



Careers decisions in secondary education

A guide for parents and carers



**CORNWALL
COUNCIL**
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**Cornwall &
the Isles of Scilly**
CAREERS HUB

THE **CAREERS &
ENTERPRISE**
COMPANY

Parents are influential people

 **“ 90% of young people said they accessed careers advice from their friends or parents ”**

DfE report: Young people's experiences of careers information, advice and guidance | Sept 2021

Being a parent is a juggling act and knowing everything about careers on top of everything else? Don't panic, there are some great ways in which you can help.

This guide has been designed to help you support your child to find their best next step in education, employment or training.

Contents

Introduction	4
Effective careers conversations, information and resources	5
Understanding qualifications	6
College, job and university application process	7
Results day	8
Apprenticeships, technical and vocational pathways	9
Provider types	10
Supporting Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND)	11
Work experience	12
Advice for children seeking an apprenticeship employer	3
The labour market and Cornwall's industries	14
Skills - what are they and why are they important	16
Other resources and websites	17

Introduction

Start with the end in mind.

There are key decision points for your child at age 14, 16 and 18 and it makes sense to consider these options through the lens of careers.

Things to consider:

- What motivates your child?
- Which hobbies do they enjoy?
- What is their favourite subject?
- Who influences them?
- Will they enjoy working indoors or outdoors or a mixture of the two?
- Would they like to work in one place or from different locations?
- Are they interested in running their own business?
- Do they want to work with people?
- Are they motivated by money?
- Are they creative?
- Do they design things?
- Have they thought about a workplace experience or doing some voluntary work?

This list is not exhaustive, but it's a great place to start.

Keep reading to find out how you can help.





A parents' toolkit for career conversations

Have more informed and constructive conversations with your child about training and education using the Talking Futures resource.

DISCOVER THE PATHWAY OPTIONS >

Effective careers conversations

Talking Futures.

The Talking Futures website has been designed to help you to navigate the world of career choices. It includes a Top Tip Framework to make it easier to have good conversations with your child covering the following aspects:

- **Timings:** Don't force the issue
- **Obstacles (and observations):** Consider what obstacles might be getting in the way
- **Passions:** Focus on their passions rather than practicality
- **Two-way communication:** Learn to listen more than talk
- **Ideas and positivity:** Continue to be interested

The website has comprehensive information and resources for all stages in your child's education.

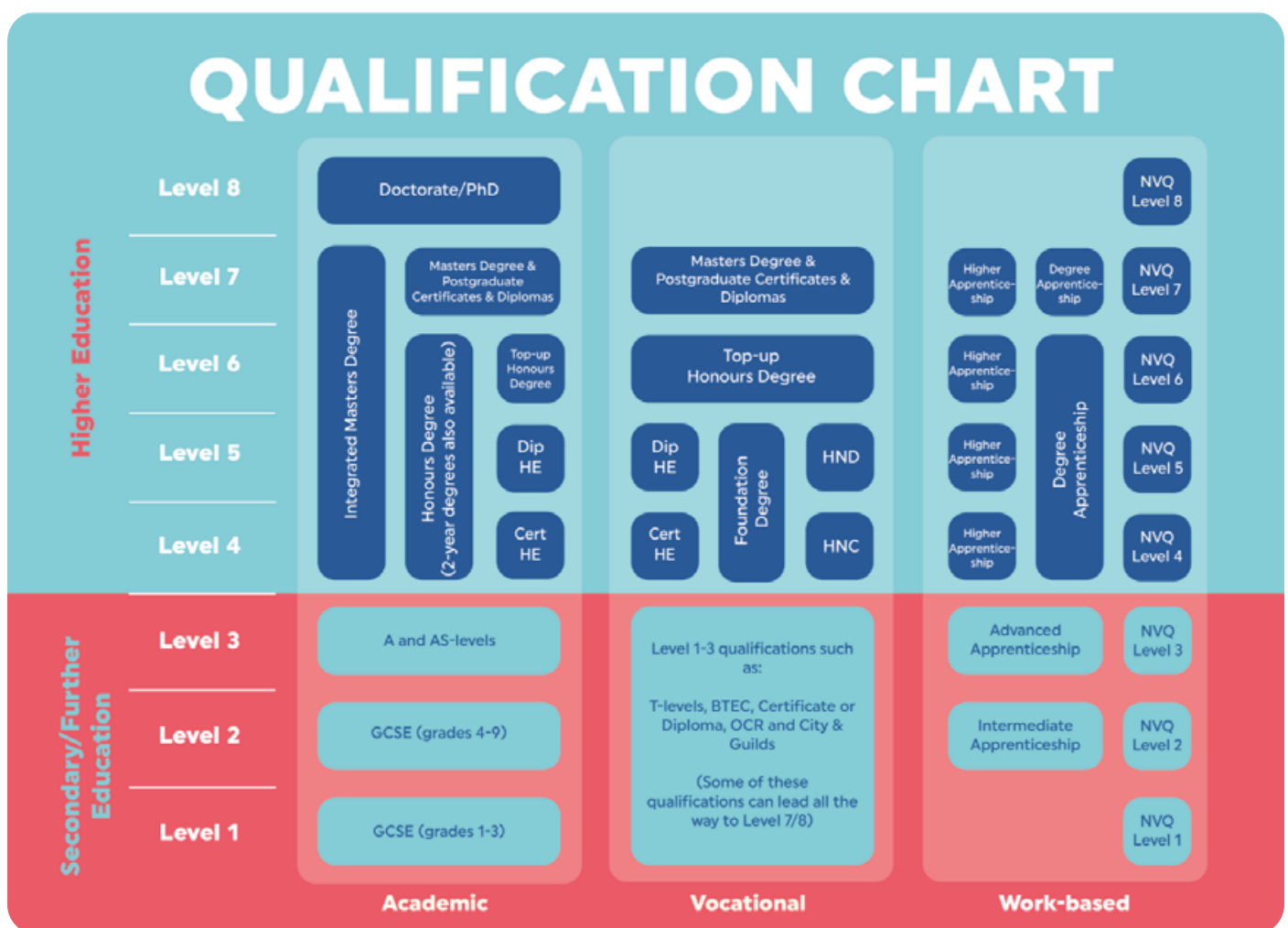


www.talkingfutures.org.uk

Understanding qualifications

There are three main educational pathways: academic, vocational or work-based. Educational levels go from entry level (before level 1) all the way up to level 8.

Use the qualification chart below to get a better understanding.



[Click here for the interactive chart](#)

College, job and university application process

Applying to college courses, universities, and jobs (including apprenticeships) requires going through an application process.

Local colleges expect applications to be submitted early in Year 11, and it is the responsibility of both the student and their parent/carer to apply.

Job opportunities and apprenticeships provide application deadlines and submission instructions in their adverts.

Universities also have specific deadlines throughout the year, and your child will receive guidance and support from their school or college careers team. The [Next Steps SW website](#) is a valuable resource for questions related to university-level study.

Here are some recommendations to prepare for the application process:

- Speak to your school or college Careers Leader or Work Experience Coordinator.
- Encourage your child to write a skills-based CV, which will include most of the necessary details for an application form.
- Ensure your child has an appropriate email address.
- Have them practice sending and receiving emails with a CV attached.
- Help them become familiar with application forms and understand the language used in them.
- Ensure their social media profiles contain good information—prospective employers will view their online presence, so make sure they know how to set privacy settings and avoid inappropriate content.
- Encourage them to leave plenty of time to review an application after writing it, and ask a friend or colleague to proofread it for spelling or grammar errors.



Results day

Sometimes, results don't turn out as expected. So, what should your child do if their results are better or worse than anticipated?

First of all, don't panic. There is usually a solution to most situations. If they did better than expected, that's fantastic! If they did worse, their sixth form, college, or training provider will typically offer an alternative. The best step is for them to seek a one-on-one guidance interview with a trained Careers Guidance Counsellor. Contact your local school or college to arrange this, or **visit the National Careers Service**.



For full information about local support and advice, **visit the Youth Hub** on the Cornwall Opportunities website: www.cornwall-opportunities.co.uk/post-16-send/post-16-send

What's your next move?



Applies to England only



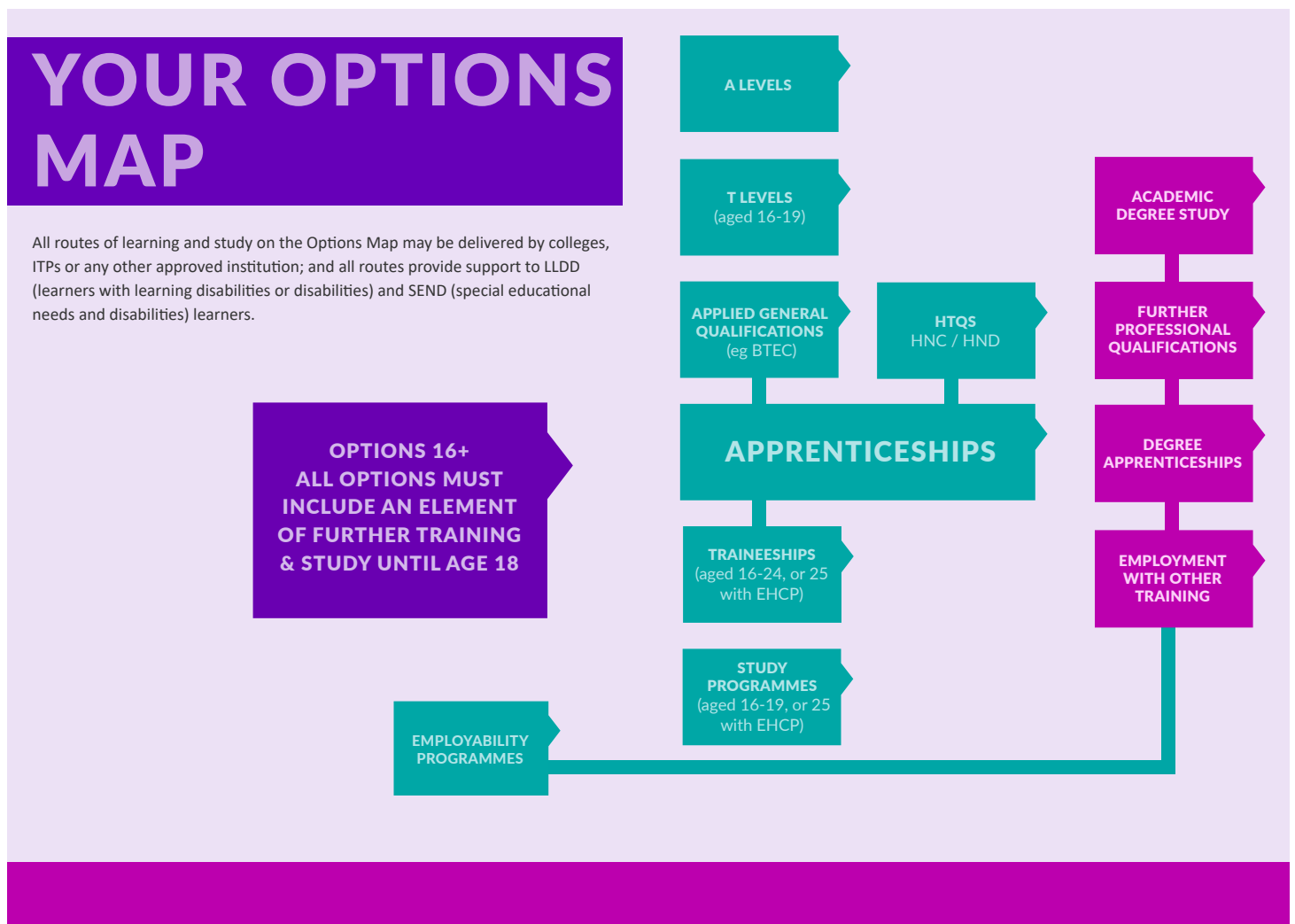
Apprenticeships, technical and vocational pathways

Work-based and apprenticeship qualifications often start at levels 1 or 2, even if your child has completed a full level 2 (equivalent to five GCSEs at grade 4 and above).

This is because these qualifications require practical experience and the ability to perform hands-on tasks. For instance, aspiring plumbers cannot start at level 3 without any practical plumbing experience, as this pathway is vocational rather than academic.

Many careers can be pursued through various pathways, and it is possible to switch between them. However, it is common to progress through the levels within a specific subject or sector. Having a plan can be very helpful in navigating this progression.

Being informed can help you to decide the best next step.



Provider types

There are different providers of qualifications, and all offer different levels and pathways.

Each type of provider offers a different style of teaching, learning and environment so there is something to suit all needs. The choice of provider will likely be influenced by where you live. [Browse the Cornwall Opportunities website](#) to help with the decision-making process.

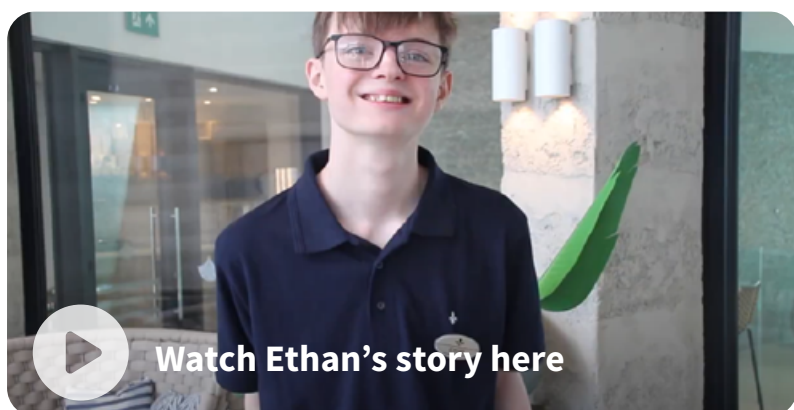
Type of provider	Governance	Quality Regulation
Independent Training Providers (ITPs)	Government funded but privately managed, so training is flexibly and diversely delivered.	Government regulated for financial accountability and quality of training delivery, learning and assessment. Non-compliance and poor outcomes lead directly to contract withdrawal.
Colleges	Public-funded and accountable institutions with a variety of independent powers depending on where they are located.	Government regulated for financial accountability and quality of training delivery, learning and assessment. Non-compliance and poor outcomes triggers process of remediation interventions.
Commercial Training Providers	Privately-owned, privately managed.	Unregulated by government. Quality standards can vary and are communicated via public relations.
Voluntary and charitable sectors	According to donor organisation codes, policy and practice.	Financial accountability and quality delivery assurance stipulated in contract between donor and training delivery organisation.
Higher Education Institutions	Independent, self-governing bodies, but most are part-funded by the government.	Self-governing bodies – subject to Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA) / Office for Students (OfS) oversight for degrees and Ofsted on all their apprenticeship provision.
University Technical Colleges (UTCs)	Government funded schools with a STEM focus. They are established by companies and universities in areas of high demand for talent.	Over 50 local universities govern UTCs.



Click here for more information about the different types of education providers.

Supporting Special Education Needs and Disabilities (SEND)

Most students with SEND can live fulfilling lives and careers with more employers being able to meet the needs of more young people.



1. For Career focused advice, resources and support:

For resources dedicated to SEND, head over to the Cornwall Opportunities website and click on the 'SEND Hub'. There you will find Post 16 options, videos and a link to the **most recent Open Doors magazine** by Access Cornwall on Issuu.

For a list of Post 16 pathway providers for SEND pupils, click here.

To access **a series of 14 short films showcasing the local post 16 Education and Training offer for young people with an EHCP or SEND**, **click here**. The films feature current SEND students and their teachers to allow parent carers and their children to explore local options.

Careermag is an online employer insights, information, advice and pathways magazine. It is published regularly with various editions tailored to support different audiences. Editions include Parent, Carers & Guardians, Primary Schools, Inclusion and School Leavers among others.

2. Cornwall Council have a Local Offer

Cornwall Council's Local Offer provides a comprehensive directory of services and support available for children and young people with SEND.

Family Information Service

3. Parent Carers Cornwall

A network of parents and carers of children with SEND, providing mutual support, information sharing, and advocacy.

Parent Carers Cornwall



Work Experience

In secondary school or college, students have the opportunity to gain work experience.

Just like with anything in life, you won't know if it's right for you until you try it. The same goes for work. Considering how much time we spend at work over a lifetime, it's beneficial for young people to start thinking early about what interests and motivates them in a job. Work experience allows students to:

- Meet employers and employees within an organisation
- Complete a project or piece of work
- Present their work to employers and receive valuable feedback
- Gain essential life skills
- Understand what it's like to work in the real world
- Determine if a particular profession is right for them
- Connect their education to real-world contexts

Your school will provide guidance on this, but it's important to discuss it with your child and start reaching out to local employers. Think outside of the box and try to go beyond asking family or friends for placements as this might limit the opportunities to experience something new. Encourage your child to be proactive in their search for a placement.



[Click here to try the Talking Futures conversation starter](#)



[Click here for sector insights and ideas for your search](#)

Advice for children seeking an apprenticeship employer

If your child can't find any suitable vacancies, they can take the initiative to find their own apprenticeship with an employer. Here are some steps they can take:

1. Gain work experience

Before applying for an apprenticeship, it's beneficial for your child to gain experience in their desired industry. Encourage them to ask their work experience employer if they would consider taking on an apprentice once the experience is complete. This will set them apart from other applicants when employers are looking to hire.

2. Hand out CVs

Though traditional, handing out CVs can still be effective. Once your child has a polished CV and has chosen an apprenticeship they're interested in, they should visit businesses in that industry. Encourage them to introduce themselves, inquire about apprenticeship opportunities, and leave their CV with contact details.

3. Make contact with local employers

If your child is still exploring options, encourage them to reach out to local employers. They can call, visit, or email businesses to express their interest. Having a CV ready to hand over is helpful. Leaving contact details with employers ensures they have a way to follow up.

4. Speak to an apprentice recruitment team

If an employer expresses interest in taking your child on as an apprentice, that's great news! In this case, your child will need to provide the employer's contact details to a training provider, such as a local college or an independent training facility. Alternatively, they can direct the employer to www.apprenticeships.gov.uk to choose an apprenticeship program and find a suitable training provider.



Apprenticeships are competitive, so we recommend you apply for both an apprenticeship and a further education course.

The labour market and Cornwall's industries



>> Could apprenticeships be the right choice for you?

Get the facts with Cornwall Opportunities and search for your ideal apprenticeship today!

Find out more and start your journey:

www.cornwall-opportunities.co.uk



>> Your career, made in Cornwall. Which industry will you choose?

Explore our industries on Cornwall Opportunities.

Find out more and start your career journey:

www.cornwall-opportunities.co.uk



Funded by UK Government



Funded by the UK Government through the G7 Legacy Fund. Cornwall Council has been chosen by government as a Lead Authority for the Fund and is responsible for monitoring the progress of projects funded through the G7 Legacy Fund in Cornwall.

Find out more and start your career journey:

www.cornwall-opportunities.co.uk



Funded by UK Government



Funded by the UK Government through the G7 Legacy Fund. Cornwall Council has been chosen by government as a Lead Authority for the Fund and is responsible for monitoring the progress of projects funded through the G7 Legacy Fund in Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly.



Key industries in Cornwall

Parents often express a desire for their children to lead happy and fulfilling lives. Meaningful work is a crucial component of building a positive future, and being well-informed can significantly impact your child's preparation for their future.

Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly boast a vibrant labour market with ten key growth sectors. These sectors indicate the types of jobs and skill demands expected to rise in the future, often reflecting the natural resources and infrastructure in the region, such as broadband supply, universities, and road networks. For instance, the local mining industry is experiencing a resurgence due to growing demand for minerals like lithium and tin. Additionally, the area's stunning coastline makes hospitality a major industry, offering careers that help employees develop valuable transferable skills such as communication, teamwork, problem-solving, and resilience.

Some sectors will create numerous job opportunities, while others may require fewer people but require more specialised skills and training. But employers increasingly seek staff with a broad range of skills capable of performing various tasks, rather than focusing on a single trade or skill area.

For more detailed information on the ten growth sectors in our region, check out the sector guides:

- **Data and space**
- **Clean energy**
- **Construction**
- **Creative**
- **Digital**
- **Engineering and manufacturing**
- **Health and social care**
- **Land-based**
- **Marine**
- **Visitor economy**



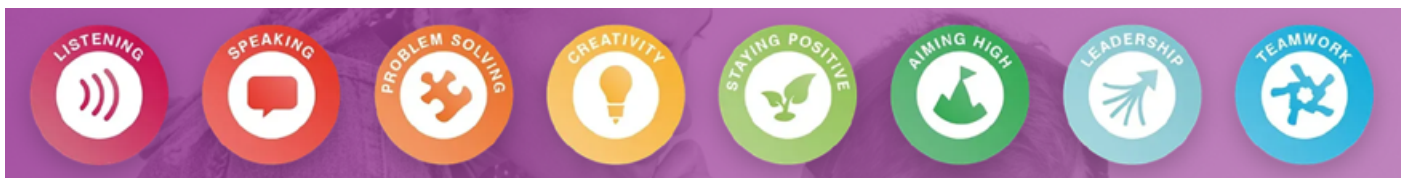
Visit the Cornwall's industries page to access resources and links for each sector Cornwall's biggest industries.

Skills: What are they and why are they important?

Did you know, research shows that having four or more essential or transferable skills, can reduce the likelihood of being unemployed, increase earnings and lead to happier and healthy lives?

The Skillsbuilder Framework website gives an overview of the essential skills employers are seeking.

The beauty of essential skills is that we all have them; sometimes we just need a little extra help to identify them in ourselves and be able write or talk about them confidently. They are achievable by everyone.



Essential skills are achievable by everyone!

Employers and educators are aware of the importance of these skills, and when your child comes to apply for their next course or job, they will be expected to show evidence of their essential skills.

Research shows that building essential skills can support:

- Social and emotional wellbeing
- Learning and academic outcomes
- Careers and opportunities



Visit the Skillsbuilder website to find out more



Resources and websites

Completing a skills self-assessment is a great way to help form ideas and shape decisions.



**Try the National
Careers Service online
skills assessment**

or



**Try the Job Quiz on the
Careerpivot website**

Here are some more helpful websites and resources:

Local

Cornwall Opportunities

The place to search for the latest jobs, apprenticeships and courses. Get information and advice on finding work or starting and developing your career. Operated by Cornwall Council, Cornwall Opportunities has all you need to find your ideal job and build a career here in Cornwall.

Cornwall's Top Industries

Cornwall's biggest industries.

SEND Support

16 years+ Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Providers.

Tech Cornwall

Connecting, promoting and supporting the growing tech community in Cornwall About Us - Tech Cornwall | Tech Cornwall

Tech Girls

Igniting a passion for technology, engineering and creativity for young girls in Cornwall.

New Creatives

An exciting talent development scheme that offers opportunities for emerging artists to create new work in film, audio or interactive media, designed for BBC platforms.

The People Hub (CioS)

Offers free support and advice for anyone seeking help with unemployment, redundancy, career development, skills or training.

Local Training and Support Organisations

General

Careerpilot

Offers expert careers information and tools for 11-19 year olds, all in one place. Featuring separate parent and advisor zones – <https://www.careerpilot.org.uk/>

Talking Futures

Here to help you have informed and constructive career conversations with your child about their academic and professional future.

Skills for Careers

Start thinking about skills and training for your career.

Lifepilot

Helping adults into higher level study.

iCould

Career ideas and information for your future.

General

➤ Go Construct

Information about careers in construction.

➤ The Student Room

The UK's largest online student community. Find expert information and peer support about everything from GCSE mocks and careers/jobs to relationships and health.

➤ Skillsbuilder

Start building essential skills with your child at home.

➤ Prospects

Get help with finding a job, careers advice or support applying to study at HE.

➤ National Careers Service

Careers information, advice and guidance. They can help you to make decisions on learning, training and work at all stages in your career.

➤ The National Citizenship Service

A programme open to 15 – 17 year olds that offers an array of free or heavily subsidised activities, including residential Summer schools.

Specific qualifications

➤ T levels

This government site is student/employer facing and tells you everything you need to know in a straight forward and easy to digest format.

➤ Apprenticeships

This government site helps you explore a range of resources designed to help inspire and support the apprentices of tomorrow.

➤ Supported internships

Supported Internships help young people aged 16-24 with an Education, Health and Care plan get into work.

➤ A Levels

➤ Technical / Vocational qualifications

➤ Applied qualifications

➤ Traineeships

Higher Education

➤ UCAS

All your UCAS application queries answered with expert support and guidance about many HE related topics.

➤ Next Steps South West

Impartial and up-to-date information and resources, to help you support your child.

➤ Discover Uni

Search and compare undergraduate courses in the UK.

➤ Follow the UCAS YouTube channel

for lots of helpful videos.

➤ Uni Taster Days

Search and compare universities and college via events, plus great resources like the Teacher's Guide to University.

➤ The Uni Guide

Research courses and where to study, and discover useful insights from admissions experts.

For more support and advice contact your school and ask to speak to the Careers Leader.

 www.careershubcios.co.uk

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