

Black Country Skills Factory



THE CAREERS &  
ENTERPRISE  
COMPANY

My Choices



**YOUR GUIDE TO  
FURTHER  
EDUCATION**

# WHAT'S YOUR NEXT MOVE?

QUALIFICATION	DESCRIPTION	LENGTH OF TIME	ASSESSMENT	LEVEL OF STUDY	DOES IT AWARD UCAS POINTS?	ENTRY REQUIREMENTS	WORK EXPERIENCE	WHAT DOES IT LEAD TO?
<b>APPRENTICESHIPS</b>	A real job with training and a salary	1 Year minimum	Apprenticeship dependent (including demonstrations, presentations and/or exams)	2/3 With the possibility to progress to higher Apprenticeships up to level 7	No	- Employer dependent - Age 16+ - Evidence of interest and ability to complete	Yes. (Paid job with at least 20% off the job training)	- Higher level or degree Apprenticeship - University / College - Work
<b>A LEVELS</b>	An academic qualification, similar in style to GCSEs that prepares you for further study	2 years	Mostly exams at the end of the course	3	Yes	For individual schools and colleges to decide (commonly 5 GCSEs at grades 4 and above)	No	- Apprenticeship - University / College - Work
<b>T LEVELS</b>	A technical study programme, equivalent to 3 A levels, with an industry placement that makes up 20% of the course. T levels are designed to give you the skills that employers need	2 years	Exams, projects and practical assignments	3	Yes	Set by each school / college	Yes (80% classroom, 20% work)	- Apprenticeship - University / College - Work
<b>TECHNICAL / VOCATIONAL QUALIFICATIONS</b>	Qualifications which teach you how to do tasks specifically related to the industry and role you want to be in	Course dependent	Course dependent (Coursework & exams)	1+	Some (course & awarding organisation dependent)	Course dependent	Course dependent	- Apprenticeship - College - Work
<b>APPLIED QUALIFICATIONS</b>	Qualifications that prepare you for further study by combining academic learning with practical skills to give you a broad overview of working in a sector	Course dependent	Course dependent (coursework & exams)	3	Yes	Set by each school / college	Course dependent	- Apprenticeship - University / College - Work
<b>TRAINEESHIPS</b>	A work focused study programme that prepares you for an Apprenticeship or work	6 weeks - 6 months	A formal job or exit interview with written feedback. Coursework and exams are course dependent	N/A	No	Have little to no work experience and qualified below Level 3	Yes	- Apprenticeship - Work

Levels are designed to indicate the complexity of qualifications and Apprenticeships, allowing people to draw comparisons and understand where they sit in relation to the other options which are available. There are 8 levels plus entry level, with the higher levels offering the highest difficulty.

Find out more about the different levels at [gov.uk/what-different-qualification-levels-mean](https://www.gov.uk/what-different-qualification-levels-mean)  
Visit [nationalcareers.service.gov.uk](https://nationalcareers.service.gov.uk) for information about careers, training and work.

# INTRODUCTION

The end of Year 11 and Year 13 can be a challenging time never more so than in 2021.

Are you faced with sometimes difficult or scary decisions about your next steps? You may like some help with your thinking, particularly if your plans are uncertain or may need to change.

This guide is designed to support you with useful hints and tips, information about support in your local area and links to resources or videos to help you make the right decision for you.

Working with partners across the Black Country we regularly host on-line events, to help you prepare your next steps and you will also be able to access the Black Country Expo - a Virtual Careers Fair specifically aimed at those living in Dudley, Sandwell, Walsall & Wolverhampton.



Keep an eye on our webpages for useful links from local Colleges and Training Providers <https://www.blackcountrylep.co.uk/our-strategy/people/support-for-school-leavers/>

If you need individual support visit your local area page within this guide for information about how to contact your local Connexions or National Careers Service.

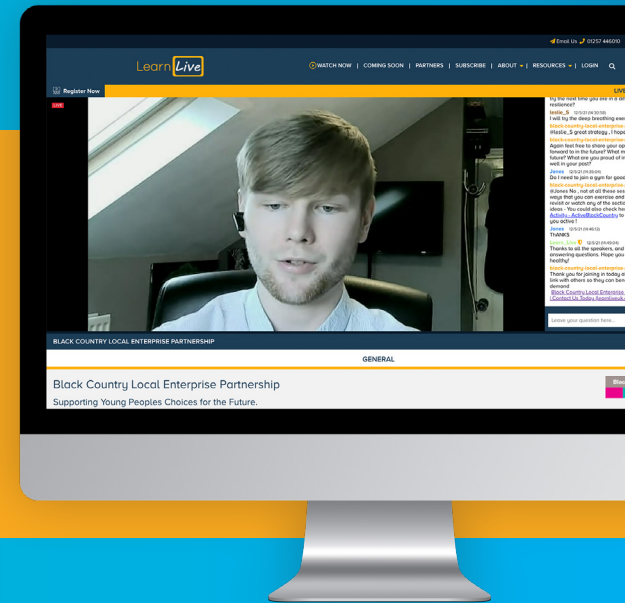
## Still not sure?

Head to our website - <https://www.blackcountrylep.co.uk/individual-support-and-guidance-form/> and complete the simple on-line request form - we will get back to you.

## Jobs Live

Our **Jobs Live** Channel also has lots of content designed to inspire you and is where we host regular Live Events showcasing local opportunities, local employers and useful employability hints and tips <https://jobsliveuk.com/partner/black-country-local-enterprise-partnership/>

Consider what is most useful to you right now: whether that is immediate sources of support to help you make the best choice for your future now or something to consider helping you make longer term decisions on your career path. Look at the section headings and on our website and consider the webinars and events that are of most interest to you. Remember, don't limit yourself, take time to explore something you may not have considered before. There may well be a different route into your ideal career that you are unaware of.



**From all of us at the Black Country Skills Team BE POSITIVE ABOUT YOUR FUTURE we are here to help you.**

# SIXTH FORM

The Sixth Form represents the final years of secondary school, for pupils aged 16 to 18. The Sixth Form provides the academic preparation needed for university, transitioning pupils from GCSEs to an undergraduate degree.

Sixth Forms are smaller and tend to offer an individualised approach to your learning. In most cases the standard of teaching will be high in academic subjects especially. Also, a student with disabilities will already know how their school accommodates disabled pupils.

Entry requirements for school and college sixth forms vary – ranging from four to five GCSEs at level 4 or 5, with perhaps GCSE level 6s in the subjects you want to study, through to at least six GCSEs at level 7 or above for the most selective colleges.

Most Schools Sixth Forms and Sixth Form colleges will offer a wide range of A-levels and vocational courses. In addition to offering A-level courses, many sixth form colleges offer BTEC, T Levels, diplomas and other vocational courses too.

Most colleges and sixth forms within schools will start to open their application process in the autumn term of Year 11. This is the time when you should be visiting colleges and schools, going to open days, talking to former and current students and finding out more about the studying options available.

Check with your school (or the sixth form you want to attend if you're changing schools to study them) and ensure you know exactly what you need to get. You can take a maximum of five A Levels, although most universities are happy to offer you a place based on three subjects.

## TOP TIPS

- Visit open days/ evenings
- Do research into what else the school offers
- Book another tour during the day
- Don't listen to your friends
- Listen to your gut feeling



# APPRENTICESHIPS

Apprenticeships are work-based training programmes. Apprentices are employed by a business, whilst working towards relevant qualifications at the same time.

An Apprenticeship is a real job where you learn, gain experience and get paid.

You're an employee with a contract of employment and holiday leave. By the end of an Apprenticeship, you'll have the right skills and knowledge needed for your chosen career.

It can take between one and six years to complete an Apprenticeship depending on which one you choose, what level it is and your previous experience. It's funded from contributions made by the government and your employer.

### **To become an Apprentice, you must:**

- be 16 or over
- not already be in full time education
- spend at least 50% of your working hours in England

### **As an Apprentice you'll:**

- learn and gain hands-on experience in a real job
- get paid
- get training for a specific job role
- be on a career path with lots of future potential

You can find an Apprenticeship whether you're starting your career, want a change or are returning to work.

THE PRACTICAL BIT  
**SKILLS**  
+  
**KNOWLEDGE**  
THE THEORY BIT

# TRAINEESHIPS



Traineeships are available for young people aged between 16 – 24 and aimed at those who are unsure of what employment sector they wish to work in.

They are a good way to gain work experience, secure an Apprenticeship, and ideal for supporting young people to develop all round abilities including employability skills, CV writing, job applications and gain confidence. The cost of training is free to the individual and is a good way of finding out what type of sector and work you may be suited to.

Upon completion of the Traineeship learners will be better prepared for moving onto an Apprenticeship.

## From the training provider you can expect:

- training to prepare you for work, including CV writing and what to expect in the workplace
- support to improve your English, maths and digital skills if you need it
- sector focused vocational learning to help prepare you for your apprenticeship or job and recognition of your learning
- From the employer you can expect:
- a high-quality work placement of at least 70 hours

- an interview for an apprenticeship or job if available, or an exit interview with written feedback

Programmes can be tailored to meet your needs and prepare you for what local businesses are looking for. A traineeship is a training programme and isn't a job. Employers are not required to pay you for the work placement, but they can support you with expenses such as transport and meals.

If you are eligible, you can maintain your entitlement to benefits whilst on a traineeship as necessary. Along with recognition of your learning, there will be support to link you with job opportunities.

## You may get:

- expenses for transport and meals from your employer
- financial support for travel, childcare or a disability from your training provider
- support from your local Jobcentre Plus if you are eligible for work benefits

## Will I be paid?

A traineeship is a learning programme including a work experience placement, not a job. Work experience placements are unpaid, but employers are encouraged to support expenses, such as for transport and meals. Depending on your circumstances, you may be eligible for support with education related costs.

## Who is eligible?

You can apply for a traineeship if you're:

- eligible to work in England
- have little or no work experience but are motivated to work
- aged 16 to 24 (or 25 with an EHC plan)

## HOW TO APPLY:

There are many training providers who offer Traineeships and advertise opportunities, your local Connexions Adviser (see pages 16 to 20) will be able to support you to find a place.

For further information on Traineeships visit <https://www.gov.uk/find-traineeship>



# NATIONAL CAREERS SERVICE

The National Careers Service provides free, expert, impartial information, advice and guidance on careers, skills and the labour market in England.

To make decisions about your future, it's important to know what's out there and what's right for you. Whatever stage you are at in your career, we can help you understand what your skills are and what skills you might need to adapt to new jobs, circumstances and opportunities.

There are many options open to you when thinking about your next steps, and we provide information, advice and guidance to help you make the best decisions on learning, training and work.

## We'll help you to:

- explore different careers – our website has information on many different job roles with sections and covers how to get the job, what you'll do, career paths, progression, and training opportunities to review your skills and develop new goals
- feel motivated to implement your plan of action
- make the best use of high-quality, career-related tools



## GET IN TOUCH

Give us a call on **0800 100 900**. Lines are open from 8am to 10pm, 7 days a week. Calls are free from landlines and most mobile numbers.

Text your name and the word **ADVICE** to **07766 413219** and an adviser will call you back for free. You can also text to ask for information like telephone numbers and addresses.

[nationalcareers.service.gov.uk](http://nationalcareers.service.gov.uk)

# NEWS CHANNEL



Do I need previous experience to work in the beauty sector?



Do you have advice on the application process?



How do I know if I will be a good fit?



 @JOBSLIVE\_UK

 INFO@JOBSLIVEUK.COM

 @JOBSLIVENEWSCHANNEL

**#STARTTHECONVERSATION**  
**SUBSCRIBE FOR FREE**

# YOUTH HUBS



Jobcentre Plus Youth Hubs are located in community venues providing access to a range of employability services in one location.

They support young people looking for work by helping to develop skills and other activities such as writing a CV and interview skills.

Some Youth Hubs offer a drop-in service for all young people who need support to find work, including those not claiming Universal Credit.

To find your nearest Youth Hub please visit: [www.gov.uk/contact-jobcentre-plus](http://www.gov.uk/contact-jobcentre-plus)

For more information, please visit: [www.gov.uk/guidance/help-to-find-work-for-universal-credit-claimants-aged-18-to-24](http://www.gov.uk/guidance/help-to-find-work-for-universal-credit-claimants-aged-18-to-24)

## DUDLEY HUB - PARTNERS

The Black Country Skills Shop, Merry Hill Centre (Monday – Friday 8am – 5pm). They are very flexible in their delivery and are happy to discuss other ways to support younger jobseekers.

### Services offered:

- SWAPs
- Employability Support
- 121 support
- Access to over 30 different Apprenticeship routes
- Work place focused training
- Mentoring Circles/Personal progression courses
- Career Guidance
- Access to Youth Work Coaches (go ahead for outreach work pending)
- A space for partners to deliver or to meet with customers (pre-arranged only due to COVID)

## SANDWELL HUB - PARTNERS:

- Sandwell College
- Talent Match
- BCTG
- Juniper Training
- NCS

### Services offered:

- One-to-one support
- Traineeships
- Apprenticeships
- Kick Start
- SWAPs
- Functional Skills
- Head Start Programme
- Virtual Career Fairs
- Vocational career months
- Interview prep and employer introductions
- Real time career pathways with Graduate workshops and UCAS application support
- Mentoring Circles with vacancy portal guidance for NHS.
- Signposting across partnership and wider if appropriate

## WALSALL HUB - PARTNERS

- Walsall College
- Walsall Borough Council
- National Careers Service
- whg
- DWP

### Services offered:

- Impartial advice and guidance
- Access to study programmes
- Traineeships
- Apprenticeships
- Job Search

### Support for 16-29 year olds includes:

- Bespoke training programme for young adults with personal issues
- One to one mentoring sessions to boost confidence and self-esteem
- Workshops in topics including housing, money management, independent travel, resilience building
- Support to access work placements
- Enrolment to vocational and functional skills qualifications
- Applying for employment

# ASPIRE TO HE

Aspire to HE is a partnership, led by the University of Wolverhampton, with local schools and colleges who strive to support people across the Black Country and Telford and Wrekin, to achieve their full potential through higher education.

Aspire to HE inspire and support people of all ages to make informed decisions about different higher education pathways and progression to higher level study, from apprenticeships to degrees we help you make the right decision for you.

## We can help you:

- Discover the variety of choices that are available to you
- Choose the right route for you to help you achieve your ambitions
- Apply for courses and student finance
- Cut through all the jargon
- Support you every step of the way

As part of the National Uni Connect Programme, Aspire to HE also offer an exciting range of activities in schools and colleges including; bespoke campus experience days at the University of Wolverhampton, virtual tours with state-of-the-art virtual reality headsets and interactive sessions with inspiring guest speakers – all to provide students with an insight into the world of higher education.

## Transition days

The team at Aspire to HE understand the transition from leaving school to higher education can be a daunting process for students. That's why the team work closely with schools and colleges to support students through these transitional stages.

Over the summer, Aspire to HE are offering Year 11, Year 12 and Year 13 students the opportunity to take part in engaging 'transition days' to ensure students are prepared and inspired to move to the next stage of their educational journeys

## Year 11 students

We will be inviting Y11 students to come to an FE College campus for a visit, with fun and inspiring activities as well as campus tours and careers guidance support.

## Year 12 students

Campus experience days will take place over the summer at the University of Wolverhampton for students to get a true insight into life at university. The day will include practical tips and techniques on choosing the right course and university, how to research bursaries and scholarships and live demonstrations on how students should look after their well-being.

## Year 13 students

Unsure on what next steps to take after college or sixth form? Experience a day at University of Wolverhampton for a 'next steps' all-day session. This exciting day focuses on giving students the opportunity to hear all about the different pathways students can take after leaving sixth form or college, whether that is entering into the world of work, completing a degree, an apprenticeship or studying a course at university.

**“Aspire to HE made me more aware of the different choices available after college.”**

**“Aspire to HE helped me map out my future and the path I need to take to make my way towards my end goal.”**



## Contact details

For more information visit: [www.aspiretohe.co.uk](http://www.aspiretohe.co.uk)

Get in touch with our team: [aspiretohe@wlv.ac.uk](mailto:aspiretohe@wlv.ac.uk)

Facebook: [www.facebook.com/aspiretohe](http://www.facebook.com/aspiretohe) Instagram: [@aspiretohe](https://www.instagram.com/aspiretohe) Twitter: [@aspiretohe](https://twitter.com/aspiretohe)



# DUDLEY

## COLLEGES

Dudley Colleges recruit learners onto all levels of courses in lots of sectors, preparing you for the world of work. The courses have good progression routes and pathways which lead to employment, Apprenticeships or University.

You can visit their websites to access information about their courses and opportunities such as Traineeships and Apprenticeships.

### Dudley College of Technology

For more information contact:  
T: 01384 363000  
W: dudleycol.ac.uk

### Halesowen College

For more information contact:  
T: 0121 602 7777  
W: halesowen.ac.uk

### King Edward VI College

For more information contact:  
T: 01384 398100  
W: kedst.ac.uk

## CONNEXIONS DUDLEY

Connexions Dudley is part of Dudley Council's Children's Services Directorate and works across the borough in mainstream schools, special schools, colleges, training providers and the community supporting young people aged 13 - 19 (up to aged 25 for those with learning difficulties and or disabilities) with careers advice guidance, information and support to help prepare them for employment, education and training at Post 16 and beyond. The service tracks young people to ensure that they are remain in their chosen Post 16 option and

works closely with Post 16 providers – colleges, employer and training providers to support this.

The Connexions Dudley website provides information to young people, parents/ carers and other professionals ranging from knowing what's available, how to make college, employment and training applications right up to a range of youth- related issues.

Connexions works in partnership with services to support a range specialist needs including SEND to prepare for their next steps into adulthood and Dudley MBC Corporate Parenting responsibility in guiding Children Looked After transition into adulthood advocating as appropriate.

Throughout the year we will be partnering with schools, colleges, employer and training providers to offer a range of activities through the year for those who will be leaving school. Additionally there will be a series of activities for those who above school leaving age and need help to explore further options. All of these will be accessible on a range of our social media platforms that we continually will be developing.

To know about events or to find out about opportunities including vacancies, training opportunities and personal development/ support options follow us on :

twitter @cnxsdudley  
facebook facebook.com/connexionsdudley  
Instagram @cnxsdudley



Connexions Dudley can also be contacted  
by calling 01384 811400  
emailing [Connexions@dudley.gov.uk](mailto:Connexions@dudley.gov.uk)  
or visit the or Connexions website  
[connexionsdudley.org](http://connexionsdudley.org)

# SANDWELL

## CONNEXIONS SANDWELL

Discuss your options with an independent impartial careers' adviser. Contact us on 0121 569 2955 or 07748930976

Mon to Fri 9.30am to 4.30pm and 1.00pm to 4.30pm on a Weds.

Check out the website: [connexionsandwell.co.uk](http://connexionsandwell.co.uk) for careers information, advice and guidance on your post 16 options and helping you choose the right career for you.

## SANDWELL COUNCIL'S EMPLOYMENT & SKILLS TEAM

Think Sandwell can provide support to find a job, including help with CV, completing application forms, interview practice and details of local vacancies are available at [sandwell.gov.uk/apprenticeships](http://sandwell.gov.uk/apprenticeships)

The Think Sandwell Employment team have a range of vacancies in the Construction and Social Care sectors [enquiries\\_recruitment@sandwell.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries_recruitment@sandwell.gov.uk)

Vacancies can be found at [sandwell.gov.uk/thinksandwell](http://sandwell.gov.uk/thinksandwell)

## BLACK COUNTRY IMPACT PROJECT

If you are aged 16-29 and are currently not in education, employment or training, Sandwell has the Black Country Impact programme. An experienced keyworker will provide custom intensive one-to-one support to help work out your next steps and fund the courses and equipment that will help you to succeed.

To know about events or to find out about opportunities including vacancies, training opportunities and personal development or support options follow us:

twitter [twitter.com/Connexion\\_Jobs](https://twitter.com/Connexion_Jobs)  
facebook [facebook.com/connexions.sandwell/](https://facebook.com/connexions.sandwell/)

## SANDWELL COLLEGE

Sandwell College recruit learners onto all levels of courses in lots of sectors, preparing you for the world of work. The courses have good progression routes and pathways which lead to employment, Apprenticeships or University.

You can visit their website to access information about their courses and opportunities such as Traineeships and Apprenticeships.

For more information contact:  
T: 0800 622006  
W: [sandwell.ac.uk/school-leaver-courses](http://sandwell.ac.uk/school-leaver-courses)

# WALSALL

## WALSALL COLLEGE

Walsall College recruit learners onto all levels of courses in lots of sectors, preparing you for the world of work. The courses have good progression routes and pathways which lead to employment, Apprenticeships or University.

You can visit Walsall Colleges website to access information about their courses and opportunities such as Traineeships and Apprenticeships - [www.walsallcollege.ac.uk/order-walsall-college-prospectus/](http://www.walsallcollege.ac.uk/order-walsall-college-prospectus/)

For more information contact:

T: 01922 657000

W: [walsallcollege.ac.uk](http://walsallcollege.ac.uk)

## WALSALL WORKS

When you register with Walsall Works, you will receive professional support from one of our trained and qualified Employment Advisors, who have the knowledge and expertise to improve your future options.

We can offer support with:

- Assessing your education needs
- Looking at academic pathways
- Exploring career options
- Applying for Apprenticeships
- Accessing free training
- Finding employment
- Access to Job Fairs
- Support with CV writing and job applications
- Interview support and work trials

Our team works closely with all partner organisations to assist young people to make the right choices. We also offer specialist support to those aged up to 25 with learning difficulties or disabilities. If you are not sure about your future choices or have left school and are not in learning, working or training please contact us for intensive personalised support to help you get back on track.

For more information contact:

T: 01922 654353

E: [walsallworks@walsall.gov.uk](mailto:walsallworks@walsall.gov.uk)

W: [go.walsall.gov.uk/walsallcom/Walsall-Works/Works-Home](http://go.walsall.gov.uk/walsallcom/Walsall-Works/Works-Home)



Endless Possibilities is Walsall Council's apprenticeship programme, which actively seeks young people who wish to access employment within the local authority. There are a range of job roles on offer from administration to leisure attendants.

For more information please contact:

Helena Baxter on 07767 615214 or email [Helena.baxter@walsall.gov.uk](mailto:Helena.baxter@walsall.gov.uk)

## BLACK COUNTRY IMPACT PROJECT

If you are aged 16-29 and currently not in education, employment or training, Walsall invites you to join the Black Country Impact programme, where we will provide intensive one-to-one support with an experienced advisor to help you work out your next steps and fund the courses and equipment that will help you to succeed.

For more information contact:

T: 01922 654364

W: [walsall.gov.uk/blackcountryimpact](http://walsall.gov.uk/blackcountryimpact)

We offer one-to-one support and advice to:

- Help you find a job
- Support you to find a college or further education course
- Offer free training to help develop the skills you need

You will have the chance to sign up for:

- Apprenticeships
- Traineeships
- Training courses
- Coaching
- Work placements
- Self-employment advice, including social enterprises
- Customised training and more

We will provide:

- Advice and guidance, along with customised support tailored to you
- An Impact Advisor, who will support you throughout your journey
- Additional items to support you, which could include free personal protective equipment (such as safety boots and high-visibility clothing), CSCS card, interview clothes, childcare, travel and more

# WOLVERHAMPTON

## WOLVERHAMPTON COLLEGE

Wolverhampton College recruit learners onto all levels of courses in lots of sectors, preparing you for the world of work. The courses have good progression routes and pathways which lead to employment, Apprenticeships or University.

You can visit Wolverhampton Colleges website to access information about their courses and opportunities such as Traineeships and Apprenticeships

[wolvcoll.ac.uk/demographic/school-leavers](http://wolvcoll.ac.uk/demographic/school-leavers)

For more information contact:

T: 01902 836000

W: [mail@wolvecoll.ac.uk](mailto:mail@wolvecoll.ac.uk)

## CONNEXIONS WOLVERHAMPTON

Connexions is a free and impartial careers information, advice and guidance service for young people who live in Wolverhampton.

We are a person-centred service, meaning we tailor our support to your needs. We want every young person to have access to equal opportunities and achieve their very best in life.

Young people can access the service if they are a resident of Wolverhampton and are aged between 13 – 19 (up to the age of 25 if you have special education needs and/or a disability). If you have left school and are not in learning, working or training you will have your own personal adviser to support you with your next steps.

For more information contact us on:

T: 01902 554499

E: [connexions@wolverhampton.gov.uk](mailto:connexions@wolverhampton.gov.uk)

Search for Connexions Wolverhampton on Facebook

connexions  
WOLVERHAMPTON

## WE OFFER ADVICE ON

- Choosing and exploring careers that will suit your skills and interests.
- Finding out key facts about different careers. What do I need to learn? How much does it pay? What does the job involve? How many jobs are there in this field?
- Your options; from 6th form to college and from training providers to apprenticeships. We will advise you on what you can do and how you can access it.
- Support with applying for courses, jobs and apprenticeships. From how to write a professional application form and CV, to how to present yourself as the best candidate at a job interview.
- Need help? Connexions can offer support and make referrals to other organisations if you are experiencing barriers to achieving.

## WORKBOX

Connexions is part of the wider Skills team in the Local Authority in Wolverhampton, which also comprises of **Impact and Wolves at Work**.

The Wolves Workbox webpage offers up to date information on free educational and training opportunities, events in the city, apprenticeships and job vacancies.

To find out more about these services visit:  
[www.wolvesworkbox.com](http://www.wolvesworkbox.com)

# WORKING FOR YOURSELF

## Do you have what it takes to set up a business?

The Princes Trust offer a 4 day training course called **Explore Enterprise** that allows you to explore if self-employment is right for you.

Eligible clients can choose either face to face or can do the programme online with an E-mentor attached to them. In some cases, grants of up to £1500 are available.



Prince's Trust

**START  
SOMETHING**

Alternatively contact the **Black Country Growth Hub** on 0300 770 2245 to be connected with the Princes Trust or explore other options that may be available to you.

# FINANCE

There are other means of financial support for young people staying in approved education or training.

## Child Benefit

Your parents are usually only entitled to Child Benefit for you up to the Monday following 31 August after your 16th birthday, unless you stay on in full-time non-advanced education or approved training. They can continue to be entitled to Child Benefit for you at ages 16, 17, 18 or 19 if you are a 'qualifying young person'.

Full-time non-advanced education will usually be in a school or college but may also include education provided at home, if you were receiving this education before your 16th birthday and the home schooling had previously been approved.

Full-time, in this situation, means an average of more than 12 hours a week of supervised study during term time, not counting breaks for meals and homework.

This would also include a study programme that is for at least 540 hours in any 12-month period. It could also include a traineeship which could last between 6 weeks and 6 months.

## Travel

If you are aged 16-18 you can get reduced travel to your place of study and/or your Apprenticeship or Traineeship:  
[www.wmnetwork.co.uk/tickets-and-swift/discounts-and-free-travel-passes/16-18-photocard/](http://www.wmnetwork.co.uk/tickets-and-swift/discounts-and-free-travel-passes/16-18-photocard/)

## Other Benefits

Depending on your circumstances you may be entitled to additional benefits and support such as help with equipment costs. Ask at your college, training provider or school appointment when you are enrolling.

Full details of financial support can be found on

**gov.uk**

# & HEALTH WELLBEING

It is vital to maintain our health and wellbeing throughout life but never more so during teenage years when significant changes take place, including exam stresses and transition into further and higher education or into the world of work.

Better health has been shown to boost energy levels, lift your mood and lead to better sleep, all of which helps us to cope with stressful circumstances. The habits set during teenage years can really benefit through life in protecting our mental and physical health to ensure we are happier, stronger and healthier.

Simple steps can be taken to improve physical health which doesn't cost a lot of money i.e. walking and running in your local area. Low cost basic gym equipment and ropes for skipping can be good fun and taking the stairs where possible is an easy way to help keep fit and healthy.

## Pay attention to the present moment

Some people call this awareness "mindfulness" and it can help you enjoy life more and understand yourself better, positively changing the way you feel about life and how you approach challenges.

For more information on opportunities to be active across the Black Country check out the following links:

[activeblackcountry.co.uk](http://activeblackcountry.co.uk)

[nhs.uk/live-well/exercise/get-active-your-way/](http://nhs.uk/live-well/exercise/get-active-your-way/)

[bhf.org.uk/information-support/heart-matters-magazine/activity/8-ways-to-get-active-every-day](http://bhf.org.uk/information-support/heart-matters-magazine/activity/8-ways-to-get-active-every-day)



## Referral & Support Agencies

**YOUNGMINDS**  
fighting for young people's mental health

0808 802 5544



0300 123 3393

**NSPCC**

0800 1111



0808 808 1677

**AnxietyUK**  
Here for you since 1970

0344 4775 774



116 123

There are many more on [nhs.uk](http://nhs.uk) You are not alone.

# MENTAL WELLBEING

An integral part of our overall health, looking after our minds is a key component. Poor mental health can leave people feeling low in mood, unhappy and demotivated.

The natural ebb and flow of life has challenges for everyone, so to cope with these challenges a positive happy frame of mind makes it easier to deal with.

At some stage in everyone's life we will experience low moods and unhappiness which can last a very short time or even years, looking after your mental wellbeing at an early age can help prevent this.

**There are ways in which you can help improve your mental health and general wellbeing:**

- Good relationships are important – connect with other people, share your positive experiences to provide emotional support to others as well as yourself
- Be physically active – setting goals and challenges
- Learn new skills – helps you build a sense of purpose
- All the above cause chemical changes in your brain to aid positive mood, raise your self-esteem and confidence



I stayed on at 6th Form which enabled me to gain the additional qualifications I needed to apply to join the Police force

I left Thorns Academy to do a Level 3 Health & Social Care at Halesowen College, then went to University. I am now a Children's Nurse working as a Paediatric Sister at Russells Hall Hospital. I manage the nursing team on shift, as well as clinical support workers and students.

Working in Childrens A&E I see a lot of head injuries, broken bones, foreign bodies but also treat a lot of poorly children that require extra oxygen, medication and lifesaving treatment.

I absolutely love my job and I can't imagine doing anything different.



Learn more at  
[www.blackcountrylep.co.uk/our-strategy/people/](http://www.blackcountrylep.co.uk/our-strategy/people/)

Black Country Skills Factory

Black Country Consortium Ltd

The Deckhouse, Waterfront West, Dudley Road, Brierley Hill DY5 1LW

t: +44 (0)8458 15 15 15

f: +44 (0)1384 471177