

# Options after Year 11

*A guide  
for  
parents and carers  
of  
young people*

15billion 

**This booklet gives you information about the options facing your son or daughter as they reach the final year of compulsory schooling, so that you can understand and help them with the decisions they have to make.**

*Careers Advisers from 15billion are available in schools to help students with their plans. The school's careers co-coordinator has details of when a careers adviser is available.*

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# Post-16 options

## Raising of Participation Age

The government has decided that young people have to continue in education or training until at least their 18<sup>th</sup> birthday (this is called the Raising of Participation Age, or RPA). There are a number of options available:

- full-time education in a school or college;
- work-based learning through an Apprenticeship or pre-Apprenticeship training;
- full-time work *or* volunteering combined with part-time education or training.

*Here's some more detail on the main options:*

## Full-time Education

*Young people have a choice about where to study. It depends not just on what type of course they want to do but also on the type of environment they are looking for:*

**School Sixth Forms** are part of schools that also provide education for students up to Year 11. Some schools co-operate to run a joint sixth form centre. They mostly offer A level studies, but some also offer a few vocational courses, like BTEC. They usually give priority to students who are progressing internally, so places for students applying from other schools could be limited. School Sixth Forms are more likely to have a uniform or dress code than other places of study.

**Sixth Form Colleges** and **16-19 Schools** specialise in education for 16 -19 year olds and take students from a lot of different schools (though some will give priority to students from the local area). Sixth Form Colleges usually offer a combination of A levels and a wide range of vocational courses, like BTEC. Some 16-19 Schools are similar to school sixth forms in curriculum and learning environment, others are more like sixth form colleges; a few specialise in a vocational area.

**Further Education (FE) Colleges** provide courses for students of all ages, including many part-time courses. Some have separate classes or even a separate site for 16 -19 year olds. Most of the courses they offer are job-related, like BTECs and more specific skills-based courses to start qualifying for a particular job (examples include motor vehicle repair, hairdressing and accounting). Some specialise in courses for a particular work sector and a few offer A level studies.

**University Technical Colleges (UTCs) and Studio Schools** are for students between the ages of 14 and 19. Like school sixth forms, priority for places on post-16 courses may be given to students progressing internally. UTCs specialise in subjects that need modern, technical, industry-standard equipment. Studio Schools often have a vocational specialism, and focus on employability skills and a core of academic qualifications, delivered in a practical and project-based way. Hours spent studying on site are usually longer than in other colleges or sixth forms.

*A list of popular places to study is available from the 15billion careers adviser who visits your child's school.*

*There are different types and levels of course, depending on a student's interests, abilities and Year 11 results:*

**Academic studies: GCE A levels** last two years and could be the right choice for those who enjoy studying, do well at exams and achieve at least 5 GCSEs at grade C or above. In practice, the entry requirement is usually more than this minimum, and can include a minimum average GCSE grade of B and/or B grade or above in specific subjects. Most students choose four subjects in the first year, continuing with three of them to the second year. An alternative to A level study, available at some schools and colleges, is the **International Baccalaureate**, in which study of science, languages and humanities are compulsory.

**Vocational programmes.** Students interested in learning about a general career area but not yet ready to train for a specific job might be interested in a “vocational” course. These include BTEC and Applied A level programmes. They are available at different levels, up to the A level equivalent Advanced/Level 3, and final grades depend mostly on course work and assignments rather than exams.

**Occupational qualifications.** Some young people know what job they want to do and a full-time job-specific course is one way to start getting qualified. Examples of these courses are CACHE (childcare), ILEX (legal work), AAT (accounts) and IMI (motor vehicle repair). Many of these are likely to be recognised under the new Technical Level (“Tech Level”) quality framework.

*Some colleges offer the opportunity to combine the study of academic and vocational subjects at Level 3 (A level or equivalent).*

*What level a student starts at depends on GCSE grades (see table below).*

Qualification Level	Normal length	Typical entry requirements	Progression possibilities
3	2 years	Minimum <b>4 GCSEs at C</b> or above; English and/or maths may be specified. For <b>A level study, more will be required:</b> at least 5 GCSEs at grade C usually with a grade average higher than C and/or B grade or above in specific subjects.	Higher education (university level), training or employment (including Apprenticeships)
2	1 year	Variable, but <b>some grade Ds</b> will usually be required, and again English and/or maths may be specified.	Level 3 studies, training or employment (including Apprenticeships).
1	1 year	Often no specific entry requirements, but level of <b>English and maths will be assessed.</b>	Level 2 studies, training or employment (possibly including Apprenticeships).
Entry	variable	<b>No specific requirements.</b>	Level 1 studies or training.

## Work-based learning

**Apprenticeships.** Those who know exactly what they want to do and are ready to start their career in a job could look at an Apprenticeship. Here are some points to consider:

- Apprenticeships are real jobs, so to gain a place a young person has to be chosen by an employer as the best applicant for the job. The selection process could involve a test of abilities and an interview;
- some employers require specific GCSEs from school leavers (often including English and maths at grade C or above);
- some employers take direct applications, but other opportunities are available through approved training providers who organise recruitment and training on behalf of employers. The National Apprenticeship Service web site ([apprenticeships.org.uk](http://apprenticeships.org.uk)) has details of many Apprenticeship vacancies;
- there is a minimum pay rate of £2.68 per hour (around £100 for a full working week). Some employers pay more than this: the average pay nationally is around £170 a week;
- Apprentices take qualifications that prove they can do the job they are training for. The main qualification is a National Vocational Qualification (NVQ). Most Apprentices start at NVQ Level 2, the level of basic competence in a job, though school leavers who have the right level of qualifications and skill may be able to start an Advanced Apprenticeships (Level 3);
- Apprenticeship places are limited and there is competition for places, so some young people find that their chances of getting a place are improved by spending some extra time in full-time education or in a Traineeship.

**Traineeships** last up to 6 months and give young people the chance to gain more qualifications and/or experience to help them progress to an Apprenticeship with an employer. The training involves:

- work experience placement(s) of at least 6 weeks
- work preparation, including help with job applications / CVs, preparing for interviews, communication skills and team work
- qualifications in English and/or maths for those not achieving grade C at school
- the possibility of a job-specific qualification (for example NVQ Level 1).

## Back-up plan

Whatever first choice a young person has, it is essential to have a back-up plan in place. For example, applying to a few different colleges/6<sup>th</sup> forms or, if applying for Apprenticeships, also lining up a relevant full-time college course or a Traineeship.

# Supporting a young person to achieve and progress

- Talk to them about where they are at with their plans for after Year 11;
- help with their applications - encourage neatness and accurate spelling and grammar;
- make sure they have an email address and voicemail message suitable for contact by schools, colleges or employers – if necessary, remind them that what is amusing to friends may not go down well in a business environment!
- encourage them to write important dates into their planner / diary;
- check that they have a revision timetable and that they stick to it;
- encourage them to eat well, take breaks between study sessions and get enough sleep at night;
- remind them of the timeline given below:

## Year 11 Progression Timeline

*To make a smooth transition after Year 11, here's what students should be thinking about and taking action on throughout the year:*

### **September to December**

- think through their career ideas and to consider which progression options best suit their ambitions and abilities;
- talk through ideas with relatives, teachers, learning mentors and a careers adviser;
- research information about what is on offer at 6<sup>th</sup> forms / colleges from web sites;
- before making applications, visit as many 6<sup>th</sup> form/college open events as possible to investigate travel options, view facilities and to talk to teachers;
- some 6<sup>th</sup> forms and colleges have early closing dates so be sure to check closing dates for applications and make sure they are met;
- if interested in Apprenticeships, find out more and register on [apprenticeships.org.uk](http://apprenticeships.org.uk).

### **January to April**

- to get the best chance of a place on popular courses like construction, performing arts, childcare, sport & exercise, or A levels, get applications in by the end of January;
- for other courses, it's best to get applications in by the end of February;
- for Apprenticeships talk to a careers adviser and check apprenticeships websites for vacancies;
- check that plans are still on track after mock exam results, Talk to a careers adviser if not sure;
- make sure there is a back up plan in place.

### **May to August**

- results of applications to sixth forms / colleges should be known by now – students without any offers should take advice on their options;
- those whose first choice is not full time study but who have not yet been successful in getting an Apprenticeship offer by June should find out about Traineeships and should contact their careers adviser for further information and advice;
- if GCSE results in August are different from expectations, their careers adviser is available to offer advice and support.

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# Financial Support

## Child Benefit and Child Tax Credit

- You can continue to claim Child Benefit (and Child Tax Credit if you are eligible) for your child if they stay in approved education or training after Year 11. You must tell the Child Benefit Office (and Tax Credit Office if applicable) otherwise your benefits may stop on 31st August.  
**Note:** the government is replacing Tax Credits with Universal Credit, so details may change.
- Education and training must be full-time (more than an average of 12 hours' supervised study a week during term time) and can include home education, if you have stated this as your intention before your child's 16<sup>th</sup> birthday.
- If your child leaves approved education or training, payments will stop at the end of February, 31 May, 31 August or 30 November (whichever comes first).
- Child Benefit also stops once a student finishes an approved course after their 19<sup>th</sup> birthday. Courses that are paid for by an employer or are at higher education/university level (Level 4 or above) are not approved.

## 16-19 Bursary

- Some 16 – 19 year-old students in full time education or training can receive a bursary to help with the costs of studying. The money is a grant, not a loan, so does not have to be repaid.
- Schools, colleges and training providers are responsible for awarding bursaries to students.
- Students in particular circumstances will be eligible to receive a bursary of £1,200 a year. This includes young people in care, care leavers, young people claiming income support, and disabled young people receiving Employment Support Allowance and/or Disability Living Allowance
- Other students facing financial difficulties may be awarded a bursary at the discretion of the education or training provider. The provider also decides the level of discretionary bursaries, when they are paid, and any conditions that students need to meet (for example standards of behaviour or level of attendance) Most providers offer discretionary bursaries to students who were eligible for free school meals at secondary.
- Some providers give eligible students £100 a term, others give £10 a week. Some do not give money to students but help with food vouchers, transport costs, book/material costs etc.
- For more information about what is on offer and how to apply, contact individual schools, colleges or training providers.

# Useful websites

## Careers information & exploration

[nationalcareersservice.direct.gov.uk](http://nationalcareersservice.direct.gov.uk)

[plotr.co.uk](http://plotr.co.uk)

[icould.com](http://icould.com)

[careersteer.org](http://careersteer.org)

## Local information about options

[newhamsussed.co.uk](http://newhamsussed.co.uk)

## Education and training providers based in Newham

### *Schools & colleges:*

Access to Music

[accesstomusic.co.uk/centres/london](http://accesstomusic.co.uk/centres/london)

Brampton Manor Academy

[bramptonmanor.org](http://bramptonmanor.org)

The Building Crafts College

[thebcc.ac.uk](http://thebcc.ac.uk)

Chobham Academy

[chobhamacademy.org.uk](http://chobhamacademy.org.uk)

London Academy of Excellence

[excellencelondon.ac.uk](http://excellencelondon.ac.uk)

London Design & Engineering UTC

[utcolleges.org/utcs/london-design-and-engineering-utc](http://utcolleges.org/utcs/london-design-and-engineering-utc)

Newham College of Further Education

[newham.ac.uk](http://newham.ac.uk)

Newham Collegiate Sixth Form Centre

[ncs6.org](http://ncs6.org)

Newham Sixth Form College (NewVIC)

[newvic.ac.uk](http://newvic.ac.uk)

St Angela's & St Bonaventure's Sixth Form Centre [stangelas-stbonaventures.co.uk](http://stangelas-stbonaventures.co.uk)

### *Work-based-learning providers:*

Access to Music

[accesstomusic.co.uk](http://accesstomusic.co.uk)

Alpha BSE

[alphabse.co.uk](http://alphabse.co.uk)

The Building Crafts College

[thebcc.ac.uk](http://thebcc.ac.uk)

Lifecare Consulting

[life-care.co.uk](http://life-care.co.uk)

Newtec

[newtec.ac.uk](http://newtec.ac.uk)

The Skills Place (Westfield Stratford City)

[theskillsplace.com](http://theskillsplace.com)

Skills For Growth

[skillsforgrowth.org.uk](http://skillsforgrowth.org.uk)

## Full-time education

14-19 education in London

[ucasprogress.com](http://ucasprogress.com)

Colleges in London

[londoncolleges.com](http://londoncolleges.com)

## Higher education

Higher education courses and applications

[ucas.com](http://ucas.com)

Subject choice for university

[russellgroup.org/InformedChoices-latest.pdf](http://russellgroup.org/InformedChoices-latest.pdf)

## Work & Training

National Apprenticeship Service

[apprenticeships.org.uk](http://apprenticeships.org.uk)

Opportunities outside of full-time education

[notgoingtouni.co.uk](http://notgoingtouni.co.uk)

Help for Newham residents

[newhamworkplace.co.uk/Apprenticeship.htm](http://newhamworkplace.co.uk/Apprenticeship.htm)

## Benefits

[gov.uk/browse/benefits](http://gov.uk/browse/benefits)