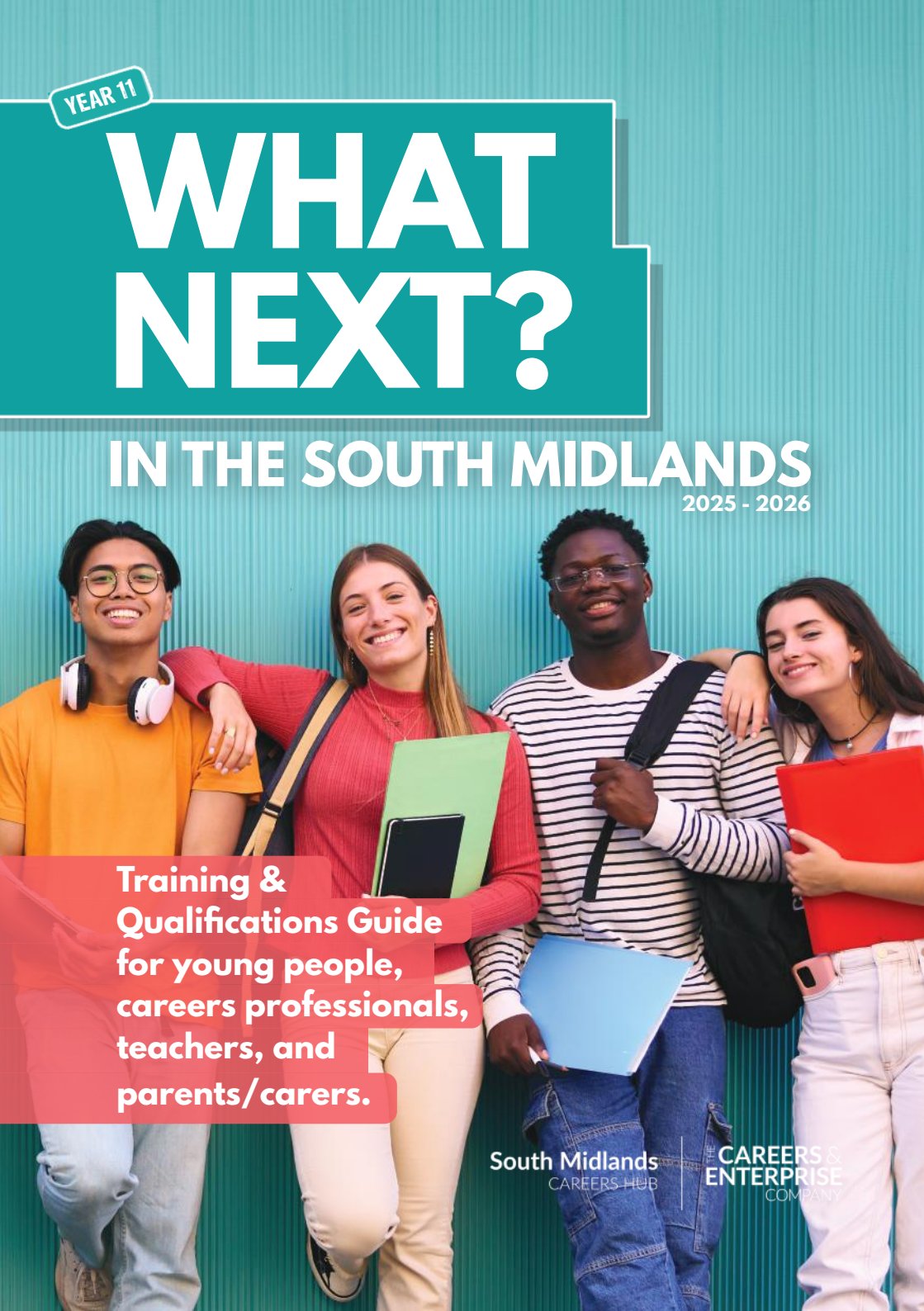


YEAR 11

WHAT NEXT?

IN THE SOUTH MIDLANDS

2025 - 2026



**Training &
Qualifications Guide**
for young people,
careers professionals,
teachers, and
parents/carers.

South Midlands
CAREERS HUB

CAREERS &
ENTERPRISE
COMPANY

Welcome

Welcome to our South Midlands Careers Hub 'What Next Guide'.

This guide will provide young people, parents/carers/families and teachers across South Midlands with key information to support with post-16 transition into education, employment and training.

This can be a daunting time for young people identifying their 'next best step' with so much information to navigate. This guide provides you with impartial and accurate information to help you to understand the range of pathways and options available to you, as well as signposting you to the local opportunities across the South Midlands.

The guide can also help you prepare for transition and can be used to expand your knowledge and understanding of the different levels in education, progression routes and what's available near you.

As parents/carers/families or teachers, you can refer to the guide when supporting young people to identify what the right pathway for them might look like. There are lots of useful website links for further guidance and support.

I hope you find it helpful.



Yvonne Ashby
Strategic Hub Lead

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PREPARATION TIMELINE

It might seem like ages away but if you take the time to research and plan now you can make more confident choices - and complete your applications earlier. So, you've got more time to focus on your GCSEs.

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 deadlines. Some colleges might require an application this term.
 - Make contact with employers if seeking an Apprenticeship.

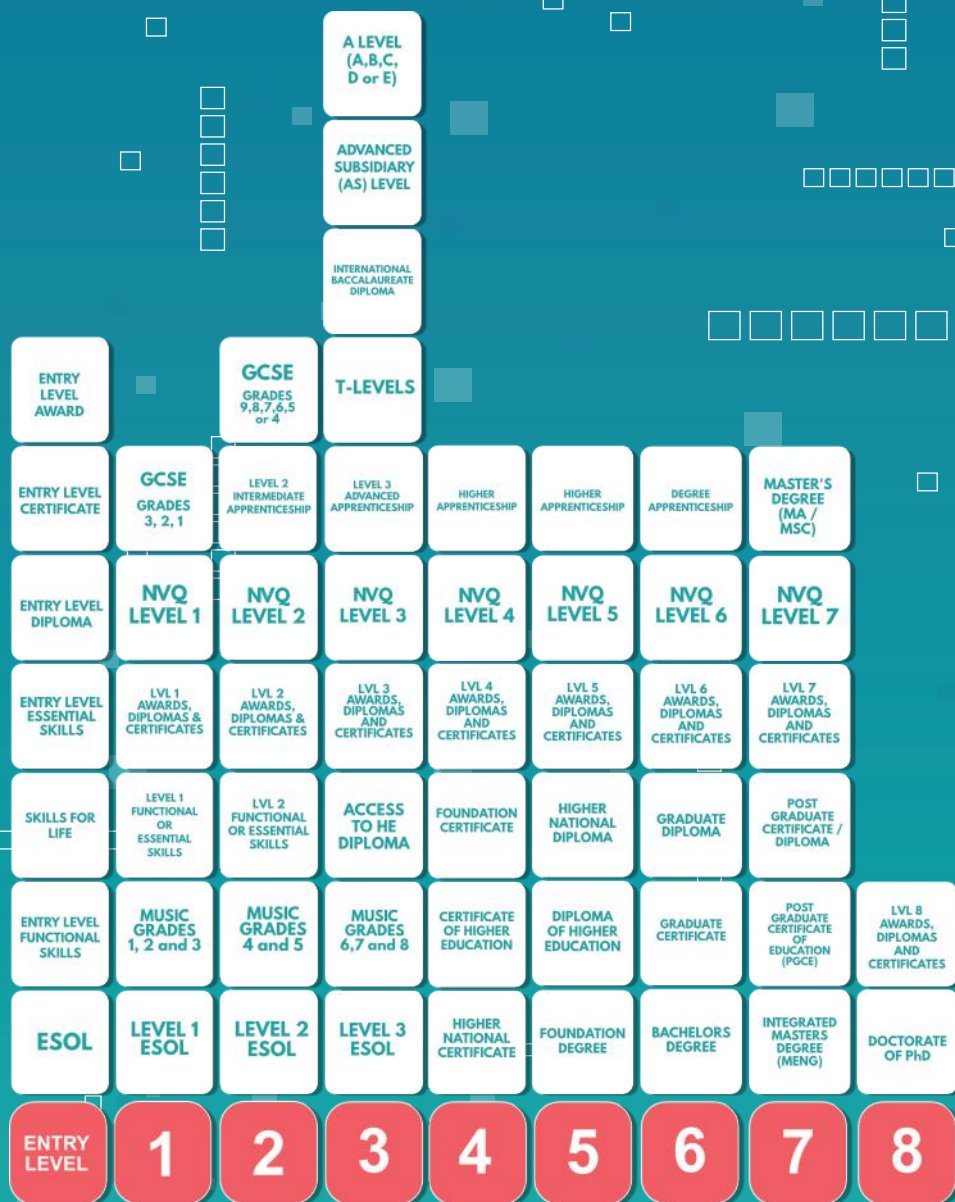
SPRING TERM YEAR 11

- 
- Complete applications (key dates will be given out in Y11) but most applications are completed by the end of January.
 - Attend interviews.
 - Attend additional taster events.
 - Work hard to secure an apprenticeship placement.
 - Make sure you have a back-up plan.

SUMMER TERM YEAR 11

- 
- Concentrate on exam prep.
 - Finalise your placement if intending on an Apprenticeship.
 - Attend any summer transitions days after exams. Many colleges run welcome events.

DO YOU KNOW YOUR LEVELS?



YOUR BEST NEXT STEP

There are numerous career progression routes available, each tailored to suit different individuals. The key is selecting the most suitable path to reach your goals.

For instance, you may opt for BTEC's, T Levels or A Levels to pursue a university degree, or alternatively, consider apprenticeships, which offer the opportunity to combine work and study.



WHAT NEXT?

Choosing the right options for YOU

For all school leavers, it is important not to close your options down by the choices you make.

ASK YOURSELF:

WHERE AM I NOW?

What qualifications, skills and interests do I have?

WHERE DO I WANT TO GET TO?

What would I like to be doing in 5 years time?

HOW WILL I GET THERE?

What course, training or future job is likely to get me where I want to go?

The main options for schools leavers

ACADEMIC PATHWAYS CLASSROOM BASED

A-LEVELS

VOCATIONAL PATHWAYS PRACTICAL & CLASSROOM BASED

T-LEVELS

VOCATIONAL COURSES

FOUNDATION COURSES

WORKPLACE PATHWAYS EMPLOYER BASED

APPRENTICESHIPS

INCLUSIVE APPRENTICESHIPS

SUPPORTED INTERNSHIPS

POST 16 OPTIONS...

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.



Study
3-4
Subjects



Mainly exam based



Earn UCAS Points



POST 16 OPTIONS...

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.



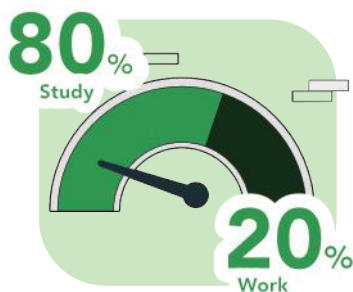
Alternative
to A-Levels



Get work
ready



Level 3
Qualifications



45 day work
placement



Progress
into a Higher
or Degree
Apprenticeship



Progress to
University

POST 16 OPTIONS...

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



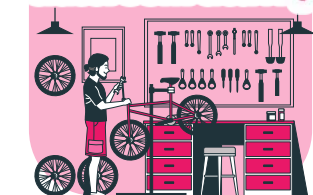
Develop
transferrable
skills



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



POST 16 OPTIONS...

FOUNDATION COURSES

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

POST 16 OPTIONS...

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.

Scan the QR
code to find
out more



A real
contract



1500+
Apprenticeship
job roles
available



2.2m
people have started
an apprenticeship



**Gain a nationally
recognised
qualification**



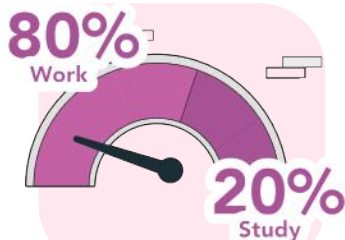
POST 16 OPTIONS...

INCLUSIVE APPRENTICESHIPS



Scan the QR
code to find
out more

Designed for individuals with acknowledged learning difficulties or disabilities. If you have an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP), Learning Disability Assessment (LDA), or Statement of Educational Need (SEN), adjustments in inclusive apprenticeships ensure accessibility.



Supportive
Job
Coach



Gain a nationally
recognised
qualification



A real
contract



1500+
Apprenticeship
job roles
available

1-4

YRS

to
complete



Earn a
salary



2.2m

people have started
an apprenticeship



600+

Apprenticeship
routes



POST 16 OPTIONS...

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.



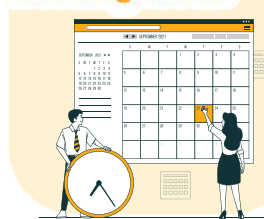
Supportive
Job
Coach



Move into paid
employment



Study during your
working week



Develop
key skills



Work with
experienced staff



Entry Requirements

Don't worry if you don't meet the exact entry requirements – providers like colleges and sixth forms are here to help.

They'll always take your personal circumstances into account and support you in finding the course that's right for you.

It's really important to achieve Grade 4 or above in English and Maths, as it opens more doors for your future. But if you don't quite get there, you'll have the chance to work towards it as part of your study programme.

Some courses may ask for specific GCSEs at grade 4 or above, depending on the subject. This will be explained when you speak with a tutor from the course area.

Entry requirements can vary between different courses, but the guide below gives a general idea 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.

Local Sixth Form & FE Colleges

When you finish Year 11, you'll have lots of choices for continuing your education. Many schools have a sixth form where you can study A Levels, vocational courses, or a mix of both — all school based sixth forms are listed on pages 16-19 for you to explore.

If you're looking for something different, there are also colleges and larger sixth form centres in your area that provide a wide range of subjects, specialist facilities, and opportunities to meet new people. Here are some of the main ones across Bedfordshire, Milton Keynes, and Northamptonshire:

Bedford Borough



Bedford College



The Bedford Sixth Form



Kimberley College

SCAN ME!

Central Bedfordshire



Central Bedfordshire College



Shuttleworth College

SCAN ME!

Luton



Luton Sixth Form College



Barnfield College



Luton Post 16 Prospectus 2025/26



SCAN ME!

Milton Keynes



MK College

SCAN ME!

North Northamptonshire



Tresham College



Corby Sixth Form

SCAN ME!

West Northamptonshire



Northampton College



Moulton College



National College for Motorsport

SCAN ME!

BEDFORD BOROUGH - SCHOOL SIXTH FORMS

Bedford Academy

<https://www.bedfordacademy.co.uk/sixth-form/6.html>

Biddenham Upper School

<https://biddenham.beds.sch.uk/Sixth-Form-at-Biddenham/>

Kempston Academy

<https://sites.google.com/kempstonchallengeracademy.org/sixth-form-at-kca>

Mark Rutherford School

<https://www.markrutherford.beds.sch.uk/page/?title=Sixth+Form&pid=49>

Ridgeway School (SEND)

<https://www.ridgeway.beds.sch.uk/6th-form-ks5/>

Sharnbrook Academy

<https://sixthform.sharnbrook.academy>

St Johns School (SEND)

<https://st-johns-school.co.uk/fe-2/>

St Thomas More

<https://www.st-thomasmore.org.uk/6thform>

Wixams Academy

<https://wixamsacademy.co.uk/Sixth-Form/>

CENTRAL BEDFORDSHIRE - SCHOOL SIXTH FORMS

All Saints Academy

<https://www.allsaintsacademydunstable.org/sixth-form/>

Cedars Upper School

<https://www.cedarsupper.org.uk/Sixth-Form-Welcome/>

Etonbury Academy

<https://www.etonbury.org.uk/sixth-form>

Harlington Upper School

<https://harlington.org/sixth-form/>

Ivel Valley School (SEND)

<https://www.ivelvalley.beds.sch.uk>

Manshead Church of England Academy

<https://www.mansheadschool.co.uk/Sixth-Form-/Prospectus-and-Applications/>

Oak Bank School

<https://www.oakbank.beds.sch.uk/curriculum/6th-form/>

Queensbury Academy

<https://www.queensbury.anthemtrust.uk/1450/queensbury-academy-sixth-form>

Redborne Upper School

<https://www.redbornecommunitycollege.com/sixth-form>

Samuel Secondary School

<https://www.samuelwhitbread.org.uk/page/?title=Sixth+Form&pid=10>

Sandy Secondary

<https://www.sandysecondarieschool.co.uk/sixth-form-admissions/>

Stratton Upper School

<https://stratton.school/welcome>

The Chiltern School (SEND)

<https://chiltern.beds.sch.uk>

Stratton Upper School

<https://stratton.school/welcome>

Vandyke Upper School

<https://vandyke.beds.sch.uk/sixth-form/welcome/>

LUTON - SCHOOL SIXTH FORMS

Cardinal Newman Catholic

<https://www.cardinalnewmanschool.net/sixth-form>

Queen Elizabeth

<https://www.qe6luton.co.uk>

The Chalk Hills Academy

<https://www.sixthform.advantageschools.co.uk/our-sixth-form/>

The Stockwood

<https://www.thestockwoodparkacademy.co.uk>

Woodlands Secondary

<https://www.woodlands.luton.sch.uk>

MILTON KEYNES - SCHOOL SIXTH FORMS

Bridge Academy

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

Denbigh High School

<https://www.denbigh.net/sixth-form/>

Lord Grey Academy

<https://www.lordgrey.org.uk/sixth-form/>

Oakgrove School

<https://www.oakgrove.school/category/sixth-form/>

Ousedale School

<https://www.ousedale.org.uk/sixth-form>

Shenley Brook End School

<https://www.sbeschool.org.uk/Sixth-Form/>

Slated Row School (SEND)

<https://www.slatedrow.com>

St Pauls Catholic School

<https://www.st-pauls.org.uk/sixth-form/intro>

Stantonbury School

<https://stantonbury.tove.org.uk>

**Stephenson Academy
(SEND)**

<https://www.stephensontrustpost16centre.org.uk>

The Hazely Academy

<https://www.thehazeleyacademy.com/Sixth-Form/>

The Radcliffe Academy

<https://www.radcliffeschool.org.uk/sixth-form-area>

**The Woodlands School
(SEND)**

<https://www.twsmk.co.uk>

Walton High

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

Watling Academy

<https://watlingacademy.net/join-us/watling-academy-sixth-form/>

NORTH NORTHAMPTONSHIRE- SCHOOL SIXTH FORMS

Bishop Stopford School

<https://www.bishopstopford.com/page/?title=Sixth+Form&pid=11>

Brooke Weston Academy

<https://www.brookeweston.org/page/?>

Chelveston Road School

<https://www.chelvestonroadschool.org/learning/curriculum/>

Corby Business Academy

<https://www.corbybusinessacademy.org/page/?pid=9>

Corby Technical School

<https://www.corbytechnicalschool.org/page/?>

Friars Academy (SEND)

<https://www.friarsacademy.org/learning/curriculum/>

The Ferrers School

<https://www.theferrers.org/sixth-form/>

Huxlow Science College

<https://www.huxlow.northants.sch.uk/sixth-form/>

Isebrook School (SEND)

<https://www.isebrookschool.co.uk/page/?title=Post+16&pid=196>

Kettering Buccleuch Academy

<https://kba.uk/sixthform>

Kettering Science Academy

<https://www.ketteringscienceacademy.org/sixthform>

Kingswood Secondary

<https://www.kingswoodsecondaryacademy.org/page/?pid=288>

The Latimer Arts College

<https://www.latimer.org.uk/page/?pid=190>

Lodge Park Academy

<https://www.lodgeparkacademy.co.uk/Sixth-Form/>

Manor School Sports College

<https://www.manorschool.northants.sch.uk/sixth-form/admissions>

Maplefields Academy (SEND)

<https://www.maplefieldsacademy.co.uk/welcome/>

Monksaye Academy

<https://www.monksaye.northants.sch.uk/sixth-form/>

Prince William School

<https://pws.emat.uk/sixth-form>

Red Kite Academy (SEND)

<https://www.redkitespecialacademy.co.uk>

Rushden Academy

<https://www.rushden-academy.net/index.php/sixth-form/sixth-form-introduction>

Sir Christopher Hatton Academy

<https://www.hattonschool.org.uk/page/?pid=72>

Southfield School for Girls

<https://www.southfieldsch.co.uk/sixth-form-welcome>

Weavers Academy

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

Wollaston School

<https://wollastonschool.co.uk/wollaston-sixth-form/>

Wrenn School

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

WEST NORTHAMPTONSHIRE- SCHOOL SIXTH FORMS

Abbeyfield School

<https://www.abbeyfieldschool.org.uk/page/?title=Sixth+Form&pid=42>

Billing Brook Special School (SEND)

<https://www.billingbrook.co.uk/6th-Form-05102020135944/>

Campion School

<https://www.campionschool.org.uk/sixth-form/welcome-to-sixth-form>

Caroline Chisholm School

<https://www.ccs.northants.sch.uk/curriculum/sixth-form>

Chenderit School

<https://www.chenderit.northants.sch.uk/Sixth-Form/Welcome-Page/>

Daventry Hill School (SEND)

<https://www.daventryhillschool.co.uk/about-us/example-page-title-20>

The Dunston School

<https://www.thedustonschool.org/page/?title=Welcome&pid=33>

Elizabeth Woodville School

<https://www.ewsacademy.org.uk/sixth-form-home/>

Greenfields Specialist School for Communication (SEND)

<https://www.gsscacademy.org/curriculum/post-16>

Guildsborough Academy

<https://www.guildsborough.northants.sch.uk/sixth-form>

Kingsthorpe College

<https://www.kingsthorpecollege.org.uk/students/post-16/>

Magdalen College School

<https://www.magdalen.northants.sch.uk/sixth-form/>

Malcolm Arnold Academy

<https://www.malcolmarnoldacademy.co.uk/Sixth-Form/>

Moulton School & Science College

<https://www.moultonschool.co.uk/sixth-form/>

The Northampton Academy

<https://www.northampton-academy.org/sixth-form>

Northampton International Academy

<https://nia.emat.uk>

Northampton School for Boys

<https://www.nsb.northants.sch.uk/page/?title=Sixth+Form&pid=10>

Northampton Schools for Girls

<https://www.nsg.northants.sch.uk>

Northgate Academy (SEND)
The Bee Hive

<https://www.northgateacademy.org.uk/The-Bee-Hive/About-Us/>

Purple Oaks Academy (SEND)

<https://www.purpleoaksacademy.org/page/?title=Post+16&pid=111>

The Parker E-ACT Academy

<https://daventrysixthform.e-act.org.uk>

Silverstone UTC

<https://www.utc-silverstone.co.uk>

Sponne School

<https://www.sponne.org.uk/sixth-form/prospective-students/new-student-home>

Thomas Becket Catholic School

<https://www.thomasbecket.org.uk/home>

Weston Favell Academy

<https://www.westonfavellacademy.org>

Local Apprenticeship Providers

There are lots of training providers who deliver apprenticeship training. Some will be part of local colleges. Some will be independent organisations, or employers. They might cover lots of different types of work or can specialise in a particular industry. Here are some local examples.

Visit the national apprenticeship service webpages for more information: www.apprenticeships.gov.uk for general information

<https://www.gov.uk/apply-apprenticeship> to search and apply for vacancies.



West
Northamptonshire
Council



JOHN LEWIS
& PARTNERS



BEDFORD
BOROUGH COUNCIL



Sainsbury's



SOUTH MIDLANDS



POPULATION OF                           

1,781,842

TOTAL NUMBER
OF BUSINESSES

NUMBER OF PEOPLE
IN EMPLOYMENT

74,035

897,700

KEY SECTORS IN OUR REGION



CONSTRUCTION



**ENGINEERING &
MANUFACTURING**



**CULTURAL
& CREATIVE**



DIGITAL



**LOGISTICS &
SUPPLY CHAIN**



HEALTH & CARE

CREATIVE & CULTURAL 82,600	HEALTH & CARE 110,000	ENGINEERING & MANUFACTURING 60,000
LOGISTICS & SUPPLY CHAIN 91,700	CONSTRUCTION 30,000	DIGITAL 50,000

The following websites can help you to explore more Labour Market Information.

Clear job profiles with pay, skills and entry routes.

Prospects – Job Profiles & Labour Market Trends

Career information geared towards students and graduates, with details on progression, salaries, and skills.

<https://www.prospects.ac.uk/job-profiles>

Youth Employment UK

helps young people explore jobs, skills and local opportunities.

<https://www.youthemployment.org.uk/careers-hub/>



STILL UNSURE?

POST-16 TOP TIPS

1

Attend careers and skills fairs

These are ideal for meeting colleges, training providers, apprenticeship providers, employers, and careers advisers.

2

Discuss your ideas

Talk to parents or carers, family and friends to get other viewpoints on your choices.

3

Get advice

Talk to teachers and career advisers – they have lots of knowledge and wisdom to share!

4

Open events and taster sessions

They're a great opportunity to visit schools and colleges, find out about the courses on offer, and speak to staff and students.

5

It's your life and your choice

Don't be influenced by where your friends are going. Ask yourself: what do I enjoy? What would I like to do and what do I want to get out of my life?

USEFUL WEBSITES

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

General Careers Information

Careers Pilot - Careers information and tools for 11-19 year olds. <https://www.careerpilot.org.uk>

Youth Employment UK – a website from an independent organisation that provides wide-ranging information about careers and employment. Try the 'Career Guides'.
<https://www.youthemployment.org.uk/careers-advice-help/>

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

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>

National Careers Service - Providing information, advice and guidance to help you make decisions on learning, training and work. www.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 \(education.gov.uk\)](http://www.skillsforcareers.org.uk)

T Levels - use this site to learn more about what T Levels are and how they work. <https://www.tlevels.gov.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 - The tool created by the Russell Group of universities to help you link University ideas to your A level choices. <https://www.informedchoices.ac.uk/>

Apprenticeships

Apprenticeships - Use this site for general information about the Apprenticeship pathway.

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

Find an Apprenticeship - Use this site to find vacancies in your area. <https://www.gov.uk/apply-apprenticeship>

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

<https://apprenticeshipguide.co.uk>

Amazing Apprenticeships - Use this site to explore a wide range of resources and activities linked to Apprenticeships.

<https://amazingapprenticeships.com/student-zone/>

Careers Information & Support for Parents

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/>

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

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

South Midlands
CAREERS HUB

THE CAREERS &
ENTERPRISE
COMPANY