



PLANNING FOR LIFE AFTER 16

Education - a general introduction

Introduction

School is compulsory and free up to the age of 16. Young people can then choose whether to:

- › Continue in full-time education. This is free of charge for young people under 19.
- › Move immediately into employment or work-based training. For more information about this, see the factsheets on *Employment*.

If your son or daughter is struggling to find a suitable placement, do be aware that the **September guarantee** entitles young people aged 16 (and in some cases 17) to an education course, or training within employment, though not necessarily to their preferred option.

The placement offered must meet your son or daughter's needs, ie:

- › It should take account of their existing qualifications
- › Be within a reasonable travelling distance
- › Be something they would like to do

Some definitions

- › **Further Education** means courses leading to qualifications up to and including level 3 (A levels and their equivalent) in school sixth forms or FE and other colleges. **FE** is often used as an abbreviation for further education.
- › **Higher Education** means courses at degree level and other higher level courses such as HNDs (Higher National Diplomas) etc. It generally refers to universities but can also include other colleges that offer courses at this level. For more information, see the factsheet *Higher Education*.

The options at 16

If your son or daughter decides to stay in full-time education, the fundamental choices facing him or her are:

- › School or college. For more information on these choices, see the factsheets *Schools* and *Colleges*
- › Mainstream or specialist provision

It is important to start considering the options in good time, ideally when the Transition process begins in year 9. For more information about what this involves, see the factsheet on *Transition*. Before making a decision, you and your son or daughter should first consider:

1. What (type of) course to go for, then
2. Which schools or colleges offer that course, or similar courses, and visit them.

Again, try to do this as early as possible (ideally in year 10) so that any necessary arrangements for admission, funding and support can be put into place.

Remember everything is more complicated and can take twice as long when you are dealing with someone with special needs or a disability.

Statements generally remain in place if young people continue at school. For more information, see the factsheet *Schools*. Young people who attend the FE/16+ sections of special schools are usually entitled afterwards to at least two further years of education in an FE or specialist college. This is often, though not always, free of charge.

Choosing a course

It is important to bear in mind that the decisions you and your son or daughter make now are laying the groundwork for their move into adult life and work, so try to take a medium to long-term view. Things to consider include:

- › Is the course at the right level for your son or daughter, not too easy, but not too difficult either?
- › What support will your son or daughter need to access the course?
- › Will the support your son or daughter needs be readily available or, if not, can special arrangements be put into place?
- › Will your son or daughter enjoy the course?
- › If they know what sort of work they'd like to do, will the course help them move in that direction?
- › If your son or daughter is not yet decided about future employment, will the course leave their options reasonably open?

It is important that any career choices your son or daughter makes are **realistic**. If they have significant ongoing speech and language or other difficulties, some types of work may not be suitable for them.

For more information on any of these issues, see the factsheet *Education: Sources of Further Information* or contact the **Afasic Helpline on 0300 666 9410 or 0207 490 9420**.

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