

# Education options for young people aged 16 and over



Explore sixth forms, colleges and work-based training, and find out about support for special educational needs and disabilities (SEND).

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**WOKINGHAM**  
BOROUGH COUNCIL

# Overview

## After Year 11, you have different options.

You can:

- study full-time at a sixth form or college
- start training in a workplace through an apprenticeship or supported internship if you have an EHCP
- study part-time while you work or volunteer for 20 hours or more a week

This guide is to help you choose what's right for you.



You can also read this information online, on the SEND Local Offer.



Thank you to Wokingham Borough Council's **Young Experts** for sharing your feedback on this guide.

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# Your course options

To help you choose a course, you can think about:

- how you like to learn
- what you enjoy
- what kind of job you'd like in the future
- any qualifications you already have, like GCSEs

## A levels (level 3)

A levels are:

- academic qualifications in subjects like English, maths, history and sciences
- usually taught in classrooms and assessed by exams

### Where to study

School sixth forms, sixth form colleges and further education colleges

## T levels (level 3)

T levels are a mix of:

- learning in the classroom
- an unpaid work placement with an employer, for at least 9 weeks

### Where to study

Check the government's T levels website to [find colleges offering T levels](#).

## Vocational Technical Qualifications (levels 1 to 3)

Vocational courses:

- teach practical skills for specific jobs, like catering, construction or childcare
- are available as different qualifications, like BTEC Diplomas or Cambridge Technicals

### Where to study

Further education colleges offer a wide range of these courses from levels 1 to 3.

Most school sixth forms offer a few vocational courses at level 3.

## Apprenticeships (levels 2 to 7)

An apprenticeship is a paid job where you also study.

You will:

- earn money
- learn on the job most of the time
- usually spend one day a week studying in college or online

### Where to study

Lots of local employers offer apprenticeships. Find out how to find apprenticeships on page 12.

### **Supported internship if you have an EHCP**

A supported internship is an unpaid work-based study programme.

They are for young people:

- with an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP)
- who want a paid job in the future, but need some extra help to build skills and confidence

You will get support from a job coach and spend time in an unpaid work placement with an employer.

#### **Where to study**

Find out how to find supported internships on page 13.

### **Foundation courses (entry level)**

Foundation courses help you build the skills you need to:

- feel confident and ready for adult life
- move on to other courses and training
- move on to paid work

These courses can support young people who:

- need extra support because of a learning difficulty or disability, including more complex needs
- need help moving to college or getting back into learning
- want to develop their personal and social skills to reach their potential

#### **Where to study**

Many further education colleges offer these courses. Found out more on page 10.



# Entry requirements

The table below shows typical entry requirements for different level courses, but schools and colleges set their own entry requirements.

To find out more:

- search for courses on their websites
- get in touch with them or go to an open day

| Course level       | Course type                                                                                    | Entry requirements                                                                                      |
|--------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Level 3</b>     | A levels<br>T levels<br>Level 3 vocational technical qualifications<br>Level 3 apprenticeships | 5 GCSEs at grade 4 or above, including English and maths, or<br><br>An equivalent level 2 qualification |
| <b>Level 2</b>     | Level 2 vocational technical qualifications<br>Level 2 apprenticeships                         | 4 GCSEs at grade 3 or above, including English and maths, or<br><br>An equivalent level 1 qualification |
| <b>Level 1</b>     | Level 1 vocational technical qualifications                                                    | 4 GCSEs at grade 2 or above, including English and maths                                                |
| <b>Entry level</b> | Foundation courses                                                                             | No formal entry requirements                                                                            |

## English and maths

If you need more time to achieve your English or maths GCSEs, you will usually study them alongside your course.

If GCSEs aren't the right pathway for you, you could work towards functional skills qualifications instead.

Contact the college to get advice on what will suit you.

# Help to decide

You can get help if you are not sure which level or course to choose.

You can:

- speak to teachers at school
- talk to parents, carers and other people who support you
- contact colleges and go to open days
- talk about your plans at your annual reviews, if you have an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP)

## If you are not in education

Wokingham Elevate is a free service for young people:

- aged 16 to 18
- aged up to 25 with an EHCP

who are not in education, employment or training. This is sometimes called NEET.

Elevate can help you choose your next steps.

Find out more online on the [Wokingham Elevate directory listing](#).



# Choosing a sixth form

A school sixth form could be your next step if you want to study A levels.

Some sixth forms also offer Vocational Technical Qualifications (VTQs) at level 3, but won't offer as many as a further education college.

## Support at sixth form

Sixth forms must support students with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND).

Each school should explain their support on their website.

Once you apply, the school should work with you to plan the support you need.

## How to apply

You usually need to apply to the sixth form directly on their website. It is best to do this in the autumn or early spring term of Year 11. If you already go to the school, you might not need to apply this way. Check with the school to be sure.

## Explore sixth forms

All school sixth forms in Wokingham Borough are co-educational. This means they are open to both boys and girls. Visit their websites to see the courses they offer:

- [Bohunt Wokingham Sixth](#)
- [The Bulmershe](#)
- [St Crispin's School](#)
- [The Emmbrook](#)
- [The Forest School](#)
- [The Holt School](#)
- [Maiden Erlegh School](#)
- [The Piggott School](#)
- [Waingels College](#)

## Applying with an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP)

You can talk about sixth form options at your annual reviews in Year 9 and 10. In Year 11, you need to:

- Apply directly to the sixth form on their website in the autumn or early spring term
- [Contact the SEND Team](#) to let them know you have applied

The SEND Team will consult with the sixth form so that everyone understands how best to support you. By 31 March of Year 11 your EHCP must be updated. Wherever possible, this will include the name of your sixth form or setting.

This process is called a phase transfer. You can read more about it on the Local Offer webpage [moving into post-16 education with an EHCP](#).

# Choosing a further education college

Further education (FE) colleges offer a wide range of courses for after Year 11, from entry level to level 3.

FE colleges also work with employers to offer work-based training such as:

- apprenticeships
- supported internships if you have an EHCP

## Explore courses

You can search for courses on these local college websites:

- [Bracknell and Wokingham College](#)
- [Reading College](#)
- [Berkshire College of Agriculture](#)
- [Newbury College](#)
- [Farnborough College of Technology](#)
- [The Henley College](#)

## How to apply

You need to apply for a college course directly on their website. It is best to do this in the autumn or early spring term of Year 11.

## Support at college

Colleges must support students with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND).

Colleges should explain the support they offer on their websites. As well as learning support, there is also support for your wellbeing, including mental health support, transition support and counselling.

Once you have applied for a course, the college should meet with you to plan your support.

## Foundation courses

If you need a higher level of support, a foundation course might be right for you. These courses are often taught in a smaller area of the college to help you build confidence. Found out more on page 10.

## Applying with an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP)

You can talk about college options at your annual reviews in Year 9 and 10.

In Year 11, you need to:

- Apply directly for the college course on their website in the autumn or early spring term
- [Contact the SEND Team](#) to let them know you have applied

The SEND Team will consult with the college so that everyone understands how best to support you. By 31 March of Year 11 your EHCP must be updated.

Wherever possible, this will include the name of your college or setting.

This process is called a phase transfer. You can read more about it on the Local Offer webpage [moving into post-16 education with an EHCP](#).

# Foundation and supported courses

Many further education colleges offer foundation and supported courses.

They can help you build the skills you need to:

- feel confident and ready for adult life
- move on to another course
- get a paid job

Foundation courses can support young people who:

- need extra support because of a learning difficulty or disability, including more complex needs
- need help moving to college or getting back into learning
- want to develop their personal and social skills to reach their potential

You might do your learning in a smaller section of the college, to help you feel supported and settle into college life. The courses are often more personalised and designed to meet your individual needs.

Afterwards, you might move onto another course, or start work-based training, like an apprenticeship or a supported internship if you have an EHCP.

## Find courses

Find out more about foundation courses on these college websites:

- [Bracknell and Wokingham College](#)
- [Reading College](#)
- [Berkshire College of Agriculture](#)
- [Newbury College](#)
- [Farnborough College of Technology](#)
- [The Henley College](#)

## How to apply

You need to apply for a foundation course directly on a college website. It is best to do this in the autumn or early spring term of Year 11.

## Applying with an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP)

You can talk about college options at your annual reviews in Year 9 and 10.

In Year 11, you need to:

- Apply directly for the college course on their website in the autumn or early spring term
- [Contact the SEND Team](#) to let them know you have applied

The SEND Team will consult with the college so that everyone understands how best to support you. By 31 March of Year 11 your EHCP must be updated. Wherever possible, this will include the name of your college or setting.

This process is called a phase transfer. You can read more about it in on the Local Offer webpage [moving into post-16 education with an EHCP](#).

# The Glade: Post-16 Hub

Wokingham Borough Council opened a new post-16 hub in Wokingham town centre in September 2026.

The hub is for young people who:

- have an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP)
- are moving into Year 12 (aged 16 and over)
- may have faced additional barriers to education such as difficult life experiences, learning needs or mental health challenges
- need some extra support to build their skills and reach their potential

## Find out more

Courses will focus on developing practical skills and preparing for work. Find out more on the Local Offer webpage [The Glade](#).

## How to apply

If you are interested in the The Glade for September 2027, [contact the SEND Team](#) to let them know this is your preference.

This is part of a process called a phase transfer. You can read more about it on the Local Offer webpage [moving into post-16 education with an EHCP](#).

## Travelling to sixth form or college

Most young people travel to sixth form or college independently. If you need help to learn to travel on your own, you can do travel training.

Travel training teaches you how to travel to school or college by public transport, like buses and trains.

It's designed to help you feel confident and safe when travelling.

Find out more about [travel training](#).

### Applying for travel assistance

Decisions about travel assistance are made on a case by case basis.

Find out more about [discretionary post-16 travel assistance](#).



# Apprenticeships

An apprenticeship is a paid job where you also study.  
You will:

- earn money
- work about 4 days a week
- study 1 day a week at work, college, with a training provider or online

## Who can apply

You can start an apprenticeship if you are 16 or over. There is no upper age limit.

You can apply while you are at school but you must be 16 by the time the apprenticeship starts.

## Levels of apprenticeship

Apprenticeships are available between level 2 and level 7.

You need certain qualifications to start some apprenticeships, but there are level 2 apprenticeships that don't need qualifications to start.

Find out about apprenticeship levels on the [government apprenticeship website](#).

## Support you can get

You can get extra support during your apprenticeship if you have a:

- learning difficulty
- disability
- physical or mental health condition

Your employer and training provider must make reasonable adjustments to help you.

If you have an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) this will continue if you are under 25 and your apprenticeship is at level 2 or 3.

## How to apply

You can search and apply for all available apprenticeships on GOV.UK.

Put in your post code to find apprenticeships in the local area.

[Find an apprenticeship on GOV.UK](#).

Apprenticeships can be advertised at any time of the year. It's good to start looking around a year before you want the apprenticeship to start.

## Applying with an EHCP

If you are thinking about doing an apprenticeship, you can talk about this at your annual review.

To apply, you need to:

1. Apply for the apprenticeship directly
2. [Contact the SEND Team](#) to let them know you have applied

The SEND Team and apprenticeship provider should then be in contact so that everyone can understand how best to support you.



# Supported internships if you have an EHCP

A supported internship is a work-based study programme for young people who:

- are aged 16 to 24
- have an education, health and care plan (EHCP)

Supported internships usually last for one year. They include an unpaid work placement, and are designed for young people who want a paid job in the future, but need some extra help to build skills and confidence.

Wherever possible, the aim is to help you move into paid work after the supported internship.

## How it works

You will be enrolled at a school or college and this will be named in your EHCP.

Each week you will do:

- 1 to 2 days of learning at the school or college
- 3 to 4 days in an unpaid work placement

You will get:

- support from a qualified job coach
- skills to help you move into paid work when the internship ends

## Who runs supported internships

They are run as a partnership between:

- employers - where you do your work placement
- schools and colleges - where you do your learning
- supported employment services - who provide support from job coaches

## How to apply

The following providers offer supported internships in the local area. Get in touch with them to find out more.

- [Reading College](#)
- [Bracknell and Wokingham College](#)
- [Ways into Work](#)
- [Optalis](#)
- [Shaw Trust](#)
- [Newbury College](#)
- [The Henley College](#)
- [Ambitious College](#)
- [Berkshire College of Agriculture](#) (for young people who already go to the college)

You can also [contact the SEND Team](#) to let them know you are interested. They can help you find a supported internship that suits you.

If you are not quite ready for a supported internship, you could do a foundation course first to help you build the skills you need.

# Volunteering

Volunteering means giving your time to help others.  
You don't get paid, but it can be a good way to get work experience.

When you volunteer, you can:

- make a difference in other people's lives
- meet new people and build your confidence
- try out different jobs and learn new skills that can help you get a paid job

## The Duke of Edinburgh's Award

This award is open to anyone aged 14 to 24.  
You can choose your activities and how you want to volunteer.

Find out how to get involved by visiting the [Duke of Edinburgh directory listing](#).

## The Gateway Award

The Gateway Award is for people aged 18 and over with a learning disability, autism or both. It is run by local charity Promise Inclusion.

It focuses on:

- volunteering
- hobbies
- adventure, challenge and fitness
- lifestyle

## More volunteering opportunities

- [Vinspired](#) is a charity that helps young people aged 14 to 25 find volunteering roles.
- [Wokingham Volunteer Centre website](#) lists lots of local volunteering roles. They also offer a matching service to help you find the right opportunity.
- [Optalis Supported Employment Service](#) helps people with disabilities aged 18 and over find volunteering opportunities.



# University and higher education

Higher education could be your next step after college, sixth form or an apprenticeship.

You can do higher education courses at:

- universities
- some further education colleges
- specialist colleges, like art schools
- online, such as the Open University

## Support at university

You can get support at university to meet your needs. This includes support with disabilities, mental health conditions, learning differences and long-term health conditions.

Find out more about support on the [UCAS website](#).

## Disabled Students' Allowance (DSA)

DSA can help pay for specialist equipment or support while you study.

If you apply for DSA, [contact the SEND Team](#) to let them know. If you ask them to, they will send a copy your EHCP to the DSA assessor to support your application. Find out more about DSA on [GOV.UK](#).

You might also be able to get financial help such as:

- bursaries
- scholarships
- hardship funds

Find out more about [extra money to pay for university on GOV.UK](#).

## If you have an EHCP

Your Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) will end when you start higher education or paid work.

Your university or other setting will still support you by making reasonable adjustments.

You might also be able to get Disabled Students' Allowance (DSA).



# Help to find and stay in work

There are services that can help you:

- build skills and find work experience
- find paid work
- talk to your employer about reasonable adjustments

## If you have an EHCP

Your Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) will end when you move into full-time paid work.

This does not include apprenticeships at level 2 or 3 - your EHCP can continue if you're doing one of these. You can still get support at work to meet your needs. Your employer must make reasonable adjustments to help you.

## Support from Optalis

Optalis runs a supported employment service for people who:

- are aged 18 and over
- are autistic, have a disability or a health condition

They can help you:

- look and apply for paid jobs
- find work experience and training
- learn how to use public transport to get to work
- get support in your current job, including help with reasonable adjustments

Find out more about the [Optalis supported employment service](#).

## Online support from Scope

The national charity Scope offer a free online service for people who:

- have a disability
- are aged 16 and over
- are looking for a paid job

You can get help from an employment adviser to find opportunities. Once you are in work, they can also help with reasonable adjustments. Find out more about [Support to Work on the Scope website](#).

## Support from the government

You might be able to get extra support if you have a disability.

Visit GOV.UK for information about:

[Access to Work](#) – help with work if you have a disability or health condition

[Employment and Support Allowance \(ESA\)](#) - financial support if your disability or health condition affects how much you can work

## More support

You can [browse the Local Offer directory](#) to find more services to help you build skills, get work experience find paid work.

Visit the SEND Local Offer:  
[www.wokingham.gov.uk/lo](http://www.wokingham.gov.uk/lo)

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