



Careers decisions in secondary education

A guide for parents and carers

East Sussex
CAREERS HUB

THE **CAREERS &
ENTERPRISE**
COMPANY

SKILLS
& EMPLOYMENT
EAST SUSSEX



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

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

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Introduction

Start with the end in mind.

There are key decision points for your young person 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 young person?
- 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.

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 young person covering the following aspects:

- **Timings:** Do not 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 young persons' education.

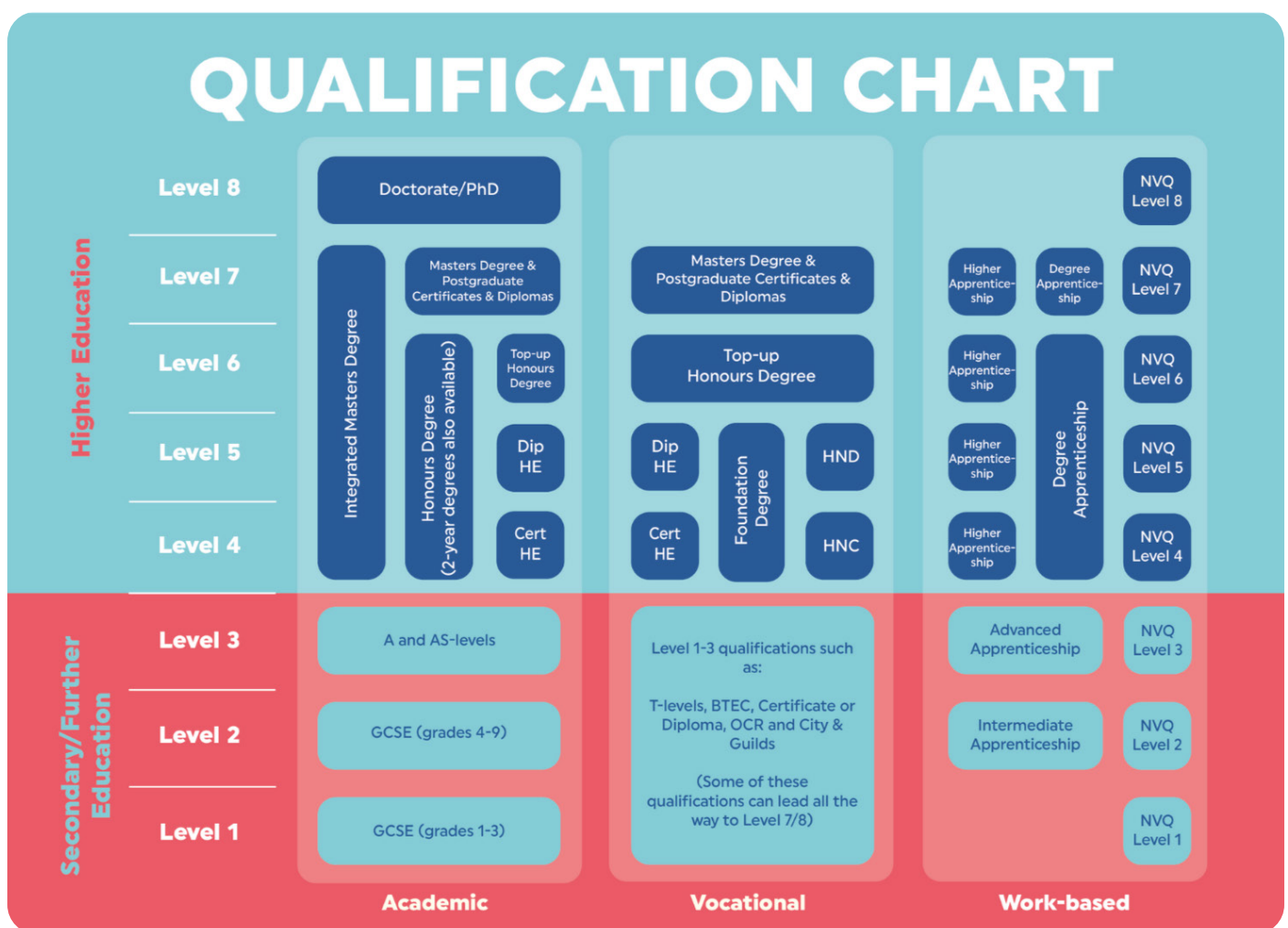


www.talkingfutures.org.uk

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](#)

Important note:
Entry level courses may only be offered at some post 16 providers

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 young person will receive guidance and support from their school or college careers team. The **Careers East Sussex 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 young person to write a skills-based CV**, which will include most of the necessary details for an application form.
- Ensure your young person 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 do not turn out as expected. So, what should your young person 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 their grades are lower than expected, it may not mean that you can not do the course you applied for, you must speak to the education setting of where you have applied as soon as possible and attend your enrolment meeting. Contact your local school or college to arrange this, or **visit the Youth Employability Service**



For full information about local support and advice, **visit the Youth Peoples** page on the

Careers East Sussex website:
www.careerseastsussex.co.uk

What's your next move?



Applies to England only



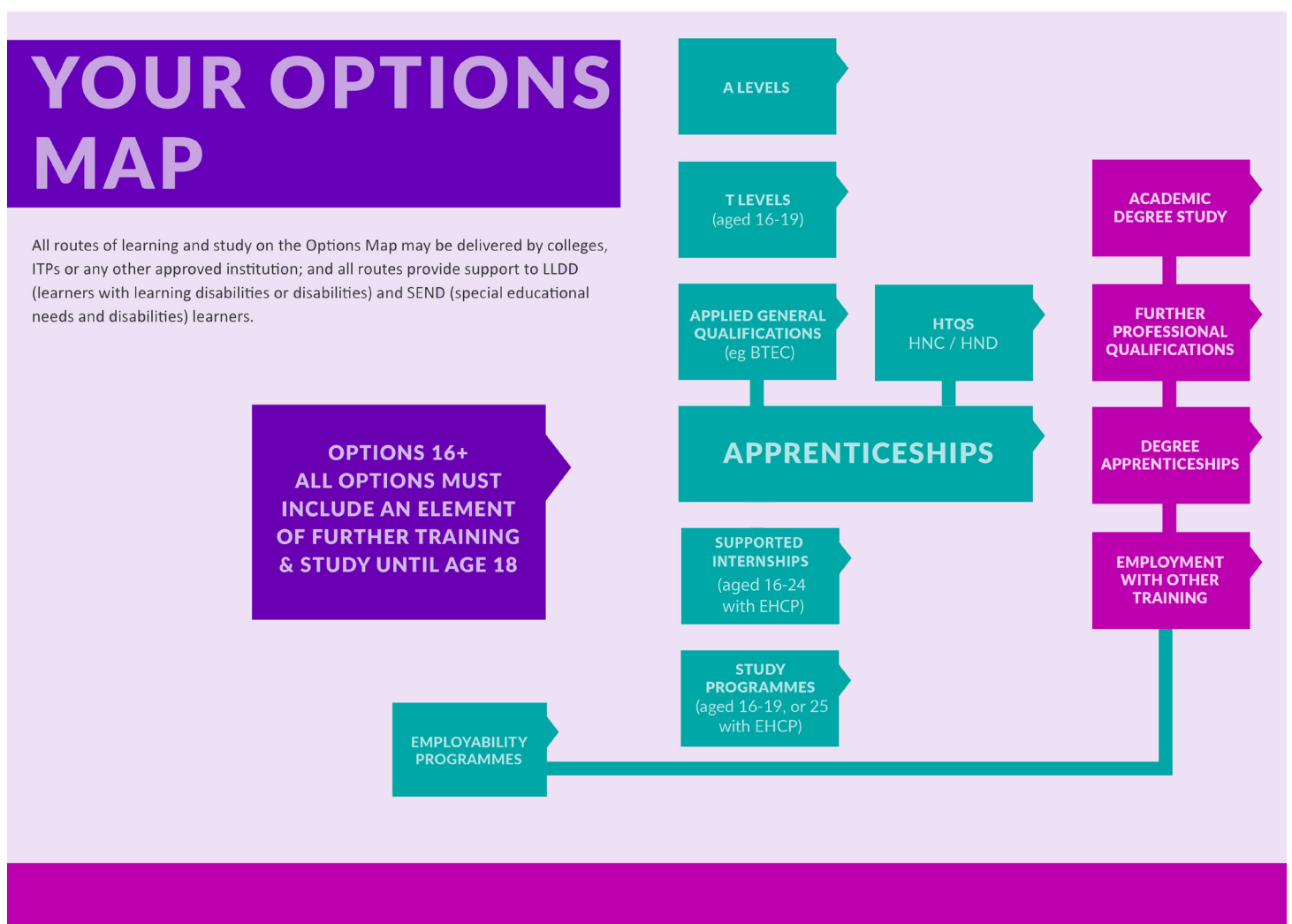
Apprenticeships, technical and vocational pathways

Apprenticeships, inclusive apprenticeships and work-based qualifications often start at levels 1 or 2, even if your young person 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. **Careers East Sussex Local Industries** to help with the decision-making process.

Type of provider	Governance	Quality Regulation
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.
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.
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, visit **Careers East Sussex Young People page**

Supporting Special Education Needs and Disabilities (SEND)

Here are some examples of local support for young people with SEND to give them the opportunities to make their best next step.



1. **Careers Preparation**

To help support young people prepare for future careers and the next steps, the school your young person is enrolled at will offer a careers programme. To find out more please contact the Careers Leader at their school.

2. **Vocational Profiles**

A vocational profile is a person-centred approach to finding out what a young person wants to do and provides an opportunity to understand what a person is interested in and to explore why. Schools and Colleges are encouraged to complete a Vocational Profile as part of their careers education offer but each school will work slightly differently. You can find out more about Vocational Profiles from the [link](#). There is a template for you to download and complete with your young person at your convenience.

3. **Post-16 Transition guides**

East Sussex County Council have developed guides to support parents, carers and young people feel prepared for the transition from school to post-16 and beyond. There are two guides, one for parents & carers and another for young people. Use these guides from the

earliest point and keep coming back to them.

Post16 Parent Carer Booklet / School to Adulthood - Transition guide

4. **East Sussex Local Offer**

East Sussex Council's **Local Offer** provides a comprehensive directory of services and support available for children and young people with SEND we have information, advice and guidance for young people aged 16 and their families to help navigate college & adult life.

5. **East Sussex 1Space**

East Sussex **1Space** is East Sussex County Council's online directory. It brings together groups and organisations that offer care, support and wellbeing services to people in East Sussex. There is a SEND specific section where you can explore information & services that could help prepare for post-16.

6. **Post-16 Providers in East Sussex**

Our local education and training providers have shared dedicated links to key information on their websites. These links are included in our Parent/Carer Transition Guide to help you explore options and make informed decisions about your young person's next steps. **From page 18 in our Post16 Parent Carer Booklet**

7. Supported Internships

Supported internships are a structured, full-time, work-based study programme. They are for young people who:

- have an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP),
- have had previous work experience, and
- are keen to go into paid work of 16 hours a week or more.

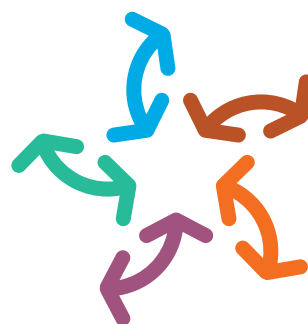
To find out more information visit our **Local Offer Supported Employment (Inclusive Apprenticeships and Internships) | East Sussex Local Offer**

8. Careermag

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.

9. Support in Post-16

If you would like to understand the learning and wellbeing support in post 16, please refer to pages 12 & 13 in our **Post16 Parent Carer Booklet**



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Click here for more information about the services and support for children and young people with SEND, visit the East Sussex Local Offer





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 or college will provide guidance on this, but it's important to discuss it with your young person 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 young person to be proactive in their search for a placement.



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

Advice for young people seeking an apprenticeship employer

If your young person can not 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 young person 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 young person 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 young person 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 young person on as an apprentice, that's great news! In this case, your young person 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.



Key industries in East Sussex

Parents often express a desire for their young person 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 young persons preparation for their future.

East Sussex boasts a vibrant labour market with eight key priority sectors. These sectors indicate the types of jobs and skills demands we have right now or ones that are currently growing. The county is full of mainly micro, small and medium businesses. These are hubs and clusters of businesses in certain parts of the county in industries such as creative and digital, health and social care, engineering and manufacturing. Alongside this, the area's stunning coastline and rural beauty makes hospitality and visitor attractions major industries, 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. Employers increasingly are seeking staff with a broad range of transferable skills capable of performing various tasks, and being agile to new technology or ways of working rather than focusing on a single trade or skill area.

Below are the county's eight key priority sectors:

- ▶ **Creative, Cultural, Digital and Media**
- ▶ **Construction and Civil Engineering**
- ▶ **Engineering and Manufacturing**
- ▶ **Health and Social Care**
- ▶ **Land-based**
- ▶ **Professional Services**
- ▶ **Visitor Economy**
- ▶ **Logistics, Freight and Haulage**

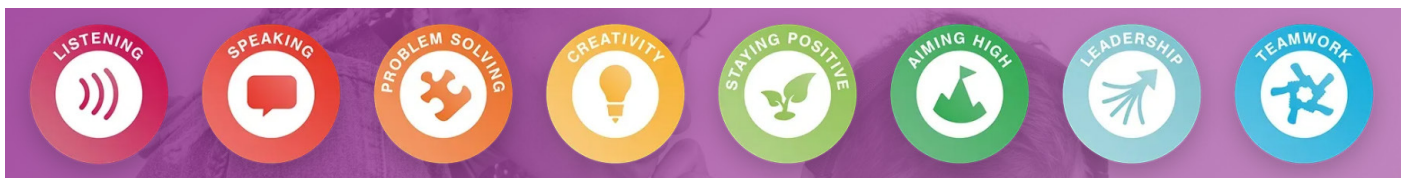


Visit the East Sussex Careers Hub industries page to access Local Employment Sectors

Skills: What are they and why are they important?

Research shows that having a minimum four 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 young person 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
Careerpilot website**

Here are some more helpful websites and resources:

Local

► **Careers East Sussex**

Careers East Sussex is a website and service that provides careers information and support for young people, adults, employers, and parents in East Sussex. It acts as an online gateway to local post-16 education, apprenticeships, and career options, and also includes a Careers Hub that connects schools with employers to help prepare young people for the world of work.

► **Youth Employability Service**

The Youth Employability Service (YES) is a free service that provides career guidance and support to help young people, particularly those aged 16-18, get into education, training, or employment.

► **Get Career Confident**

Get Career Confident is a careers and guidance programme that supports young people, parents, and educators in East Sussex and across the wider Sussex region.

► **Bexhill College**

Bexhill College is a sixth form college located in Bexhill-on-Sea. It specialises in post-16 education, catering primarily to students aged 16 to 19, though it also offers courses for adult learners.

► **DV8**

DV8 Sussex is a specialist creative college in Brighton and Bexhill for young people aged 16-18 (up to 25 with an EHCP), offering practical, industry-led courses in areas like music, media, games development, and esports.

► **East Sussex College**

The East Sussex College (ESC) is the largest education college in East Sussex, United Kingdom. The college provides a wide range of academic, technical, and professional courses, from Entry level up to degrees.

► **Plumpton College**

Plumpton College is a specialist land-based college located in the South Downs National Park in East Sussex. Founded in 1926, the college provides a wide range of vocational courses in agricultural and related subjects.

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

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 young person 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.

► 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 young person at home.

► Prospects

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

► 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

The government's T levels website is student/ employer facing and tells you everything you need to know in a straight forward and easy to digest format.

► Apprenticeships

The government's Apprenticeship website 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

► New V Qualifications

Coming September 2027

► Applied qualifications

Higher Education

► UCAS

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

► Next Steps South West

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

► 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.

 www.careerseastsussex.co.uk/

   www.facebook.com/CareersHubES/

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