

# Post-16 Pathways

September 2020

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## ***GUIDE FOR PARENTS AND CARERS***

## Which Route?

*Young people have to stay in education or training until they are 18*

*This can be*

- ▶ full-time education (sixth form college, school sixth form, further education college, University Technical College)
- ▶ an Apprenticeship or Traineeship
- ▶ part-time education or training combined with one of the following:
  - ▶ employment or self-employment for 20 hours or more a week
  - ▶ volunteering for 20 hours or more a week

## Full time education

### A levels

- A levels are academic courses that follow GCSEs and are studied over 2 years. Students usually study 3 full A' level subjects, although some students may study 4 subjects. A levels are offered at Colleges of Further Education, Sixth Form Colleges and school sixth forms (where schools have them).
- Typical subjects include English, History, Biology and Art. Assessment is mainly focused on examinations, with exams now taking place at the end of the 2<sup>nd</sup> year of study.
- By studying 3 (or in some cases 4) separate subjects, options for the future can be kept open. However, certain progression routes at university, or for some Apprenticeships, may require or prefer specific subjects to be studied at A level, such as Medicine or Veterinary Science degrees. It's very important to ask for careers advice and guidance when choosing subject combinations.
- Entry requirements vary depending on the college, but students will generally need at least 5 GCSE's passes at Grade 4 or above (usually including English and maths) to start a programme of A' levels. Colleges may ask for higher grades in some subjects in order to study them at A' level. For example, you will often need at least a GCSE grade 6 in Mathematics and/or relevant Sciences to take these subjects at A level.
- Students use A levels to gain entry to university courses, all levels of Apprenticeships or to apply for work and training.
- Students may choose to study AS levels in Year 12 but the marks attained do not count towards the final A level grade as happened previously. They can be studied as stand-alone qualifications and will count towards university applications alongside A levels.

## Vocational

- Courses are usually linked to specific or broad career areas and last 1 or 2 years dependent on the level studied.
- Students can study at either level 1, 2 or 3 depending on their GCSE grades.
- Most vocational courses offer practical experience which include work placements.
- Assessment is mainly focussed on coursework and practical projects.
- Entry requirements vary due to the variety of course levels available. As a general guide the minimum entry criteria for the different levels are:
  - Level 3 courses = 4/5 x grade 4 in GCSE's (often including English and/or maths)
  - Level 2 courses = 4 x grade 3 in GCSE's
  - Level 1 = 4 x grade 2 in GCSE's
- Generally these courses are more suited to those who have some idea about their future career direction, although it may be possible to change direction if you decide the course is not for you. Some courses are relatively broad (e.g. Business Studies) whereas others are very specific (e.g. Hairdressing). Do ask for advice and guidance before choosing a course.
- If your teenager does not have the qualifications needed to go onto a Level 1 course, there are *pre-entry level* courses available. Talk to their Connexions personal adviser or school for more information.
- Students who successfully complete lower level courses can progress onto higher level college courses or opportunities such as **Supported Internships, Traineeships** or **Apprenticeships**.
- Students who successfully complete a suitable level 3 course (e.g. BTEC Level 3 Extended Diploma) may be able to progress onto university/higher level education or an Advanced/Higher Apprenticeship/Degree apprenticeship.
- In the future there will be new qualifications called T Levels which will be based around occupational routes into different jobs. These will be Level 3 and equivalent to A levels.

## T levels

- T Levels are **new courses**, the first starting in September 2020, which will follow GCSEs and will be equivalent to 3 A Levels.
- These 2-year courses have been developed in collaboration with employers and businesses so that the content meets the needs of industry and prepares students for work.
- T Levels will offer students a mixture of classroom learning and 'on-the-job' experience during an industry placement of at least 315 hours (approximately 45 days). They will provide the knowledge and experience needed to open the door into skilled employment, further study or a higher apprenticeship.
- The first 3 T Levels will be available at selected colleges and schools (providers) across England in September 2020. The first courses will be in: Digital production, design and development; Design, surveying and planning; and Education. The nearest provider to Bury is Oldham Sixth Form College offering Digital production, design and development. Bury College will offer some T levels in September 2021. To find the nearest courses, visit <https://www.tlevels.gov.uk/students/find>.

## Apprenticeships

- Apprenticeships are jobs with training that can lead to nationally recognised qualifications in a specific trade or skill. They can be accessed after school or after college level study. They are around different 'standards' which are designed by experts from industry and business.
- Apprenticeships are offered at different levels and vary in the length of time taken to complete; an Intermediate Level 2 Apprenticeship usually takes around 12 to 18 months, an Advanced Level 3 Apprenticeship around 24 months and a higher level apprenticeship can last up to be 5 years. Degree Level Apprenticeships are now an option for some career pathways.
- An Apprenticeship may include time away from the workplace to do some training at a college or training centre, but most training and assessment is done on the job.
- Earn while you learn! Apprentices must be paid at least the minimum rate and they start at a minimum of £4.15 per hour (under 19).
- There are a wide range of apprenticeships available, although COVID-19 has had an impact on the number of available vacancies in 2020, at the time of writing. Around Greater Manchester the greatest numbers of vacancies are in business administration, customer service, financial services, digital industries, retail and childcare. Apprenticeship vacancies also include design, hospitality, construction, vehicle industries, surveying, engineering, teaching, dental nursing, estate agency and paralegal roles.
- After completing an Intermediate Level Apprenticeship, young people can continue with their education or training through a Higher, Advanced or Degree Level Apprenticeship (which are currently being delivered by universities such as Manchester Metropolitan University) or continue onto a related vocational qualification. Alternatively, some young people may go on to a college or university level course, or take a professional qualification that may lead to a specific job role.
- Apprenticeships give valuable industry experience which is an advantage when looking at progressing in a career.

## Traineeships

- Traineeships can be used as a stepping stone to an Apprenticeship. If your teenager is motivated to get an Apprenticeship but lacks either the experience or the skills that employers are looking for, then Traineeships can help.
- Traineeships are an opportunity to gain real work experience, job skills and improve their English and maths, if needed.
- The programme can last up to a maximum of twelve months but many are around three months with the content tailored to their individual career needs.
- Although Traineeships are unpaid, they will build up the young person's confidence and skills and help them to find an Apprenticeship or a job with training.
- Traineeships are advertised regularly at [www.gov.uk/find-traineeship](http://www.gov.uk/find-traineeship)

## Supported Internships

Supported Internships are a structured study programme based primarily at an employer. They enable young people aged 16-24 with a statement of SEN, or an Education, Health and Care plan to achieve sustainable paid employment by equipping them with the skills they need for work, through learning in the workplace and with support. Supported internships are unpaid, and last for a minimum of six months. Wherever possible, they support the young person to move into paid employment at the end of the programme. Alongside their time at the employer, young people complete a personalised study programme which includes the chance to study for relevant substantial qualifications, if appropriate, and English and maths. Often, a young person will have completed a course first, perhaps at school or college, which provides a preparation for employment, so that they are more fully ready to take on the time with an employer.

Go here for other sources of information and support in Bury for families with children and young people who have special educational needs and disabilities:

<https://theburydirectory.co.uk/send-local-offer>

## Employment with part-time training or college

- If your son or daughter is interested in getting a job, remember that they won't be allowed to start full-time work until after the official school leaving date. This is the last Friday in June, in the school year in which they reach 16.
- If your teenager leaves school at 16 and hasn't got an offer of a place at college or employment they should go into the Connexions Centre and a friendly team of advisers are there to help them. Connexions Bury is based at 3 Knowsley Place, Duke Street, Bury, BL9 0EJ.
- There is a new government job matching service called Find a job which enables a search on job vacancies and it can be narrowed down by job type or skills and locality.  
<https://www.gov.uk/find-a-job>

## How to Apply - Tips

### Apprenticeship or Traineeship

- Go to the National Apprenticeship Service (NAS) website to search for information, opportunities and vacancies. <https://www.apprenticeships.gov.uk/> is the National Apprenticeship Service website that details everything you need to know about apprenticeships and traineeships including a vacancy matching service which you can get to directly at: <https://www.gov.uk/apply-apprenticeship> or at [www.gov.uk/find-traineeship](https://www.gov.uk/find-traineeship)
- Contact a training provider directly and see vacancies on individual provider websites – Connexions advisers can help with this.
- Attend open days and events run by training providers.
- Talk to the Careers Advisers in school about where and how to apply for vacancies.

- Look on the Greater Jobs website to find jobs and apprenticeships within Greater Manchester Councils, GM Fire & Rescue and public sector.
- Employers take on apprentices throughout the year; there is no set start or application date. Many of the vacancies advertised from Easter onwards have start dates suitable for school and college leavers. Some larger companies advertise from January each year with summer or September start dates.

## A level/Vocational

- College courses can be applied for directly online or by using a paper application form.
- All local college have course information online and in prospectus brochures.
- Attend college open events. Many colleges have open days and events throughout the year, particularly in September and October to help prospective students and parents and carers. Details for open days can be found on college websites. Some offer virtual tours on their website. Local colleges include Bury College, Holy Cross, Manchester College, Bolton College, Hopwood Hall College and Salford College but there are more.
- Individual colleges have varying closing dates; ensure you know when these are, the earliest being mid-November.
- Get advice and guidance to ensure you course choices match your career ideas.

## Four steps to helping your teenager make career plans

### 1. Getting beyond the barriers

With so many different careers and routes to choose from, how is your teenager going to decide what will suit them best? Career planning is an organised way of thinking about the options. You can help your teenager with this process, as you probably know them better than anyone! You can help them to think about:

#### Ask

- **What do you want to do – have you a career in mind?**
- **What do you care about?**
- **What do you like to do with your time?**
- **What type of person are you? Are they well-organised, creative, sociable, technical?**
- **What do you enjoy doing?**
- **What are you good at?**

If they can follow a career based on their passion or interest (or even an obsession!) this can be an unstoppable force.

## 2. Find basic information

- There should be careers information in school often in the school library or in a careers room or resource area. Your teenager should ask the careers teacher. They will also signpost them to good websites.
- Careers software can also help your teenager to plan their future. Careers software programs like Kudos and E-CLIPS may be available for your son or daughter to access online at their school and home. These programs can help your teenager to find out more about which careers might suit them and get factsheets about hundreds of different jobs.
- The National Careers Service has a wide range of job profiles on their website where you can find out useful, relevant and up-to-date information. Look on <https://nationalcareersservice.direct.gov.uk> or type 'job profiles' into a search engine.
- Have they checked what skills and qualifications they would need to get into the job/career area they are considering? Have they thought about what the work would be like, the average salary they could expect and what the career prospects are? What do they know about the different routes – A levels, vocational courses, T Levels and Apprenticeships? Which ones suit their learning style? Do their career ideas require a certain route or is there a choice of routes?
- Encourage them to complete research by visiting college and training provider open events, reading through prospectuses, looking on the National Apprenticeship Service website and talking to colleges and training providers if they come into school.

## 3. Give practical help

- Help them fill in application forms accurately and neatly, including any relevant information that helps their application stand out from the crowd.
- If they are offered an interview, help them prepare by discussing the kind of questions they may be asked, how they should dress and behave and also any questions they could ask.
- If they have successfully been offered a college course or apprenticeship, find out whether there are conditions attached, such as GCSEs they need to pass.

## 4. Seek professional advice

- There is a personal adviser from Connexions attached to every school who will see all students in care who are in year 11 to check out their careers plans and support them with their decisions as they make this important transition.
- There will also be a careers adviser and careers teacher in school who can offer information, advice and guidance, usually from Year 7 upwards. There is a dedicated teacher for Looked After children in every school who will be there to support you and your teenager every step of the way. Career plans should be discussed at the Personal Education Planning meetings.

## 5. Leaving school without a clear plan

- Some young people may leave school and may still not have an offer of a place from a college or employer, may still be undecided about their future pathway or may have other issues in their lives which are creating barriers to making decisions.
- This is when Connexions can step in and help them. Your teenager will work with a named Connexions adviser who will work with them 1:1 for as long as it takes, providing advice and guidance around whatever issues are worrying them and help them move on into employment, education or training.
- If they are not ready to make the step, there are other programmes that may provide that support and confidence-building to increase their readiness for work or college.
- Connexions is based at 3 Knowsley Place, Duke Street, Bury, BL9 0EJ, Tel 0161 253 7733.

More information can be found at <https://theburydirectory.co.uk/services/connexions-bury>

## 6. Bury Council Care Leavers local Offer

The Care Leavers Local Offer is to help young people make that big step to move out of care and move onto being a self-sufficient independent young adult. If you care for a teenager then you can access help from the Through Care Team and Connexions. Teenagers in care or leaving care can face particular challenges as they leave school or college but there *is* help out there. Schools and colleges run events and evenings about the options open when leaving school or college so you should try to attend these so you can support your teenager.

For more information go here:

<https://theburydirectory.co.uk/care-leavers-offer>

Or contact the **Through Care Team**: Tel 0161 253 6666 (or out of hours 0161 253 6606)

## Useful websites

- [www.parentalguidance.org.uk](http://www.parentalguidance.org.uk) - a website for parents supporting their children with career choices.
- <https://www.careeralchemy.co.uk> a source of impartial advice and information for parents.
- [www.preparingforadulthood.org.uk](http://www.preparingforadulthood.org.uk) - careers advice and support for parents of young people with special educational needs.
- <https://theburydirectory.co.uk/services/connexions-bury> - local service that offers careers advice and support for young people leaving school, up to 19 years of age.
- <https://nationalcareersservice.direct.gov.uk> - online information on more than 130 industries with 800 different job profiles and a helpline available from 8am until 10pm, 7 days a week (0800 100 900).



- <https://www.apprenticeships.gov.uk> - the National Apprenticeship Service website that details everything you need to know about apprenticeships and traineeships including a vacancy matching service. Your child can register and search for ideal jobs based on postcode, job role or sector.
- <http://theapprenticeshiphub.co.uk/> Greater Manchester Apprenticeship information
- [www.gov.uk/find-traineeship](http://www.gov.uk/find-traineeship)- service to search and apply for traineeships
- [www.ucas.com](http://www.ucas.com) and <https://www.theuniguide.co.uk/>– two comprehensive sources of information and advice about university and higher level education; offering information on how to choose courses, different types of study and entry requirements.
- <https://www.gov.uk/find-a-job>-search and apply for full or part-time jobs
- <https://theburydirectory.co.uk/> - information about services and support in Bury  
<https://theburydirectory.co.uk/care-leavers-offer>- Bury Council support and information for young people in care or leaving care.
- <https://theburydirectory.co.uk/send-local-offer> - Information and support in Bury for families with children and young people who have special educational needs and disabilities.
- <https://www.greater.jobs/> - job vacancies in councils across Greater Manchester, Greater Manchester Fire and Rescue, Greater Manchester Police and other public sector organisations.
- <https://www.jobs.nhs.uk/> - Perform a job search, find jobs that match your skills, and apply for NHS jobs online
- <https://icould.com/> - careers videos and information about jobs.
- <https://www.notgoingtouni.co.uk> - a one stop site for apprenticeships, gap years, distance learning and jobs for students looking at alternative pathways
- <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/introduction-of-t-levels/introduction-of-t-levels> - government information about T Levels
- <https://www.tlevels.gov.uk/students/find> to find your nearest course
- <https://gmacs.co.uk/> - explore careers and pathways
- <https://burycollege.ac.uk/home/> - Bury College
- <https://www.holycross.ac.uk/> - Holy Cross Sixth Form College
- <https://www.elmsbank.co.uk/> - Elms Bank special school

## Understanding the different levels and pathways

<b>Level*</b>	<b>Academic</b>	<b>Vocational (college based)</b>	<b>Vocational (job based)</b>	<b>Apprenticeships</b>
<b>Levels 4-6 (Higher)</b>	Degrees  Foundation degrees	Higher National Diploma	Professional/Management Qualification	Higher Apprenticeships  Degree Apprenticeships
<b>Level 3 (Advanced)</b>	International Baccalaureate, AS & A2 levels A levels  Entry = 5/6 GCSEs grade 4-5 minimum	BTEC Level 3 Nationals  Entry = 4 GCSEs grade 4-5 or Level 2 qualification	Level 3 NVQs  Entry = 4 GCSEs grade 4-5 or Level 2 qualification	Advanced Apprenticeship  Entry = 4 GCSEs grade 4-5 or Level 2 qualification + interview
<b>Level 2 (Intermediate)</b>	GCSEs grade 4-9	BTEC Level 2  Entry = generally 4 GCSEs level 3 and a school report or a Level 1 qualification	Level 2 NVQs  Entry = less than 4 GCSEs grade 4-5 or Level 1 qualification or assessment	Intermediate Apprenticeship  Entry = GCSEs at grade 3 or above or Level 1 qualification + interview
<b>Level 1 (Foundation)</b>	GCSEs grades 1-3	BTEC Level 1  Entry = interview or assessment	Level 1 NVQs  Entry = interview or assessment	Traineeship
<b>Entry Levels</b>	Entry level certificates	Functional Skills or Entry Level (English, Maths and ICT)	Awards, Certificates and Diplomas at Entry Level  Supported Internship	Skills for Life

This document has been produced by the Bury Council 14-19 Team and was correct at the time of writing. Website links were also correct but the content and address can be subject to change and are out of the control of the writer. September 2020