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[communications@gloucestershire.gov.uk](mailto:communications@gloucestershire.gov.uk)

# What's Next?

Your essential guide to  
choosing education and career options  
2025



There is more  
than one route  
to success

This is an exciting  
time in your life  
Think about what you  
enjoy and make the  
right choice

# Endless possibilities

Hello,

It's time to think about your future, what subjects and qualifications you might need and **What's Next** for you after GCSEs. Whether you're in Year 9 or 13, the next few years depends on your decisions about your future.

When I was your age, there wasn't much on offer in terms of careers guidance or help and advice on what to do next. I took a pathway to university, but these days there are lots of other options. Making a choice can seem quite daunting, so that's why we've created this booklet to help you.

Firstly, don't panic when trying to decide what you want to do! Use this booklet as a starting point on your journey. Talking to friends, teachers or even people in the area of work you are interested in will help you choose. It's important that you know about all the choices out there and you take the path that is right for you.

I hope you will find this booklet helpful in your quest to figure out:  
**What's Next?**

Best of luck!



A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Lisa Spivey'.

**Councillor Lisa Spivey**  
Leader of Gloucestershire County Council

# Let's get started...

Are you finding it tricky deciding what you want to do when you leave school, and how to make it happen?  
**That's OK!** There are a range of options available to you. This booklet will talk you through them.

**Turn the page for a guide to this document and your future.**

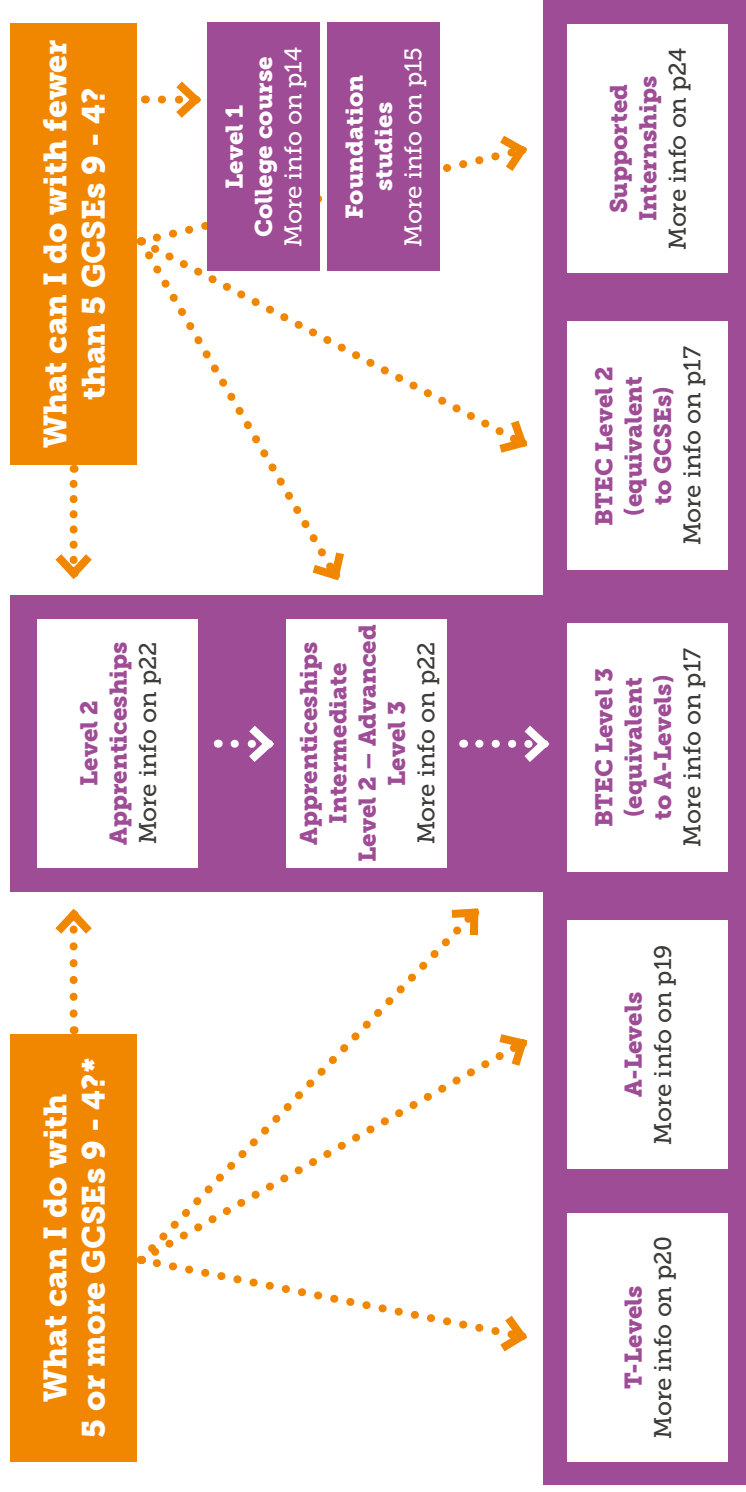


# What's Next?

# What's Next?

## So, you're doing your GCSEs...

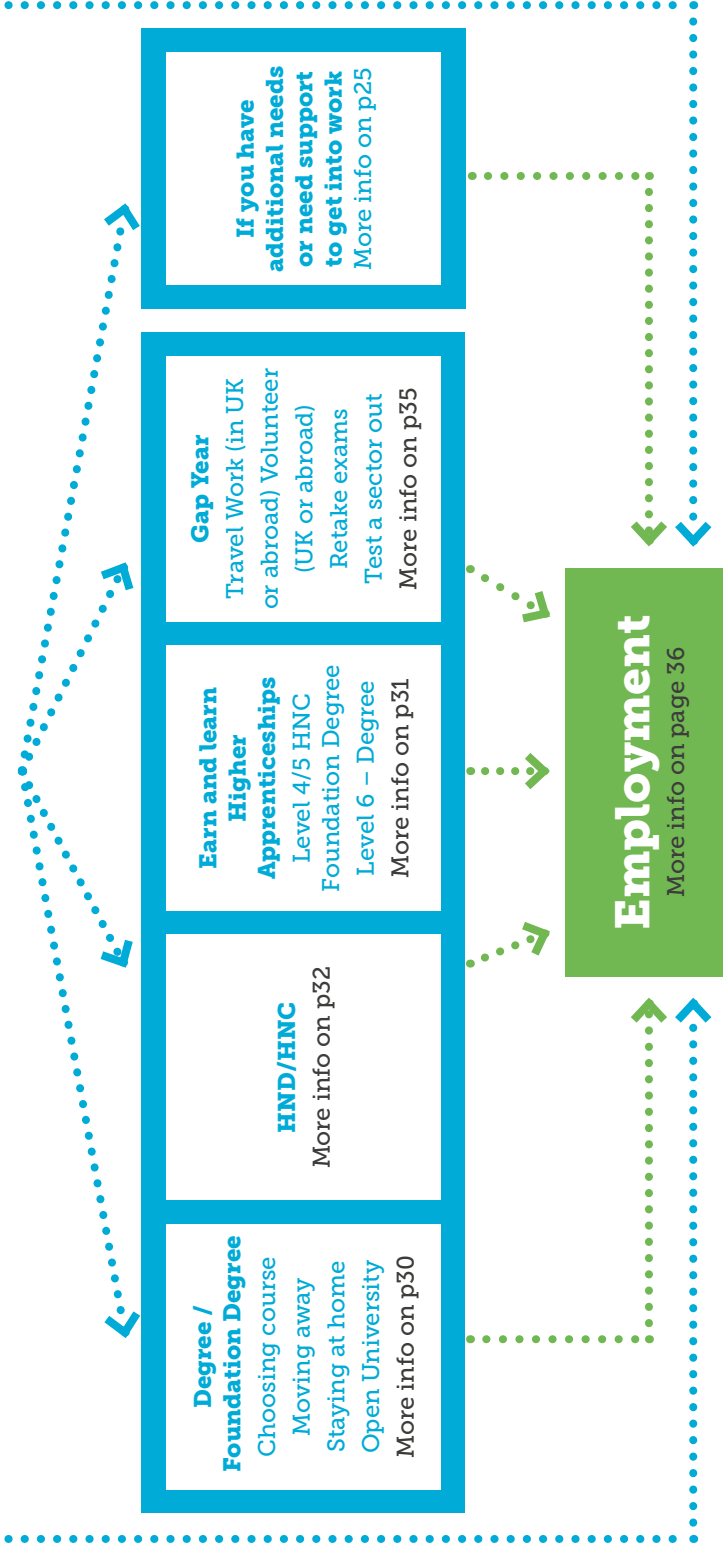
More info on page 12



\* Note: Some courses will accept 4 GCSE's if they include English and Maths.

## Looking ahead

### What are your options after you're 18?



# Making choices

Here are some things you need to know, do and think about...

## What you need to know:

- The law says you must stay in learning until the age of 18. This does not mean you have to stay in school. Learning also includes college, training, or full time work as long as it includes some part time learning e.g. an apprenticeship.
- You pick GCSE options in Year 8 or 9, depending on your school.
- You usually pick your next step in Year 11.



## What you need to do:

- Ask as many questions as you need before you make your decisions – there's no such thing as a stupid question!
- Talk to a range of people; your parents, teachers and other young people who are a bit older than you. This will help you get a variety of advice.
- Talk to staff at your school and arrange a meeting with your careers adviser. You are entitled to two 1 to 1 appointments with a qualified adviser by age 18!
- Research all of your options and write down the pros and cons for each.
- Try to get work experience in an area you're interested in – try it out first.
- Attend open evenings/days to get a feel for sixth forms, colleges and universities.

## What you need to think about:

- What are you good at? (quiz on page 8)
- What do you enjoy?
- What might you want to do until you are 18? (info on pages 15-24)
- What might you want to do after you're 18? (info on pages 25-31)
- What jobs are available in your local area? (info on page 35)
- What resources at school could help you with these decisions? Ask your teachers or the school librarian to help you.

There are lots of resources available for young people at: [www.prospects.ac.uk](http://www.prospects.ac.uk) including quizzes, work experience and job opportunities.

There is lots of support, information and job opportunities at:  
[www.prospects.ac.uk](http://www.prospects.ac.uk)



# Building on your Strengths

Read each statement below, and if you agree with it, put a tick in the box to the right of it.

Do you like to...

Do puzzles?	Care for younger children?
Fix or mend things?	Explore creative ideas?
Express your own style?	Play a sport?
Work in a team?	Keep detailed records?
Organise things like school work?	Make sure things get done?
Set goals for yourself?	Take photographs?
Build things?	Be physically active?
Read or write stories?	Work with your hands?
Have clear instructions to follow?	Sing, dance or act?
Persuade or influence others?	Think of ideas for events or activities?
Do experiments or research things?	Solve mechanical problems?
Help others to learn?	Talk to a range of people at a party?
Help people solve personal problems?	Find the best deals on the internet?
Take care of animals?	Help your friends out?
Have your day structured?	Use the computer to type up work?
Sell things or promote ideas?	Do astronomy (star gazing)?
Do creative writing?	Work out a budget for pocket money?
Work on Science projects?	Keep up with the latest fashions?
Take on new responsibilities?	Work out a solution to a problem?
Help people?	Be creative?
Figure out how things work?	Pay attention to detail?

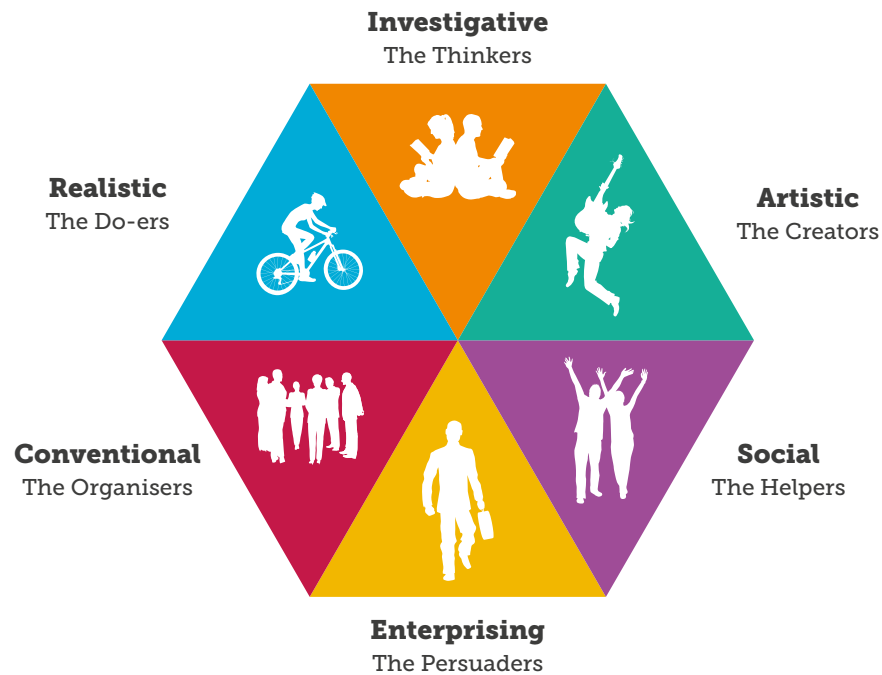
Type up homework/keep it neat?	Convince people to do it your way?
Learn about other cultures?	Suggest a better way to do a task?
Analyse, research or problem solve?	Use a microscope?
Play an instrument or sing?	Fix electrical or electronic things?
Dream of starting your own business?	Lead a group?
Cook?	Design fashions, interiors, architecture?
Act in plays?	Keep on going until you finish?
Do practical things?	Research to find things out?
Work with numbers or charts?	Perform experiments?
Be kind and cooperative?	Understand complicated ideas?
Keep your work in ordered folders?	Do voluntary work?
Take charge (be a leader)?	Fix your bicycle?
Work outdoors?	Teach others?
Work in an office?	Get all your school work done on time?
Work on Maths problems?	Enjoy music?
Care for others?	Make sure that everyone gets along?
Draw or paint?	Be your class representative?
Give a speech or presentation?	Be reliable and on time?

Total up the number of ticks for each colour and record the number in the coloured boxes.

Read what they mean on the next page.



The areas you scored highest are probably your strengths. You might want to consider building on these in your career.



**Investigative**

People who like to observe, learn, investigate, analyse, evaluate or solve problems. They often like to work independently, tend to be good at Maths and Science and enjoy analysing data.

**Artistic**

People whose abilities are artistic, innovative or intuitive. They like to work in unstructured situations where they can use their imagination and creativity. They enjoy performing (theatre or music) and visual arts.

**Social**

People who like to work with people to enlighten, inform, help, train, or cure them, or are skilled with words. They enjoy training, instructing, counselling or curing others. They are often good public speakers with helpful, empathetic personalities.

**Enterprising**

People who like to work with people, influencing, persuading, performing, or managing for organisational goals or economic gain. They like to lead and tend to be assertive and enthusiastic.

**Conventional**

People who like detail and data, and are good at following instructions. They are organised, good with numbers and like structured working.

**Realistic**

People who have athletic or mechanical ability, prefer to work with objects, machines, tools, plants or animals, or to be outdoors. They like to work with their hands. They are often practical and good at solving problems.

**John L. Holland** was the person who developed the theory that people can be described by a combination of six personality types and that people seek out work opportunities that match their personality type. A better match means more job satisfaction because the person finds the job interesting.

# What now?

It can be a stressful time choosing options and taking exams. Lots of people have gone through it and this is their experience:

The most enjoyable part of my course is meeting new people. **Hairdressing**

I enjoy the practical sessions and theory parts of my course, because they expand my knowledge. **Catering**

I know that I need to continue to improve and learn further. **Sixth former**

Sixth form was not for me. **Early years**

I love learning new skills. **Catering**

I eventually want to own my own business and I enjoyed business studies in school. **Hairdressing**

**Some tips for dealing with stress are on page 43.**



## GCSEs

GCSEs are your first chance to choose which subjects you want to learn. You may need to pick certain subjects if you have a particular job in mind. Or you may want to carry on with the subjects you really enjoy.

Everyone studies English, Maths and Science. You will need a grade 4 in English and Maths to get a place on most courses after GCSEs, like A-Levels.

Your school will tell you which subjects you can choose. Subjects might include: Art, Design & Technology, Geography, Drama, History and Music.

Top tip - If you are not sure what to study after turning 16 or what job you want, keep your options open and try to study a variety of subjects.



## What alternatives are available to prepare for a job?

New opportunities are opening up for young people to prepare for the world of work.

These involve moving at the end of Year 9 (or Year 11) to a University Technical College (UTC) or Studio School. UTCs and Studio Schools are designed for 14-19 year olds of all abilities to study subjects linked to specific industrial sectors like STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Maths).

They will closely involve universities and employers and are designed to be like the workplace. For example they follow a "9 to 5" day and don't have the same terms as schools. They will offer a range of academic and vocational qualifications including GCSEs in English, Maths and Science.

It is also possible to offer work placements linked directly to employment opportunities in the local area. Employers will also contribute to the learning experience of students throughout their programmes of study.

The first UTC is operating in Berkeley, Gloucestershire and is a partnership between employers, Stroud & South Gloucestershire College and the University of Gloucestershire to develop opportunities in Engineering, Manufacturing and Digital Technologies.

For further information visit:

[www.berkeleygreenutc.org.uk/about](http://www.berkeleygreenutc.org.uk/about), [www.studioschoolstrust.org](http://www.studioschoolstrust.org) or [www.utcolleges.org](http://www.utcolleges.org)

## Are there other alternatives to school?

South Gloucestershire & Stroud College offers a 14-16 course combining GCSEs with practical and technical education.

Further details can be found on page 48.



# What's next?

Once you've finished your GCSEs you will have more decisions to make. Here's how some other students in the county are making decisions...

My course leader is my go-to person for advice... they are a great guide and support me in finding new roles and experiences. **Systems support**

I chose Gloucestershire College because the facilities were appealing and they had a lot to offer. **Software development**

UCAS talks helped me decide what I want to do next. **Travel and Tourism**

My tutor and family helped me decide my next steps. **Hairdressing**

Myself, my employer and my lecturer helped me decide my next steps. **Catering**

When making a decision it's important for me to think whether I'll enjoy it. **Health and Social Care**



## Foundation Studies

A foundation studies course at college can help you to build confidence, offering you an entry level route in to further education.

On completion of a foundation studies course, you can move on to higher level courses.

Students studying at foundation level range from Entry 1 to Entry 3 and often have an EHCP, My Plan or My Plan +.

Foundation studies are offered at colleges and also alternative education providers such as Bridge Training and Prospects.

### **Foundation studies are great because...**

- You receive guidance and support to transition to college
- The needs of the student are considered to make learning accessible
- You can transition on to further courses.

Take a look at: [www.bridgetrainingltd.co.uk](http://www.bridgetrainingltd.co.uk)  
and [www.prospect-training.org.uk](http://www.prospect-training.org.uk)



### **Level 1 college course**

A level 1 course at college enables you to study a subject at an introductory level and supports you to develop the skills for the next level of learning.

A level 1 course is equivalent to GCSE grades 3-1.

#### **Level 1 courses are great because...**

- They offer you the chance to study a chosen subject, even if you didn't get the grades you expected
- Many level 1 courses are suitable for people with an EHCP
- They equip you to take your studies further.

### **BTECs**

August 2025 - BTECs are not being completely phased out, but some are being scaled down as part of the UK government's ongoing reforms to post-16 education, particularly in favour of T Levels.

BTECs are specialist work-related qualifications that can help you get started in your chosen career. They combine practical learning with subject-specific and theory content. You can study a Level 2 programme which is broadly equivalent to 5 GCSEs at Levels 4 and higher. Progression to Level 3 is the usual pathway.

Level 3 qualifications are available as the Diploma (equal to two A-Levels) or the Extended Diploma (equivalent to three A-Levels).

It may be possible to combine an A-Level with a Diploma but this is unlikely with an Extended Diploma.

You will need a GCSE grade 4 or higher in English and Maths before you can progress to either level.

These courses will not prepare you for a specific role like an apprenticeship but will provide an insight to an industry and a vocational alternative to A-Levels. They will include some work experience.

Colleges have the widest range of choices and have good links to local employers.

#### **BTECs are great because...**

They give you the broad knowledge and skills required to work in a range of jobs within an industry.

## Gavin Scriven

Chartered Building Surveyor at Malcolm Hollis  
Studied BTEC Level 3 Construction



Gavin Scriven



"The construction course at Gloucestershire College (GC) was very relevant to the degree that I studied. When I got to university, I was far more prepared for the assignments than the other students and I firmly believe it was because of my course at GC.

The lecturers were all passionate and had practical experience, as well as academic. The facilities were great and the campus was even the subject of my dissertation case study at university; I would often return to speak to the support teams and the lecturer to get more information about it.

My dream career is being a commercial building surveyor. The course I studied formed the corner stone of my progression from college to university; gaining a work placement year, graduating and working for the best surveyor firm in the market. It provided greater depth and breadth of learning than the first year and a half of my degree and was invaluable in me graduating from UWE with a first-class honors degree."

**“ The course I studied formed the corner stone of my progression from college to university ”**

## A-Levels

A-Levels are the 'traditional' qualification offered by schools and colleges for students aged 16-19. Most pupils take three A-Levels in Year 13. Some pupils will also take an AS in Year 12 or an extra A-Level.

You are mainly assessed by sitting exams, but there are other types of assessment like course work. AS and A-Levels will be assessed at the end of the course. AS assessments will usually take place after one year's study and A-Levels after two. The courses will no longer be divided into modules and there will be no exams in January. AS and A-Levels have been "decoupled" – this means that AS results will no longer count towards an A-Level, in the way they have done in the past.

Note: Most schools are moving away from AS Levels now.

### Thinking about A-Levels? You should know...

- A-Levels are a lot more work than GCSEs – be prepared!
- Most schools and colleges generally require at least grade 6 in the subjects you want to study
- You'll need GCSE English and Maths at grade 4\* or above, whether or not you study them at A-Level (you can retake them at most schools and colleges if you need to).

### A-Levels are great because...

- They are really well recognised by employers and universities.
- You can continue subjects you enjoy and are good at, often in a school setting.
- You can combine them with BTECs and Cambridge Technicals.

**Top Tip** – When you are thinking about post-16 study, you need to think about how you will get there.  
[www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/applyforabuspass](http://www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/applyforabuspass)



## T-Levels

T Levels were introduced in 2020 and are a 2-year qualification that bring classroom learning and an extended industry placement together on a course designed with businesses and employers.

T Levels are ideal if you have finished your GCSEs and want the knowledge and experience to get straight into employment, an apprenticeship or higher education. You'll spend 80% of your time in the classroom and 20% on a 45-day placement with an employer to give you the knowledge and skills companies look for.

T Levels are offered at many colleges and schools across the county. T Levels take 2 years of full time study and are equivalent to 3 A Levels. Like A Levels, there are no tuition fees to study a T Level if you start before you are 19.

T Levels give you the chance to learn what a real career is like while you continue your studies. Your industry placement will last for at least 45 days – when and how you complete it depends on the T Level, college and employer.

When you pass your T Level, you will get a nationally recognised certificate showing the overall grade you achieved - pass, merit, distinction or distinction\*. It will also give details of what you learned on the course to help you move into skilled employment or a higher apprenticeship. Your T Level will be worth UCAS points – a T Level Distinction\* is worth the same as 3 A Levels at A\* and will be recognised by universities and other education providers so you can choose to continue studying if you wish. T Levels involve more classroom study than apprenticeships, which means you can experience an industry while you continue your studies.

## Cambridge Technicals

Cambridge Technicals are vocational qualifications at Level 2 and Level 3 for students aged 16+ with a great selection of subjects to choose from. They are designed with the workplace in mind and provide a high quality alternative to A-Levels, supporting progression to higher education. These courses are assessed through a mixture of internal and external assessment.

At Level 3 they are equivalent to two A-Levels and are usually two year full-time courses.

### **Cambridge Technicals are great because...**

One or two A levels can usually be studied alongside a CTEC Level 3 qualification.

## Not sure what to study?

**Choose subjects you are good at and you enjoy. Studying a broad range of subjects including 'facilitating subjects' will help you keep your options open. Facilitating subjects are Sciences, English Literature, Geography, French, German and Maths.**

If you have a career or university course in mind, check the entry requirements because you may need specific subjects and grades at A-Level. There is an informed choices guide to what A-Levels you need for certain subjects at: [www.russellgroup.ac.uk/for-students](http://www.russellgroup.ac.uk/for-students)

### **Not sure where to study?**

You don't have to carry on studying at your current school:

- Make the choice that's right for you
- Don't just follow your friends and choose what they choose
- Don't put off going somewhere your friends aren't going – you will make new friends.



**Top Tip** – Go to open days at schools and colleges you like the sound of – you can ask the teachers and current students questions about what it is like to help you decide. There is a list to start you off at the end of this booklet.

## International Baccalaureate

An International Baccalaureate involves studying six subjects, including languages. It's an internationally recognised qualification.

However, it isn't offered within any Gloucestershire state schools, so you would have to travel to Bristol, Bath or Swindon to study.

See [www.ibo.org](http://www.ibo.org) for more information.

## Apprenticeships

Apprenticeships are about working for an employer and earning as you learn. You get hands-on training in the workplace. You study part time for an NVQ, BTEC or both, with training at a local college or specialist training provider. At a higher level you can also study for a degree whilst doing an apprenticeship.

**There are two types of apprenticeship that you can apply for at 16, depending on your GCSE grades:**

**Intermediate** = Level 2 (equivalent to 5 x GCSEs)

**Advanced** = Level 3 (equivalent to 2 x A-Levels)

Some students start as an intermediate level apprentice but gradually progress to advanced or even higher level as they work. This can give you an edge over school or university leavers later because you have more work experience.

**You can also do an apprenticeship after A-Levels, or if you feel you need extra training for your job role later on.**

**More info is on page 31.**

**Take a look at:** [www.prospects.ac.uk](http://www.prospects.ac.uk) for information and advice; [www.careersbox.co.uk](http://www.careersbox.co.uk) for videos of apprentices talking about their experience; [www.apprenticeships.org.uk](http://www.apprenticeships.org.uk) to search for local opportunities.

[www.gloshospitals.nhs.uk/work-us/apprenticeships](http://www.gloshospitals.nhs.uk/work-us/apprenticeships) for apprenticeships with Gloucestershire hospitals.



## Apprenticeships are great because...

- Over 90% of apprentices go into work or further training
- You earn while you learn
- 89% of apprentices are satisfied with their apprenticeship
- 97% of apprentices said the ability to do their job had improved
- Apprenticeships are available in over 170 industries including aerospace, fashion, broadcast media and finance – with 1500 job roles available
- Top employers in Gloucestershire for apprentices include: the NHS, Motus Commercial, Renishaw, and others.

You have to be 16 or over and not in full-time education to start an apprenticeship but you can register and start to search for opportunities on the National Apprenticeship Vacancy Matching Service (NAVMS) at [www.apprenticeships.org.uk](http://www.apprenticeships.org.uk) as early as the spring term of Year 11.

Employers like you to have GCSEs when you apply for apprenticeships, but if they go wrong don't panic. You can often study for Level 2 Functional Skills in English, Maths and IT.

Alternatively, you can also study an apprenticeship after BTECs or A-Levels, entering as a higher level apprentice, and going on to obtain a degree.



## Struggling to decide what to do still?

Check out Careers Coach, which can provide some guidance on what the right step might be for you next.



Scan this QR for access to a digital version of this quiz and extra careers guidance.



## Supported Internships

The assisted internship model (AIM) in Gloucestershire is a collaboration between colleges, post-16 provision, employers and Gloucestershire County Council. The goal is to help young people with a disability or boundary to employment take their first step onto the employment ladder.

AIM is based around three days in a work placement, a day in college and staggered employment support through the year in order to enable the young person to work independently and gain paid employment at the end of their internship.

The programme has a focus on employability but also helps the young person develop their English and Maths skills over the year. This year, Gloucestershire College, SGS College and National Star College all have students accessing the internship.



### There are additional options for students with special educational needs/ disabilities

Do you need extra support getting into training, work or education?

- Get in contact with Forwards career service for advice about getting a job or work experience – go to [www.forwardsgloucestershire.co.uk](http://www.forwardsgloucestershire.co.uk) to find out more.
- Speak to your education link adviser
- Find a college which supports students with additional needs.
- Complete a Transformation Plan to help you plan where you want to get to.

## Ryan Mitchell Supported Intern



Ryan Mitchell

Ryan Mitchell is a 20 year old former SGS College student, who recently completed a supported internship placement at Matalan in Quedgeley. This July, Ryan was delighted to be offered 4.5 hours weekly employment by Matalan, his first paid job.

Tony Haywood, Floor Manager at Matalan Quedgeley, has been really impressed by Ryan's progress through his internship and since that he's moved on to a paid role in store. During his placement Tony explained that he "worked on all departments and gathered knowledge across the store.

However, he particularly enjoyed working in the stock room, where he prepares stock to go out onto the sales floor."

Ryan says he enjoys the job he's doing, and looks forward to coming to work. He has made many friends, and thinks he's done a good job. Matalan likes what Ryan is doing and appreciates his hard work.

He has already increased his weekly hours from 4.5 to 9.

“ Matalan likes what Ryan is doing and appreciates his hard work. ”

## Looking Ahead

There are more choices to make when you're 18. What are other people in the county doing?

University is the next step to help progress my knowledge and get into the industry I'm interested in. **Systems support**

I felt working was the next best step for me to take. **Systems support**

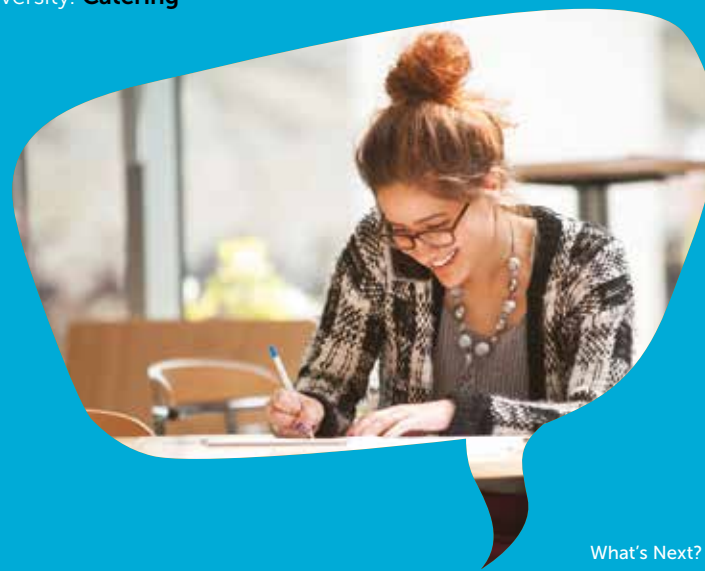
I am struggling with what to do after sixth form. I want to go to university but I'm thinking... three years of study... I would rather work. **Sixth former**

I am indecisive about what to do after A-Levels, whether to go to work, go to university or do an apprenticeship. **Sixth former**

I'm starting a foundation degree in September. **Early years**

I hope to find a job when I finish studying. **Catering**

I'm possibly doing a Level 3 BTEC or changing course so I can go to university. **Catering**



# Planning ahead

This calendar shows you key dates to look out for over the year!

**Top Tip**  
You can print out this chart and use throughout the year

SEPTEMBER | OCTOBER | NOVEMBER | DECEMBER | JANUARY | FEBRUARY | MARCH | APRIL | MAY | JUNE | JULY | AUGUST | SEPTEMBER

ALL  
Year 13  
Year 12  
Year 11  
Year 10  
Year 9

Talk to your friends, parents, carers and teachers. Ask questions about your options so you know what grades you need to aim for.			National Apprenticeship Week! Every year in February.	If you're in Year 11 and above you can also think about work experience all year round.					
You can apply for apprenticeships all year round.				Lots of apprenticeships vacancies, usually April – September.					
Attend university open days. Apply for university – write personal statement – see <a href="http://www.ucas.com">www.ucas.com</a> . Oxbridge applications close mid October.		Deadline for most university courses applications mid Jan.	University offers come in and you may need to attend interviews.		A2 Exams.		IB Results Day July. BTEC Results Mid July.	A-Level Results day! 3rd Thursday in August. University clearing process for some.	
Attend university open days and research what grades you need for different options.				AS Exams & start A2 studying.		BTEC Results! Mid July.		AS Results day! 3rd Thursday in August.	
Register and search for apprenticeships on the National Apprenticeship Vacancy Matching Service (NAVMS) at <a href="http://www.apprenticeships.org.uk">www.apprenticeships.org.uk</a>					Can start an apprenticeship from 4th Friday in June.		GCSE Results Day! 4th Thursday in August. You may need to talk to your college or sixth form about your grades.		
School, college and sixth form open days – talk to individual schools for dates.		Apply for college. Find out the deadline from individual colleges.			GCSE Exams		BTEC Results! Mid July.		
Ask questions about your options so you know what grades you need to aim for.				GCSE Exams		Most schools offer work experience in July.		GCSE Results Day! 4th Thursday in August.	
Think about GCSE options or talk to your school about alternatives to GCSE.		Pick your GCSE options. Your school will tell you the exact deadline.							

# Key Academic Dates

# University

## Why choose university?

- It's good if you have a specific career in mind (like being a doctor) but also if you don't have a career in mind, as it helps to keep your options open.
- University can be a good step towards living away from home, giving you independence and confidence.
- You get lots of opportunities to meet new people, learn from professionals and travel.

If you want to go to university you need to think carefully about what you want to do, and the qualifications you need to get there. Check out some university open days – they will tell you what A-Level subjects and grades you need.



## Thinking about university?

To get into a university you need to:

- Head to the UCAS website to start your application
- Write a personal statement about you and what makes you a good candidate
- Attend an interview
- Consider visiting the university at an open day before applying
- Apply to student finance for your loan.

You could always consider **Open University** – you do your own study, in your own home, at your own pace.

**Further info:** There is a huge choice of courses you can take – check them out at [www.ucas.com](http://www.ucas.com) or visit [www.prospects.ac.uk](http://www.prospects.ac.uk) for advice on choosing a course. If you want to know more about student finance and applications visit [www.gov.uk/student-finance](http://www.gov.uk/student-finance)

Graduates in some jobs can expect to make more money than non graduates over a lifetime. Choose your course carefully though, as recent research says this only works for some degrees. You can expect to pay £42,900 or more for tuition and maintenance which are covered by loans that you have to pay back as you work. Some students can apply for grants if they are eligible for certain benefits, disabled or need help with childcare costs.

# Advanced & Higher Level Apprenticeships

An apprenticeship is a minimum of a year of working and earning while you study. Normally, you work four days a week and you study at college one day a week. Apprenticeships come at different levels of difficulty and are equivalent to different qualifications:

Name	Level	Equivalent educational level
Intermediate	2	5 GCSE passes at grades 9-4
Advanced	3	2 A-Level passes
Higher	4,5,6 and 7	Foundation degree and above
Degree	6 and 7	Bachelors or Masters degree

You can progress over several years from Level 2 to Level 4 and beyond, and most of the time your employer will fund your apprenticeship so you don't have to worry about tuition fees.

## Benefits of doing an apprenticeship

- Earning a salary
- Training in the skills employers want
- Excellent progression opportunities, whether looking to study further or climb the ranks within the workplace
- Increased future earning potential
- Learning at a pace suited to you
- Only in a classroom one day a week!
- Gain practical, hands-on experience.



There is lots of information available at [www.prospects.ac.uk](http://www.prospects.ac.uk)

**Top Tip** – Go to open days at schools and colleges you like the sound of – you can ask the teachers and current students questions about what it is like to help you decide.

## Higher National Certificates and Higher National Diplomas

If spending three or four years full-time studying for a degree at university is not right for you, don't despair.

Higher National Certificates (HNCs) and Higher National Diplomas (HNDs) are work-related, or vocational, higher education qualifications and are great alternatives to going to university.

They are Level 4 and Level 5 qualifications respectively.

### What HNCs and HNDs are

HNCs and HNDs focus on 'learning by doing' and give skills that you can use in a particular job. They are highly valued by employers and can also count towards membership of professional bodies and other employer organisations. Both qualifications are provided by further and higher education colleges. HNCs take about one year to complete full-time and two years part-time. HNDs take two years full-time and can also be taken part-time, which takes longer.

### Subjects available

HNCs and HNDs are available in a wide range of subject areas, including:

- agriculture
- computing and IT
- construction and civil engineering
- engineering
- health and social care
- business and management
- sport and exercise sciences
- performing arts
- retail and distribution
- hospitality management

### Entry requirements

To study for an HNC or HND, you will need some previous qualifications. Most HND courses require one A level or an equal qualification.



## Lucy Phelps Apprenticeship



Lucy Phelps

I left secondary school with good grades and went on to study A-Levels but I didn't choose anything 'career specific' as I didn't know what I wanted to do for a career. I struggled to stay engaged during A-Levels in subjects I didn't enjoy but I focused and completed them. I still didn't have a career path in mind. I joined the apprenticeship scheme at Ultra Electronics PCS in Cheltenham back in 2015.

Whilst being part of the apprenticeship scheme, I have remained engaged in college subjects as it is something I really enjoy. Being able to apply what I learn in a work environment has really benefited my understanding of the subjects. I have always pushed myself and with the help of the college, my peers and the support system at my workplace, I have achieved distinction grades across the board, including in subjects I had never studied before.

The apprenticeship scheme has enabled me to work in various departments across the business and given me a chance to find what I enjoy doing.

I'm now able to turn that into a career with a clear progression path.

From my experience, my advice for anyone looking to get a career whether that be from school, A-Levels or even graduate schemes, would be to go down the apprentice or work-based learning route. There are people in the industries who are fountains of knowledge, and from my experience, they are more than willing to share this knowledge and help you progress and achieve your best.



**My advice for anyone looking to get a career ... go down the apprentice or work-based learning route**



## Gap Years

Gap years can give you the opportunity to:

- Travel and see the world
- Get a taste of independence
- Volunteer and get some work experience
- Work to fund future studies
- Study for additional qualifications such as an Art & Design Foundation Diploma
- Gain experience in your chosen career

If you choose to do some travelling you might want to go by yourself, with a friend or with a gap year organisation/charity.

The Year Out Group website [www.yearoutgroup.org](http://www.yearoutgroup.org) has information to help you decide if a gap year is right for you.



# Getting ready for work

You may feel ready to start full-time work when you are 18, or you may want to work part time while you study. There are some things to think about to improve your chances of getting a job:

## Develop your employability skills

Improve time-keeping, using your initiative and working in a team. For more info on what employers are looking for go to page 38.

## Get some work experience

Get a part-time or holiday job, either by volunteering or through your school or college.

## Put together a CV

Any work experience or volunteering looks good. Go to page 41 for more information.



## Work experience

Work experience is a great way to test out whether you like a job/sector. It also shows employers that you've thought about what you want to do and have a realistic idea of what working life is like.

You may do work experience with your school or college. You can also arrange your own experience during school holidays or at weekends.

Part-time work while you study is also a great way to get experience and learn skills – as long as your education comes first!



# Volunteering

## Why Volunteer?

Volunteering can help you gain skills that employers are looking for, and also;

- Develop confidence
- Find out more about what you're good at
- Feel valuable
- Get work experience for your CV or personal statement
- Learn new skills and get extra qualifications
- Support a good cause
- Meet people
- Have fun!

To find local volunteering opportunities visit:  
[www.govolunteerglos.org/](http://www.govolunteerglos.org/)



## Jobs in Gloucestershire

### Gloucestershire is a great place to live and work

Most businesses in Gloucestershire are small and employ less than five people. There are also some very large employers.

- Public sector admin, education and health – the biggest sector in terms of workforce numbers.
- Distribution (including retail), hotels and restaurants – supermarkets are usually the largest individual employers.
- Banking, finance and insurance – major employers include Ageas and Endsleigh (insurance companies).
- Manufacturing and engineering – including Safran Landing Systems (aerospace), Renishaw (hi-tech measuring specialists) and Unilever (consumer products).

You might want to take a look at Job Market Information on the National Careers Service website:  
<https://nationalcareersservice.direct.gov.uk>



## Merretts Heating Services Ltd

### Business of the Year



Merretts Heating Services Ltd

At Merretts Heating Services Ltd, a completed full apprenticeship gives you the basis of a creative and rewarding trade and it's an ideal opportunity to enjoy a long and fulfilling career. Apprenticeships are a great way of earning whilst learning. They give you a fantastic opportunity to follow a career that excites you and pays whilst you learn. I would strongly advise anyone thinking of taking up an apprenticeship to find a trade that really excites and interests you. Don't just become a plumber or carpenter just because your mum, dad, aunts or uncles are plumbers or carpenters. This is your life and your career and you need to pick a trade that suits you.

Merretts Heating Services Ltd is very proud and honoured to have been nominated and won two prestigious awards at the recent Gloucestershire Apprenticeship Awards. It's humbling to have our peers recognise and appreciate all our efforts in promoting quality apprenticeships in Gloucestershire.

The future of the construction industry depends on the high standards of craftsmanship, workmanship and professionalism that a trade apprenticeship can provide.



**The future of the construction industry depends on the high standards of craftsmanship, workmanship and professionalism that a trade apprenticeship can provide.**



## Writing a CV and covering letter

CVs and covering letters are a great way to show your skills and experience. They are the first impression employers get of you. They can be daunting to write at first, but these tips are a good starting point:



### CV

CVs should be no longer than two sides of A4.

- If there's a job description, read it
- Write three sentences about your skills and personality
- List your education and qualifications including what you are studying at the moment
- List any work experience and volunteering, and what tasks you did
- Include a bit of information about your skills, hobbies and interests
- Have a smart and professional layout
- Remember to include your contact details.



### Covering letters

A covering letter should be no longer than one page of A4.

- One line saying why you are writing
- A few lines about you and your skills
- A paragraph about your experience and what you would bring to the organisation or role
- A paragraph about why you want to work for this organisation and in this role
- A few sentences to summarise.

There's more information at:

<https://www.how2become.com/resources/ultimate-guide-to-building-a-cv/> and at <https://nationalcareersservice.direct.gov.uk/get-a-job/cv-tips>

## How to impress at interviews



### Make a good first impression

- Be on time or if you can, a bit early. It shows you are keen.
- Dress appropriately for your interview, don't worry about being too smart.
- Turn your phone off.
- Give a firm handshake.
- Take a deep breath, smile and speak calmly and clearly.
- Research the role and company – do you understand what they do and what you'll need to do?
- Be interested in your job – ask questions about what your employer expects of you.
- Keep eye contact throughout the interview.
- Ask the employer some questions at the end of the interview.

### Employers want to see that you can:

- Work well in a team
- Solve problems
- Use a computer (basic Word and email skills)
- Turn up on time
- Motivate yourself
- Stick with tasks

**What are you like at these? Employers often say that your willingness to work (your attitude) is every bit as important as your skills and qualifications. Are you ready for work?**

You can **download the Forwards job app**, for quick tips on how to ace an interview. For more tips, do's and don'ts and questions that you might get asked, visit: <https://nationalcareersservice.direct.gov.uk/get-a-job/interview-advice>

## Tips for dealing with stress

### Choosing options and taking exams is stressful

#### Need to relax?

These tips can help:

- Have a bath to relax
- Do exercise – it'll burn off stress and release endorphins
- Pop bubble wrap! It'll help calm you
- Eat some dark chocolate – it releases endorphins
- Take a break and get outside for some fresh air and hopefully sunshine
- Spend time with animals – research shows they reduce stress

#### Feeling really stressed out?

These tips can help:

- Take a break from revision
- Talk to friends and family about how you're feeling
- Talk to a range of people and teachers about your decision
- Don't be embarrassed to ask for help
- Try not to procrastinate – you'll just feel worse afterwards

#### Finally:

Remember it's ok to not know what you want to do.

If you're really struggling and feel really down, **talk to your GP immediately.**

Or if you need immediate support call Samaritans on **116 123** or text **"Shout"** to **85258.**



There's a new website for young people in Gloucestershire to find out about mental health and wellbeing:  
**[www.onyourmindglos.nhs.uk](http://www.onyourmindglos.nhs.uk)**

## For career information and inspiration:

Start [www.startprofile.com](http://www.startprofile.com)

Careers advice website including career videos, quizzes and advice.

National Apprenticeship site [www.gov.uk/apply-apprenticeship](http://www.gov.uk/apply-apprenticeship)

For detailed information and vacancy searching.

National Careers Service <https://nationalcareers.service.gov.uk>

For everyone over the age of 13.

South West Apprenticeship Company [www.theswac.org.uk](http://www.theswac.org.uk)

For a local flavour of apprenticeships, including vacancy searching.

UCAS [www.ucas.com](http://www.ucas.com)

Is the starting point for all research about higher education.

On Your Mind [www.onyourmindglos.nhs.uk](http://www.onyourmindglos.nhs.uk)

For advice and support on mental health and wellbeing.

traveline [www.traveline.info](http://www.traveline.info)

Plan your journey when considering your post-16 options.

Gloucestershire Youth Support Team [www.youthsupportteam.co.uk](http://www.youthsupportteam.co.uk)

For additional support.

Care to learn [www.gov.uk/care-to-learn](http://www.gov.uk/care-to-learn)

If you're a young parent you can get help with childcare costs.

Young Gloucestershire [www.youngglos.org.uk](http://www.youngglos.org.uk)

Can support young people who are facing challenge in their lives.

The Employment and Skills Hub [employmentskillshub@gloucestershire.gov.uk](mailto:employmentskillshub@gloucestershire.gov.uk)

If you would like help with finding paid work or would like to learn new skills.

Tel: 01452 425767.



# Employment and Skills Hub

Would you like help with finding paid work  
or would you like to learn new skills?

We can help you.



Find us at:  
4-6 Commercial Road, Gloucester, GL1 2EA  
T: **01452 426767**  
E: [employmentandskillshub@gloucestershire.gov.uk](mailto:employmentandskillshub@gloucestershire.gov.uk)

WE'RE OPEN  
MON-FRI  
9-5

## When looking ahead

It is a good idea to find out what local schools and colleges offer to students wishing to do higher education. You can find dates for open days on their respective websites.



# Contacts

## Schools with sixth forms / sixth form centres

**All Saints' Academy**  
01242 711200  
www.asachelt.org

**Archway School**  
01453 763242  
www.archwayschool.net

**Balcarras School**  
01242 515881  
www.balcarras.gloucs.sch.uk

**Cheltenham Bournside School**  
& 6th Form Centre  
01242 229542  
www.bournside.gloucs.sch.uk

**Chipping Campden School**  
01386 840216  
www.campden.school

**Chosen Hill School**  
01452 713488  
www.chosen-hill.gloucs.sch.uk

**Churchdown School Academy**  
01452 713340  
www.churchdownschool.com

**Cleeve School**  
01242 672546  
www.cleeveschool.net

**The Cotswold School**  
01451 820554 or 820938  
www.cotswold.gloucs.sch.uk

**The Crypt School**  
01452 530291  
www.cryptschool.org

**Dene Magna School**  
01594 542370  
www.denemagnasixth.org.uk

**Denmark Road High School**  
01452 543335  
www.denmarkroad.org

**Farmor's School**  
01285 712302  
www.farmors.gloucs.sch.uk

**Gloucester Academy**  
01452 428800  
www.gloucesteracademy.com

**Henley Bank High School**  
01452 863372  
www.henleybankhighschool.co.uk

**The High School For Girls**  
01452 543335  
www.hsfsg.org

**Holmleigh Park High School**  
01452 301381  
www.hphigh.co.uk

**Katharine Lady Berkeley's School**  
01453 842227  
www.klbschool.org.uk

**Marling School**  
01453 760156  
www.marling.gloucs.sch.uk

**Newent Community**  
School & 6th Form  
01531 820550  
www.newent.gloucs.sch.uk

**Pate's Grammar School**  
01242 538219 – 6th Form Office  
www.patesgs.org

**Rednock School**  
01453 543618  
www.rednockschool.org.uk

**Ribston Hall High School**  
01452 382249  
www.ribstonhall.gloucs.sch.uk

**Sir Thomas Rich's School**  
01452 338400  
www.strschool.co.uk

**St Peter's RC High School & Sixth Form Centre**  
01452 520594  
www.stpetershigh.net

**Stroud High School**  
01453 764441  
www.stroudhigh.gloucs.sch.uk

**Tewkesbury School**  
01684 292152  
www.tewkesburyschool.org

**Wyedean School & Sixth Form Centre**  
01291 625340 / 01291 636180  
www.wyedean.gloucs.sch.uk

## Colleges in Gloucestershire

**Cirencester College**  
01285 640994  
www.cirencester.ac.uk

**Gloucestershire College**  
0345 155 2020  
www.gloscol.ac.uk

**Hartpury College**  
01452 702345  
www.hartpury.ac.uk

**South Gloucestershire and Stroud College**  
0800 056 7253  
www.sgscol.ac.uk

## Training Providers in Gloucestershire

**Bridge Training**  
Gloucester 01452 411112  
www.bridgetrainingltd.co.uk

**Prospect Training**  
Gloucester  
01452 332996 or 01452 331500  
www.prospect-training.org.uk

**Military Preparation College (MPCT)**  
0330 111 3939  
www.mpct.co.uk/MPCT/military-preparation-college

**Adult Education in Gloucestershire**  
Gloucester  
01452 583800  
www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/adult-education-in-gloucestershire

## UTCs and Studio Schools (from page 10)

**SGS Berkeley Green UTC**  
in Gloucestershire,  
opened in September 2017  
www.berkeleygreenutc.org.uk

**Bristol Technology and Engineering Academy**, in South Gloucestershire  
www.bteacademy.co.uk

**UTC Swindon**  
www.utcswindon.co.uk

**Digitech Studio School Bristol**  
www.digitechstudioschool.co.uk

## **Where to go for help if you are up out of education, training, or employment**

The Youth Support Team (Part of Gloucestershire County Council) have an education, employment, training team that works with young people who are not in education, training or employment (NEET) from when they finish Year 11 until the August after their 18th birthday.

### **Support from the Education, Employment, and Training Team can include:**

- Helping you to think about careers and jobs that you might be interested in.
- Helping you to find out what opportunities are available in your area. These could be jobs, training, work experience, volunteering or further education.
- Helping you to produce a good CV and support with applying for jobs.
- Help you prepare for interviews.
- Help you look at small steps that may help you to plan for the future.



**The Youth Support Team work across all of Gloucestershire. They can see you face to face, virtually, as well speak to you over the phone or email.**

**Are you 16-18 years of age and out of education, training, employment?**  
email: [ystopportunitysupport@gloucestershire.gov.uk](mailto:ystopportunitysupport@gloucestershire.gov.uk)