



DISCOVER

GET SET: Post-16 Options Information for Parents and Carers

More to Explore

How can you support your young person with their post-16 options and Open Days?

Post 16 options

To support their future and boost their career options, your young person must stay in education or training until they are 18 years old. **Post 16 options** refers to all the choices available to them as they think about the next two years after their GCSEs.

There are several pathways they could take, and many sixth forms and further education colleges (FECs) will offer different options, courses, and opportunities. They might choose to study A levels, T levels, BTECs or secure an apprenticeship. Your young person has a choice about where they study and they don't have to attend the sixth form attached to their school or further education college right on their doorstep. They can explore all the options available to them through **Open Days**.

What are Open Days?

Open Days are an opportunity for your young person to visit sixth forms and FECs in the area to find out more about what post 16 qualifications and courses they offer. Whether your young person...

- Wants to study a specific or specialist subject
- Isn't sure what they want to study
- Knows exactly what they want to do in the future

Open Days help them to find the best environment for them to study and thrive in. Some schools organise trips for students to attend Open days. As a parent or carer, you can also accompany your young person and support them to make an informed choice on where to study.

How to I find Open Days?

Open Days take place on different dates across the year. Most are in-person, but some may be virtual. Encourage your young person to look at individual school or FECs' websites where they can find dates and information on how to attend.

One of the best local resources is [helpyouchoose.org](https://www.helpyouchoose.org). This website allows you to search by course to find out where your young person could study and lists Open Day events across the region.

What do I ask at an Open Day?

It's a good idea for your young person to think of a few questions they'd like to ask at an open day. As a parent or carer, it's good for you to take note of any questions you'd like to ask too. You might have different questions to them and can help gather all the information they need to make an informed decision.

Use this space to write down any questions you have. We've added a few to get you started.

- What do students who study here go on to do next?
- What support services are available to help my young person?
- What communications will I receive about my young person's learning and progress?
- Are there regular events for parents and carers to attend? For example, careers fairs, information events, performances, or exhibitions?
- Who would I contact if I have a concern about my young person?

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What happens after Open Days?

Once your young person has decided where they would like to go, they will need to complete an application and might have to attend an interview. Each sixth form or further education college may have a different application process, so make sure you and your young person know the deadlines and what they need to do to apply.

As a parent or carer, you can help your young person prepare by doing a mock interview – pretend you're the interviewer and ask them a series of questions. The more practice your young person gets, the easier it will feel during their actual interview.

Here are some questions you can use to practice with them at home:

- Why do you want to study these specific subjects or why do you want to do this apprenticeship?
- What skills or strengths do you feel you could bring to these subjects or apprenticeship?
- How will these subjects and qualifications help you achieve your future goals?

5 Top tips for supporting your young person with Post 16 options

- 1) Check out this useful ['Options After Year 11' guide](https://www.icanbea.org.uk) for parents and carers at [icanbea.org.uk](https://www.icanbea.org.uk).
- 2) Sit down with your young person and discuss what subjects they're interested in. Use the [helpyouchoose.org](https://www.helpyouchoose.org) website to find out where they could study.
- 3) Encourage your young person to start researching their post 16 options and attend Open Days as soon as possible. Some courses might be popular and will only have a certain number of places available, so they don't want to miss out.
- 4) If your young person is interested in apprenticeships, get clued up by visiting the [TakeYourPlace apprenticeships page](#) and [Amazing Apprenticeships Parent Zone](#).
- 5) Keep talking to them about their future. The decisions they make at post 16 will inspire the pathways they choose for their post 18 studies and beyond. Check out the [EverWondered](#) Resource Centre for resources, videos, and blogs about their options for higher education.

Where to find more information

If your young person is interested in higher education, we're on hand to continue offering you advice and support. Sign up today, and once a month we'll send you a newsletter full of top tips and useful information to support your young person's journey to higher education.

Visit → uea.ac.uk/study/information-for/parents

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