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A Guide for Parents

**How to help your child
with their future career plans**



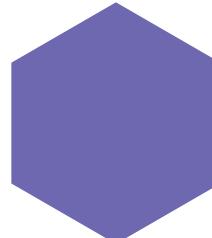
The information contained in this guide can be
made available in other formats upon request.

The aim of the Department for Employment and Learning is:

“To promote learning and skills, to prepare people for work and to support the economy.”

The aim of the Careers Service is:

“To deliver an effective, impartial and professional careers service to help people realise their career aspirations, enabling them to contribute positively to their community and to the NI economy.”



The purpose of this guide is to assist parents or guardians with their child’s future career plans and to provide information on the following:

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What careers are likely to be in demand in the future?

In an ever changing economy, young people today face a number of challenges and decisions about their future. It is more important than ever that young people make their career choices wisely.

It is very difficult to accurately forecast the job requirements of the future; which sector these will be based in and what qualifications will be required. However, it is accepted that the essential skills needed for the workplace are a good standard of literacy, numeracy, basic computer skills and effective communication skills. Young people need to look for ways to develop these skills through their studies and school based activities, sport, voluntary work and work experience.

While it's important for young people to study subjects that they enjoy, it's also advisable to consider the career opportunities which lie ahead.

The Northern Ireland Executive is working to rebuild and rebalance the economy. The Department for Employment and Learning (DEL) has identified the following sectors as key to future economic success:

Rebalancing:

- **Business Services**
(specifically Information and Communication Technology – ICT)
- **Financial Services**
- **Manufacturing**
(including food and drink processing, advanced manufacturing and advanced engineering)

Emerging:

- **Life and health sciences**
- **Creative industries**

Rebuilding:

- **Retail**
- **Hotels and catering**
(in support of tourism)

These sectors are expected to offer increasing opportunities for high quality employment. Many of these sectors require people with qualifications in science, technology, engineering or mathematics, often known as STEM subjects. Of course these are not the only career options available. The important issue is that young people research information about future employment opportunities and trends. They should then consider these against their own abilities and aspirations.

Having access to up-to-date information is a critical part of career planning.

For more information visit www.nidirect.gov.uk/careers or find your local careers office.



How can I help my child with their future career plans?

As a parent there is a lot you can do to support your child and help them find the career that's right for them.

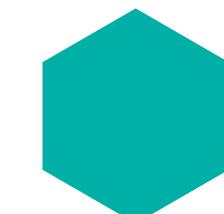
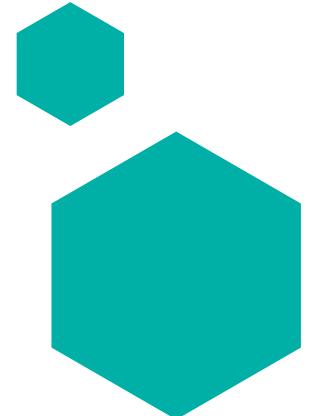
GENERAL TIPS

Encourage them to:

- Talk about their career ideas and future plans
- Research a wide range of careers
- Think about their Year 10, 12, 13 and post 14 options in good time and be aware of application deadlines
- Prepare for and make the most of their careers guidance interview with the careers adviser in school
- Find out about entry requirements for school, college, university courses or jobs they are interested in
- Develop their skills through school activities and other interests. This will help them when they are applying for courses or jobs
- Find out about the world of work through work experience opportunities
- Use the Careers Service website www.nidirect.gov.uk/careers where they can:
 - Match their interests and abilities to jobs
 - Use the A-Z of jobs database for information on over 1500 jobs
- Visit their local careers office where they can speak with a careers adviser – see page 16

In addition you can attend careers events at their school and talk to subject teachers at parents' evenings.

The support of parents is really important when key decisions like subject choices are being made. You may not always think it, but you greatly influence their decision making. However, keep in mind that your child's choices and decisions should be based on their aspirations, abilities and future employment opportunities. It should not just be what you as a parent may want for them.



Subject Choices at Year 10

During Year 10 your child will be asked to make a choice about some of the subjects or courses they will study in Years 11 and 12.

They will usually be expected to study English, Maths, PE, RE, Learning for Life and Work and develop the Cross-Curricular Skills of Communication, Using Maths and Using ICT.

For more information on the areas of learning at Key Stage 4 (Years 11 & 12) check www.nicurriculum.org.uk

The process of choosing subjects will be organised by the school your child is attending and varies from school to school. With the introduction of the post 14 curriculum (the Entitlement Framework from 2013- refer to page 30) pupils will have access to a much broader, more balanced range and choice of applied and general courses.

A general qualification is one where knowledge, understanding and skills are developed within a subject, e.g. GCSE Maths. An applied qualification is one where knowledge, understanding and skills can be developed through practical demonstration, eg: GCSE Construction. When choosing subjects at Key Stage 4 it is important for your child to be aware that some courses require specific subjects, eg: Science is required to study Nursing.

In addition to the help from the careers teachers in schools, careers advisers provide careers information, advice and guidance to pupils. This is delivered through class talks, group guidance and individual interviews where appropriate.

To help your child decide what to study in Key Stage 4, they should start exploring what sort of person they are.

Get them to think about:

- Subjects they enjoy
- Subjects they are good at or find challenging
- Subjects that can link into career areas
- How they like to learn, (through coursework, exams or a combination of both)
- Hobbies/interests they enjoy
- The type of job they would like to do
- Researching jobs through the Careers Service website
- Talking to the careers adviser
- Talking to their subject teachers

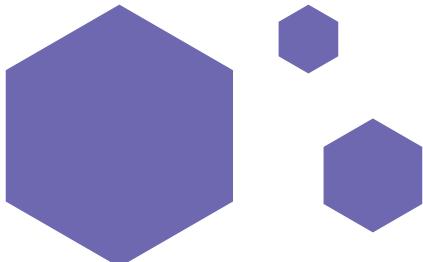


Understanding the different options after Year 12 and 13

Year 12 marks the end of compulsory education for your child and they will have to make a decision on what they want to do next. Making a choice about the future isn't easy as there are lots of options to choose from.

Options include:

- Full-time Education in their existing school or transferring to another school
- Further Education college
- On the job training through the Training for Success programme
- Employment opportunities and apprenticeships
- Self employment



Full-time education in their existing school or transferring to another school.

Before thinking about embarking on further study discuss the following with your child:

- Do they enjoy studying?
- Do they need to study further for the type of job they want to do?

Some young people prefer to stay at school. Others may be keen to have a change and study somewhere new. There may be competition for some popular subjects and/or courses so encourage your child to apply in plenty of time.

If your child decides to continue in full-time education within school they can choose either to stay in their current school or move to a different school for Years 13 and 14. Post Year 12 pupils in school have a greater choice of a broader range of subjects to meet their needs, interests and aptitudes.

Further Education college.

If your child decides to continue their studies at a further education college encourage them to attend open days to find out the subjects/courses on offer and qualifications required. There may be competition for some popular subjects and/or courses so encourage your child to apply in plenty of time.

Northern Ireland currently has six Regional Colleges and an Agricultural College:

- Belfast Metropolitan College
- Northern Regional College
- North West Regional College
- South Eastern Regional College
- Southern Regional College
- South West College
- Cafre (College of Agriculture, Food and Rural Enterprise)

Further information can be found at:

- www.collegesni.ac.uk
Tel: 02890 682296
- www.cafre.ac.uk
Tel: 02894 426666

On the job training through the Training for Success programme

Training for Success is designed specifically for young people aged 16 to 17 years (up to 24 years for those requiring additional support) and provides training to give them the vocational qualifications, skills and experience they need to get a job. Participants receive a non-means tested training allowance. Training is delivered across a wide range of suppliers and colleges throughout Northern Ireland.

This project is part financed by the European Social Fund.

For more information on Training for Success visit www.nidirect.gov.uk/trainingforsuccess



Training opportunities through the Northern Ireland European Social Fund (NIESF) Programme

NIESF Programmes aim to assist individuals aged 16 years and over who are having difficulty in the labour market, such as young people not in education, employment or training (NEETS). Young people aged 16 – 17 years old receive an allowance. Young people over 18 who are disabled or subject of a care order may also qualify for the allowance while participating on the programme.

Training will be delivered by relevant public, private, voluntary or community sector organisations.

For more information visit
www.delni.gov.uk/del_esf_directory_dps_final2.pdf

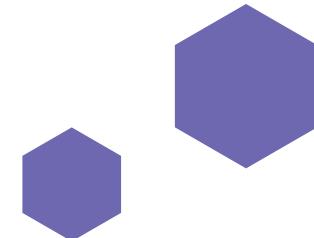
Employment opportunities and Apprenticeships

Your child may be keen to get out into the world of work when they leave school but remember that skills, experience and qualifications are important in a very competitive job market.

If your child is considering employment it is important to start looking before they leave school. They may be tempted to take a job where no training is provided – particularly if the wage is quite good, but training and qualifications are better for long term success. It is therefore better to look for a job that includes training opportunities.

Where to look for job vacancies

- Online at
www.jobcentreonline.com
- Newspapers
- Your local Jobs and Benefits office/JobCentre
- Recruitment agencies
- Careers and job fairs
- Careers Service website
www.nidirect.gov.uk/where-to-find-a-job



Apprenticeships

If your child has a good idea of where they want to go with their career and like the idea of earning while they learn, an apprenticeship could be for them.

ApprenticeshipsNI is currently the main apprenticeship programme and is part financed by the European Social Fund. It offers training across a wide range of occupational areas to employees who earn a wage while working with experienced staff to learn and develop their skills.

An apprentice also receives ‘off-the-job’ training to work towards achieving a competence based qualification, a knowledge based qualification and Essential Skills.

For more information on apprenticeship courses visit
www.nidirect.gov.uk/apprenticeshipsni or speak with your local careers adviser.

Some employers, mainly large firms offer their own apprenticeships such as British Telecom (BT), NI Water, Bombardier, Pricewaterhouse Cooper etc. Vacancies are advertised in local press, radio and websites.

Self Employment

Your child may have a good idea for a business and could be thinking of self employment. Although this is not a common option for the majority of young people, working for themselves may be the right choice for them particularly if they have the right financial backing. Even if this is the case it is a big step and they will need good advice.

The following organisations provide support to help young people turn their business idea into a reality:

- Go for it programme
www.goforitni.com
- Prince's Trust Enterprise programme
www.princes-trust.org.uk
- Advantage NI
www.advantage-ni.com
- NI Business Info
www.nibusinessinfo.co.uk



Understanding the different options after Year 14

After Year 14 there are lots of different routes and options for your child to move forward in their personal career journey. From apprenticeships to foundation degrees, employment and gap years there are many opportunities to choose from.

The choice your child makes will be affected by many things like their financial situation, interests, attitude to study, qualifications, the job market etc.

Options include:

- Higher Education – full-time/part-time courses at university or a further education college
- Further Education (FE) – full-time/part-time (refer to page 9)
- Employment opportunities and Apprenticeships (refer to page 10)
- Self employment (refer to page 11)
- Gap year
- Volunteering

Higher Education at University

If your child is thinking about going to university it is important to understand the application process and research fully the range of universities, courses and methods of study/assessment. Time and money could be another consideration as to whether full-time or part-time study would best suit their circumstances.

For more information check out:

- www.ucas.ac.uk – Universities and Colleges Admission Service (UCAS)

UCAS is the central organisation through which applications are processed for entry to higher education in the UK

- www.cao.ie – Central Applications Office (CAO)

Central organisation through which applications are processed for entry to higher education institutions in the Republic of Ireland.

- www.open.ac.uk – Open University.

The Open University's unique, world-leading style of distance learning enables you to learn in your own time, at home or wherever you choose – reading, watching or listening to material supplied, doing course activities and assignments with regular support from your tutor.

- unistats.direct.gov.uk - Unistats.

Unistats is the official website for comparing data and information on university and college courses from across the UK.

Higher Education at a Further Education College

Further education colleges accept direct applicants to higher education courses.

For more information check out:

- Belfast Metropolitan College www.belfastmet.ac.uk
- North West Regional College www.nwrc.ac.uk
- Northern Regional College www.nrc.ac.uk
- Southern Regional College www.src.ac.uk

- South West College www.swc.ac.uk

- South Eastern Regional College www.serc.ac.uk

Gap year

Your child may choose to take a gap year after they leave school and before they start university or college. This year out can be a great opportunity for them to have a break from their studies, earn some money, gain valuable experience, meet new people, increase independence and learn new skills. Universities, colleges and future employers support gap years as they see the value when students grow in confidence, have a more mature outlook and greater focus when they return to their studies.

But it does take planning and for this reason it is important they have a goal, rather than just taking a year off without any real direction or purpose.

For more information check - www.nidirect.gov.uk/planning-a-gap-year

How can I help my child make the most of work experience?

Most schools provide an opportunity for work experience. This is a good chance for your child to find out about the world of work and for them to understand the skills that are needed in the workplace.

It can also be an opportunity for them to find out more about a career that interests them. For some courses or jobs relevant work experience is essential.

Making the most of work experience:

- Encourage your child to plan ahead and think carefully about where they would like to go
- They should keep a diary or record of what they did on work experience - this may be useful later when they are applying for courses or jobs
- Even if they don't get their chosen placement they can still learn a lot about the world of work and the type of skills that employers look for
- Use the long summer break to explore what type of work friends and family do
- Parents can also talk to schools to find out when work experience is due to take place

Other activities to help your child find out about the world of work.

Work experience isn't the only opportunity for your child to find out about the world of work. Other activities include:

- Attending careers fairs where students get the chance to talk to employers about work and training
- Talking with people who are doing the job they are interested in
- Visiting local companies
- Visit your local Jobs and Benefits office/JobCentre
- Online at:
www.jobcentreonline.com



What is the Careers Service and what does it do?

The Careers Service is an integral part of the Department for Employment and Learning and provides free and impartial careers information, advice and guidance service to clients of all ages and abilities throughout Northern Ireland.

This service is available to everyone whether they are employed, unemployed, in training or in education, including students in schools and further and higher education. The Careers Service employs careers advisers who are professionally qualified and are based throughout Northern Ireland in Careers Resource Centres, JobCentres and Jobs and Benefits offices.

To find your nearest careers office, go to www.nidirect.gov.uk/careers or contact **0300 200 7820**.

The Careers Service assists young people and adults who are:

- Unsure what career might suit them
- Unsure of how to plan their next step
- Looking for information on a particular career
- Looking for education/training/employment opportunities
- Thinking of starting their own business
- Ready for a new career challenge

The Careers Service provides:

Information

- on up-to-date employment trends and future job opportunities
- on further and higher education, training and post graduate opportunities
- on working overseas and vacation/voluntary work

Advice

- on career options
- on CVs, interviews and application forms

Guidance

- individual careers guidance interviews to help develop personalised career plans



How can the Careers Service help my child?

Whether your child is at school, college, in training, employed or looking for work the Careers Service can help with their career decision making and planning.

Careers Adviser in school

While the Careers Service is separate and independent from schools, careers advisers work with all post primary schools in Northern Ireland. The services they provide include:

- Individual career guidance interviews to help with choices from Year 10 onwards
- Class and group talks on careers options/topics
- Information about Further/Higher Education and Training Provision

- Advice on how to find out about different careers and the skills and qualifications needed
- Information about current and future job opportunities
- Help with CVs, application forms and mock interviews

Every Year 12 pupil is offered at least one face to face guidance interview with a professionally qualified careers adviser. This is usually organised through your child's school but you can also arrange an appointment at any one of our offices.

Further information is also available online www.nidirect.gov.uk/careers

Careers Teacher in school

Careers teachers play an important role by providing careers education. They help young people to develop self awareness, decision making skills and support them to develop appropriate skills.

Post primary schools are required to deliver a careers education programme which has six core components:

- Timetabled lessons
- Cross-curricular provision
- Individual careers guidance
- Careers information
- Experiences of work
- Personal career planning



What is a Careers Guidance interview?

A careers guidance interview is an impartial one-to-one meeting with a professionally qualified careers adviser. A guidance interview is available to all clients.

In school the guidance interview normally occurs during the course of Year 12 (or Year 10/11 if appropriate). Before your child starts making career decisions they need to know about themselves, their career choices and other opportunities available to them. Encourage your child to find out the name of the careers adviser for their school. You can also contact the school to find out when they will be talking to your child. If your child would like you to attend the interview, this can be arranged with the school and the careers adviser.

The careers guidance interview will increase your child's awareness, enhance decision making skills and maximize their potential to achieve their personal career goals.

What can your child do to prepare for their interview?

Think about:

- Their skills e.g. good communicator, team player
- Their personal qualities e.g. friendly, outgoing, well organised
- Their likes and dislikes in terms of jobs, subjects, interests, aptitudes
- Their career ideas and plans
- Barriers they may have e.g. personal, financial
- Qualifications or experience they need for their chosen career

What will be discussed?

The careers adviser will help your child explore their interests, how they are getting on in school, likes and dislikes, family influences, barriers, work experience and any careers ideas they may already have. There will also be an opportunity to ask questions. If your child is worried that they have no firm career ideas the careers adviser has a range of resources to help generate career ideas.

A careers action plan will be drawn up to help your child move towards a decision and will address the following issues:

- What stage your child is currently at
- Where your child wants to be
- How will they get there
- Who can help them achieve their goal
- Next steps

It is therefore important to ask your child about their action plan and encourage them to talk it through with you as it will help you see the type of support you will need to offer.

My child has a learning and/or physical disability – how can the Careers Service help?

The Careers Service aims to provide an impartial and professional careers service to clients of all ages and abilities.

Careers advisers are trained to tailor support to meet individual needs and abilities. If your child has a learning and/or physical disability the Careers Service can help you and your child plan for the future by outlining appropriate options for education, training and employment and reviewing progress regularly.

The careers adviser will provide you and your child with the information and guidance needed to help with the decision making process.

If your child has a Statement of Special Educational Need (SEN)

On or just after your child's 14th birthday your child's school will hold a transition plan meeting. This meeting is the first step to planning and preparing for your child's future and aims to ensure that they make a successful transition to adult life/learning and work.

After this first transition plan meeting your child's Statement of Special Educational Need is reviewed on an annual basis, drawing together information from a range of individuals within and beyond school to discuss and review the progress of your child.

To help you and your child make the best choices for these important years ahead one of our professional careers advisers will be invited to participate in this process.

For further advice you can contact the Careers Service through the Special Education Needs Co-ordinator and/or careers teacher at the school and your local careers office.

After school

The Careers Service will continue to offer career services after your child has left school. You and your child can arrange to meet a careers adviser by contacting **0300 200 7820**.



How can my child contact a careers adviser when they have left school?

Accessing our services

In addition to the services offered to young people in school, careers advisers are available all year round. You can get in touch in a number of ways:

- by telephone: **0300 200 7820**
- by email: csni@delni.gov.uk
- visiting one of our local offices
- through the website: www.nidirect.gov.uk/careers

The Careers Service recognises that parents are a key influence on the career decisions of young people. The guidance that you provide your child at all stages of their education will be invaluable to their eventual academic achievements and their long term outcomes.

We welcome contact from parents and can provide information and advice to help you support your child with their career decisions.

Would careers advice help you?

The Careers Service offers careers information, advice and guidance to people of all ages. So if you feel you need help with your own career plans call into your local office and talk with one of our professionally qualified careers advisers or contact us.



What financial support is available when my child leaves school?

Staying on at school or going to FE College

Students age 16 to 19 and in full-time education can apply for a means-tested Education Maintenance Allowance (EMA). Further information is available at www.nidirect.gov.uk or contact EMA Customer Services Team on **0845 601 7646**.

Further Education Awards

Further Education awards may be available to students who need assistance with buying books, transport and child care costs. Check with your local college or Education & Library Board for more information on what is available.

Help with training

Participants on the Training for Success programme will automatically qualify for a non means tested allowance.

Further information is available at:
www.nidirect.gov.uk/trainingforsuccess

The Pathways for Young People suite of provision offers an allowance payable to 16 & 17 year olds not in education, employment or training (NEET) on programmes funded by the Department for Employment and Learning through the European Social Fund.

Going to university (Higher Education)

Getting a degree can be costly but support is available for fees and living expenses. Further information is available at:

- www.studentfinanceni.co.uk
- www.nidirect.gov.uk/studentfinance

Other sources of funding

These include grants, bursaries, hardship loans and sponsorships. Information on these is available from individual universities and colleges.



Checklist

Helping your child with their future career plans

It is important to be aware of your influence in your child's career planning and to make that influence as positive as possible. The most valuable things parents can do to help their child with career planning is keep informed, listen, don't judge, be open to ideas and encourage them to explore all their options.

Here are ten ways you can help prepare and support your child with their future career plans:

- Encourage your child to prepare for and make the most of their careers guidance interview with the Careers Service
- Encourage them to participate in appropriate out of school activities
- Support your child to explore a range of careers
- Help your child plan their career once they have some ideas
- Encourage them to check university websites for the most up to date information and be aware of application deadlines
- Be aware that your child may change their career interest as they become aware of more options
- Encourage them to find out about the world of work
- Encourage your child to talk with adult relatives and friends about the kind of work that they do
- Help and encourage them to stay up-to-date with current careers events
- Remember that career choice is a personal decision. Do not try to steer your child to a particular career because you think it is something you might like



Did you know?

ALC – Area Learning Community

is a partnership of schools who are working together to increase and develop curricular provision.

ApprenticeshipsNI

is a Northern Ireland programme that offers training to 16 year olds and over, who are employed across a wide range of jobs. It provides recognised training and qualifications to new and existing employees to help meet the demands of local employers.

CAO – Central Applications Office

is the central organisation through which applications are processed for entry to higher education institutions in the Republic of Ireland.

DEL – Department for Employment and Learning

promotes learning and skills, to prepare people for work and to support the economy.

DE – Department of Education

promotes the education of the people of Northern Ireland and ensures the effective implementation of education policy.

EF – Entitlement Framework

is a DE policy to encourage schools to enable pupils at Key Stage 4 and post 16 to access a broader range of courses. The emphasis is on providing access to applied (vocational) courses.

ELB – Education and Library Boards

ensure education, youth and library support services exist throughout their areas.

EMA – Educational Maintenance Allowance

is means tested for 16 to 19 year olds who want to continue their education after school leaving age.

If your child goes into training through one of the components of Training for Success they will automatically qualify for a non means tested EMA.

Pathways for Young People EMA is an allowance payable to 16 & 17 year olds not in education, employment or training (NEET) on programmes funded by DEL through the European Social Fund (ESF).

ESA – Education and Skills Authority

is the single authority for the administration of education, subsuming the functions, assets and liabilities of the five Education and Library Boards (ELBs), the Council for Catholic Maintained Schools (CCMS), the Staff Commission and the Youth Council.

FE – Further Education

is education which goes beyond what has been achieved in compulsory education, but which is not at degree level (Higher Education). Typically, further education includes A levels, AS levels and vocational qualifications.

HE – Higher Education

is an advanced level of study normally after you turn 18 years old. Higher education courses are usually studied at universities, university colleges and higher education institutions.

JBO – Jobs and Benefits offices

provides services and programmes to help jobseekers, particularly people who are unemployed, individuals with disabilities and others who may need extra help in finding work.

NEET – Not in Education, Employment or Training

is an acronym for people currently “not in education, employment or training”.

Open University

is a unique style of distance learning which enables individuals to learn in their own time, at home or wherever you choose – reading, watching or listening to material supplied, doing course activities and assignments with regular support from your tutor.

STEM – Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics

is an acronym of science, technology, engineering and mathematics.

TfS – Training for Success

provides a guaranteed training placement for young people aged 16 – 17 (up to 24 years for those requiring additional support) and provides training to give them the vocational qualifications, skills and experience they need to get a job.

UCAS – Universities and Colleges**Admission Service**

is the central organisation through which applications are processed for entry to higher education in the UK.

Unistats

is the official website for comparing data and information on university and college courses from across the UK.

Acknowledgements

The Department for Employment and Learning would like to thank the following contributors:

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