Aimed at Parents

Talking Futures - A parent-facing resource offering guidance on how to have career conversations with your child. <https://www.talkingfutures.org.uk>

Talking Futures - A set of prompt cards to help parents and careers talk to their teens about career ideas. <https://www.talkingfutures.org.uk/conversation-cards/>

The Parents Perspective - an exciting podcast series for parents and carers, helping them to support their children with careers advice and guidance.

<https://amazingapprenticeships.com/the-parent-perspective-podcast/>

Careermag - If you're a school leaver, graduate or job seeker, we have lots of options! Search & apply for apprenticeships, graduate schemes & jobs.

<https://careermag.co.uk/career-advice/careermag/for-parents-guardians>

Youth Employment Parent Link - Supportive careers advice and resources to help parents guide their children through education and employment choices.

<https://www.youthemployment.org.uk/careers-advice-for-parents/>

Information About Support at University for Students with SEND

Disabled Students' Allowance – GOV.UK - Support with study-related costs if you have a disability or health condition.

<https://www.gov.uk/disabled-students-allowance-dsa>

Disabled Students – UCAS - Advice on applying to university, including accessibility, support, and adjustments.

<https://www.ucas.com/applying/applying-university/students-individual-needs/disabled-students>

Scope UK – Support for Disabled Students in Higher Education - Funding and practical advice for students with SEND at university.

<https://www.scope.org.uk/advice-and-support/education/funding-for-college-and-university>

Office for Students – Disabled Students - Research and resources to support inclusive university education.

<https://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/for-students/equal-opportunities/disabled-students/>

Information About Work-Based Pathways

What Are Supported Internships? - NDTi - An easy read guide to supported internships, explaining what they are and how they can help young people with SEND gain work experience.

<https://www.ndti.org.uk/resources/publication/what-are-supported-internships>

The Government information and guidance on Supported Internships - Official government guidance on supported internships for young people with additional needs. [Supported internships - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/supported-internships)

Supported Employment (BASE-UK) – An overview of supported employment and how it helps individuals with additional needs find and retain work. <https://www.base-uk.org/page/What-is-Supported-Employment>

DFN Project SEARCH - A national organisation partnering with local providers to offer high-quality supported internship programmes for young people with SEND.

<https://www.dfnprojectsearch.org>

Access to Work (GOV.UK) – Government support available for individuals with disabilities or health conditions to help them succeed in the workplace.

<https://www.gov.uk/access-to-work>

Apprenticeships for All – Animation - A short and accessible animation explaining how apprenticeships can be adapted to be inclusive.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5JgMIFZsVy0>

Apprenticeship Guide - Use this site as a tool to discover your perfect Apprenticeship role.

<https://apprenticeshipguide.co.uk>

50 FORWARD

We've created a series of five career booklets tailored for adults aged 50 and over who may be considering a new direction, returning to work, or exploring different job sectors. Each guide provides an accessible introduction to a key UK industry, a snapshot of the kinds of jobs available, the skills employers are looking for, and where to go for further information and support. These resources may also give you insights to help guide your child as they explore their own future career path.

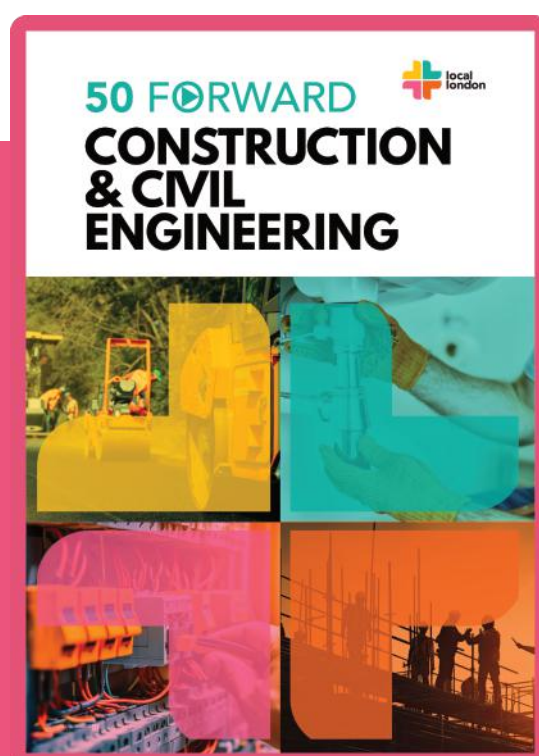


Creative & Digital

Explore the fast-growing world of creative and digital careers—from graphic design and animation to social media and coding. This guide highlights exciting job options, the digital skills in demand, and features a job spotlight to bring the sector to life. Perfect for anyone with a creative spark or an interest in tech.

Construction & Civil Engineering

From hands-on roles to planning and project management, this guide introduces the wide range of opportunities within construction and civil engineering. Learn about essential skills like teamwork, attention to detail, and problem-solving, with practical advice on how to get started or retrain for the sector.



50 FORWARD



DISTRIBUTION & LOGISTICS



Distribution & Logistics

Discover how goods move across the country—and the globe. This guide sheds light on careers in warehousing, transport, and supply chain management. Whether you're interested in organisation, driving, or data, there's a role for every kind of strength and experience.

50 FORWARD



HEALTH & SOCIAL CARE



Health & Social Care

Make a real difference in people's lives. This guide explores the varied roles within health and social care, including support work, nursing, and mental health services. Learn about the values and interpersonal skills that matter most—and where to find training and support to get started.

50 FORWARD



MANUFACTURING



Manufacturing

From advanced engineering to quality control, manufacturing offers a world of opportunity. This guide gives an overview of the sector, the practical and technical skills employers look for, and a spotlight on a key job role to show what the work is really like.

Scan or click the QR code to view each of the guides in more detail

