



Also useful for parents, carers, professionals and young adults up to 25

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Your Future Starts Here

An e-handbook of opportunities, support and career pathways
for young people aged 16-18 in the New Forest

Also useful for parents, carers, professionals and young adults up to 25 who are looking for a way forward.

Draft 1

Public comment and trial version. Contact details and eligibility were checked against public sources in August 2026, but services can change.

A note about this handbook

This handbook has been developed by Cllr Fran Carpenter as a practical starting point for young people, parents, carers and professionals in the New Forest. It was researched and drafted with assistance from AI, then reviewed and edited for local use. Information and contact details were checked against public sources in August 2026, but services, eligibility and contact details can change. Please check directly with each organisation before applying, visiting or making plans. Fran welcomes comments, corrections and suggestions for future versions.

Contents

- 1. You do not have to have your future worked out
- 2. Who this handbook is for
- 3. Where should I start?
- 4. Your options after 16
- 5. Careers advice and guidance
- 6. If things did not go to plan
- 7. College, training and study providers
- 8. Apprenticeships
- 9. Finding work, CVs, work experience and volunteering
- 10. SEND, EHCPs and supported routes
- 11. Wellbeing, travel and money
- 12. Career ideas and New Forest routes
- 13. Staying safe and your first week
- 14. Extra support for young carers, care-experienced young people and 19-25s
- 15. Parents, carers and professionals
- 16. Quick contacts and useful sources
- 17. My next three steps

You do not have to have your future worked out

Some people know exactly what they want to do after school. Many do not. And that is completely okay.

You might be thinking about college, an apprenticeship, getting a job, learning a trade, volunteering, or simply trying to work out what comes next.

Whatever your situation, this handbook is here to help you explore the opportunities available in and around the New Forest. It is not a rulebook and you do not need to read it from beginning to end.

There is not one right path. People learn in different ways, enjoy different things and achieve success in many different careers. Some people follow one route for years. Others change direction several times.

The important thing is not having every answer today. It is taking the next step.

You do not have to know everything. You just need somewhere to start.

Who is this handbook for?

This handbook has been written mainly for young people aged 16 to 18 in the New Forest.

It may also be useful for:

- young adults up to 25 who are looking for a way forward
- parents and carers
- foster carers, grandparents and family members
- teachers, tutors and SENCOs
- youth workers, social workers and careers advisers
- employers and community groups

Some services are mainly for 16 to 18-year-olds. Others support young people up to 25, especially if they have SEND, are care experienced, are not currently in education, employment or training, or need help getting into work or training.

You can read this on your own, or look through it with someone you trust.

You do not have to work everything out by yourself.

Where should I start?

Start with the sentence that sounds most like you. You may fit into more than one section. That is okay.

If this sounds like you	Try this first
I have no idea what I want to do.	Start with Careers Advice and Guidance. Work experience and volunteering can also help you try things out.
I want to earn money.	Look at Apprenticeships and Finding Your First Job. If you are 16 or 17, check how work fits with education or training.
I prefer learning by doing.	Look at Apprenticeships, T Levels, vocational courses and practical career routes.
I want to go to college.	Look at College and Sixth Form Options and Local Study Providers.
I did not get the grades I hoped for.	Start with If Things Did Not Go to Plan. There is always another route.
I do not want to stay at school.	You may be able to study at college, start an apprenticeship or combine work with training.
I want work experience.	Look at Work Experience and Volunteering. You do not need a dream career before trying something.
I have SEND, autism or an EHCP.	Go to SEND, EHCPs and Supported Routes. Ask early about support.
I feel anxious, stuck or overwhelmed.	Go to Wellbeing and Extra Support. Small steps count.
I need help with travel or money.	Go to Travel, Costs and Financial Support. Do not rule something out before asking what help exists.
I want to start my own business.	Look at Starting Your Own Business. Start small and ask for advice.
I am a parent, carer or professional.	Go to Parents, Carers and Professionals, and use the quick contacts section.

One useful idea can lead to the next one.

Your options after 16

After Year 11, you need to stay in some form of education or training until you are 18. That does not mean you have to stay at school.

- stay on at school or sixth form
- go to college
- study a T Level or vocational course
- start an apprenticeship
- combine work with training
- take part in a supported internship if you have an EHCP
- volunteer or do work experience while exploring your options

Choosing one route at 16 does not mean you are stuck with it forever. Many people change course, move from college into an apprenticeship, start work and train later, or discover a completely different career as they gain experience.

Plain English guide

Route	What it means
A Levels	Mostly classroom-based subjects, often useful for university, higher apprenticeships or further training.
T Levels	Technical courses with classroom learning and a long industry placement.
Vocational courses	Practical courses linked to work areas such as childcare, construction, animal care, sport, business or digital media.
Apprenticeships	A paid job with training. You earn a wage while working towards a qualification.
Supported internships	Work-based programmes for young people with an EHCP who are preparing for paid employment.
Work experience	A chance to try a workplace for a short time and learn what different jobs are really like.
Volunteering	Giving time to help a charity, club or community project. It can build skills, confidence and references.

There is more than one way forward.

Careers advice and guidance

You do not need to know what job you want before asking for careers advice. That is what careers advice is for.

A careers adviser can help you think about:

- what you enjoy
- what you are good at
- what kind of workplace might suit you
- what qualifications or training you may need
- what support is available
- what your next step could be

Where to start

- your school or college careers adviser, tutor or SENCO

[Hampshire County Council Education Participation Team](#)

[National Careers Service](#)

- Youth Options / Better Futures if you are not in education, employment or training
- No Limits if you need wider advice or wellbeing support

Useful first question

I am not sure what I want to do next. Can you help me look at my options?

If things did not go to plan

You may not have got the grades you wanted. You may have started a course and realised it was not right. You may have left school, college or training and not know what to do next. If that sounds familiar, try not to panic. There are still options.

- retake English or maths
- start a different course or level
- apply for an apprenticeship
- try work experience or volunteering
- speak to a careers adviser
- ask about extra support or a different route

If you are not in education, employment or training

Adults may use the term NEET. It means not in education, employment or training. It is only a description of your situation. It is not a judgement of you.

A good first step could be to contact Hampshire County Council Education Participation, speak to a careers adviser, ask about Better Futures: New Forest Enterprise, contact a college or training provider, or ask a trusted adult to help you send one message.

A change of plan is not the end of the road. It is just a different way forward.

College, training and study providers

College and sixth form options

College or sixth form can be a good choice if you want to continue studying after Year 11. Some young people stay at a school sixth form. Others move to a sixth form college or further education college. There is no single best choice.

- School sixth form may suit you if you want a familiar environment and mostly A Levels.
- Sixth form college may suit you if you want more subject choice and a more independent setting.
- Further education college may suit you if you want vocational courses, T Levels, apprenticeships, supported learning or practical routes.

Where can I study in and near the New Forest?

Local study providers are the realistic places a young person might study or train after 16. The right place will depend on the course, support needs, transport and where in the New Forest you live.

Provider type	Why it may be useful
Brockenhurst College	A Levels, vocational courses, apprenticeships and student support. Useful for many New Forest students. Website: https://www.brock.ac.uk/
Totton College	Vocational courses, apprenticeships, skills for life and practical training routes. Website: https://www.totton.ac.uk/
School sixth forms	A Levels and some other courses, depending on the school. Check individual school websites and Hampshire education information. Website: https://www.hants.gov.uk/educationandlearning
Sparsholt College	Important for land-based, animal care, equine, horticulture, forestry, conservation, motor vehicle and outdoor routes. Website: https://www.sparsholt.ac.uk/
Southampton / Bournemouth / Christchurch options	May be realistic for some students depending on transport, course choice and support. Examples: Southampton College and Bournemouth & Poole College. Website: https://www.thecollege.co.uk/
Specialist or supported provision	For some young people with SEND, EHCPs or additional support needs. Start with your school, SENCO, careers adviser, Hampshire SEN Service or SENDIASS. Website: https://www.hants.gov.uk/educationandlearning/send/contacts

Questions to ask before choosing

- What course is available and what grades do I need?
- How would I get there and how long would the journey take?
- What support is available if I have SEND, anxiety or an EHCP?
- Is there help with travel or costs?
- Can I visit before applying?
- What do students go on to do afterwards?

T Levels and vocational courses

Not everyone wants to study only academic subjects. T Levels and vocational courses are linked more directly to jobs, skills and practical work.

T Levels

T Levels are technical qualifications for young people aged 16 to 19. They usually take two years and combine classroom learning with an industry placement. They can lead to work, apprenticeships, higher education or further training.

Vocational courses

Vocational courses are practical courses linked to a job area. They may be available at different levels, depending on your qualifications and experience.

- childcare and education
- health and social care
- animal care and equine
- construction and trades
- motor vehicle and engineering
- hospitality and catering
- business and customer service
- sport, public services, digital media or creative subjects

The best course is not just the one that sounds impressive. It is the one that helps you move towards something that interests you.

Thinking about university?

This handbook is mainly about local routes into education, training, work, volunteering and supported employment.

If you are waiting for A Level, T Level or other Level 3 results and are thinking about university, you may also want to look at UCAS.

UCAS provides information about applying to university, student choices and 'Clearing', which can help applicants who are not holding a university or college place find courses with vacancies.

Website: ucas.com

Apprenticeships

An apprenticeship is a paid job with training. You work for an employer, earn a wage and learn the skills needed for the job. You also spend part of your working time studying with a college, university or training provider.

Apprenticeships may suit you if you

- want to earn money while learning
- prefer practical learning
- are ready for the workplace
- want to train for a specific career
- do not want full-time classroom learning

What jobs can apprenticeships lead to?

- construction, engineering and motor vehicle
- business, customer service, finance and IT
- childcare, education, health and social care
- hospitality, catering, retail and leisure
- animal care, land-based work and environmental roles
- creative, digital, media and public service roles

Pay

Apprentices are paid. The exact amount depends on the employer, apprenticeship and your age. Minimum wage rates usually change each April, so always check the latest rate before applying.

An apprenticeship is not a second-best option. It is a real job, real training and a real route into a career.

Where to find apprenticeships

- Use the GOV.UK Find an apprenticeship service.
- Search using different places: New Forest, New Milton, Lymington, Brockenhurst, Totton, Southampton, Ringwood, Christchurch, Bournemouth and Hampshire.
- Ask colleges and training providers.
- Ask local employers politely.
- Ask family, friends, neighbours, teachers, coaches and community contacts.
- Keep checking. Vacancies appear throughout the year.

Before accepting an apprenticeship, ask

- What job will I do each day?
- What qualification will I gain?
- Where will the training happen?
- How many hours will I work and how much will I be paid?
- How will I travel there?
- What support will I get?
- What could happen when the apprenticeship ends?

The right opportunity may not appear on the first search. Keep looking, keep asking and keep learning.

Getting ready for an apprenticeship

You may like the idea of an apprenticeship but not feel ready to apply yet. That is okay. An apprenticeship is a job as well as training, so employers will usually look for signs that you are ready for the workplace.

Employers often look for someone who can

- arrive on time
- follow instructions
- ask for help when needed
- work as part of a team
- be polite to customers or colleagues
- show interest in the job
- take health and safety seriously
- use their phone appropriately at work

Ways to build confidence

- work experience
- volunteering
- a college or vocational course
- a short training programme
- helping at a club or community project
- practising travel to work or college
- getting help with English or maths
- speaking to a careers adviser

You do not have to be ready for everything today. You can get ready one step at a time.

Finding your first job

Your first job does not have to be your forever job. It can help you earn money, build confidence, learn workplace skills and discover what kind of work you enjoy.

- Saturday, evening or weekend work
- seasonal work
- part-time work while studying
- a full-time job with training
- an apprenticeship or trainee role
- an entry-level role

Where to look

- employer websites and job search websites
- shop windows and local noticeboards
- local Facebook groups, used carefully
- asking local businesses politely
- school, college or careers advisers
- Jobcentre Plus for older young people where appropriate

Before you apply, check

- hours, pay and travel
- whether it fits with education or training if you are 16 or 17
- whether you need uniform or equipment
- whether the job is suitable for your age
- what training and support will be provided

Your first job is not the final answer. It is a first step into the world of work.

CVs, applications and interviews

When you apply for a job, apprenticeship, work experience or volunteering role, you may be asked for a CV, an application form or an interview. These are skills you can learn.

What is a CV?

A CV is a short document that tells an employer about you. If you are 16 to 18, one page is usually enough.

- your name and contact details
- a short personal statement
- education and qualifications
- work experience or volunteering
- skills, interests and achievements
- references if needed

What if I do not have work experience?

That is normal. You can include school projects, volunteering, helping at home, caring responsibilities, clubs, sports, music, practical skills, creative work or achievements.

Interviews

- check the time and place
- plan how you will get there
- look up the employer
- think about why you want the role
- practise a few answers
- prepare one or two questions to ask

You are not expected to know how to apply for jobs automatically. It is something you learn by doing.

Example CV for a young person

Section	Example text
Name	Alex Morgan
Location	New Milton, Hampshire
Contact	alex.morgan@email.com 07123 456789
Personal statement	I am a reliable and friendly student looking for my first part-time job or work experience placement. I enjoy practical tasks, working with people and learning new skills. I am willing to work hard, listen carefully and do my best.
Education	Example Secondary School, New Forest. GCSEs completed in 2026. Subjects include English, maths, science, geography, design and technology, and food preparation.
Work experience	School work experience placement - local cafe. Helped prepare tables, welcomed customers, followed hygiene instructions and supported staff during busy periods.
Volunteering	Community event helper. Helped set up tables and signs, spoke politely to visitors and worked as part of a team.
Skills	Reliable and punctual; friendly and polite; willing to learn; good at following instructions; able to work as part of a team; practical and organised.
References	Available on request.

Where to get CV help

- National Careers Service: nationalcareers.service.gov.uk
- your school or college careers adviser, tutor or SENCO
- Hampshire County Council careers information
- a trusted adult, youth worker, support worker or sports coach
- No Limits, if you need wider advice and support

Work experience

Work experience gives you the chance to try a workplace and learn what different jobs are really like. You do not need to know your dream career before doing work experience.

What counts as work experience?

- a placement arranged by school or college
- a few days with a local employer
- shadowing someone at work
- helping in a family business
- volunteering with a charity
- helping at a community event
- a placement linked to a T Level or vocational course

Where to ask

- schools, colleges and careers advisers
- local businesses and employers
- charities and community groups
- councils, libraries and care settings
- farms, stables, garages and garden centres
- hotels, cafes, restaurants and visitor attractions
- veterinary practices, where suitable and safe

During your placement

- arrive on time
- be polite
- listen carefully
- follow instructions
- ask questions when appropriate
- put your phone away unless allowed
- thank people for helping you

Trying something out can teach you more than guessing from the outside.

Volunteering

Volunteering means giving your time to help an organisation, charity, club or community project. You usually do not get paid, but volunteering can still be very valuable.

- build confidence and experience
- add something useful to your CV
- get a reference
- meet people
- try a type of work before choosing a course or job
- support a cause you care about

Local volunteering routes

- Volunteer First and Community First Young Volunteers

- New Forest National Park Authority Youth Portal
- charity shops, libraries, sports clubs and youth groups
- animal charities, environmental groups, community cafes and care homes
- local events, festivals and community gardens

The best volunteering role is one where you feel useful, supported and able to learn.

Support for young people with SEND

Everyone learns differently. Some young people need extra support because of autism, ADHD, dyslexia, dyspraxia, anxiety, a learning disability, a physical disability, a medical condition, sensory needs, communication needs or an EHCP.

Having SEND does not mean you cannot have a good future. It means you may need the right support, the right environment and the right route.

Support might include

- help understanding choices after 16
- learning support at college
- clear written instructions
- a quieter place to work or wait
- exam arrangements
- travel support where eligible
- assistive technology
- interview adjustments
- a job coach or supported work experience
- reasonable adjustments at work

If you have an EHCP

Your EHCP should help support your move into adulthood. This is sometimes called preparing for adulthood. Annual reviews should include conversations about education or training, employment, independent living, health, friendships, community life and travel.

Needing support does not make your future smaller. It helps you move towards it in the right way.

Supported internships

A supported internship is a work-based study programme for young people with an Education, Health and Care Plan. It is designed to help young people move towards paid employment.

- time in a workplace
- support from a job coach
- help learning workplace skills
- support with confidence and communication
- English and maths if needed
- help understanding what employers expect

Questions to ask

- Am I eligible?
- What workplaces are available?
- Would I have a job coach?
- How would I travel there?
- Would I still study English or maths?
- What happens when the internship ends?
- Could it lead to paid work?

A supported internship can be a bridge between education and work, with support along the way.

Supported employment and job coaching

Some young people need extra support to move towards work. That support might be needed before applying for a job, during work experience, when starting a new role or after getting a job.

What is supported employment?

- help thinking about what kind of job might suit you
- support finding work experience
- help with CVs, applications and interviews
- support speaking to employers
- job coaching
- help understanding workplace expectations
- advice about reasonable adjustments

What is a job coach?

A job coach can help you learn tasks, build routines, understand instructions, communicate with colleagues, manage time, travel more confidently and become more independent over time.

Asking for adjustments

You do not always need to share everything about yourself. It can help to explain what you need in practical terms, such as:

- I learn best when I can see the task demonstrated first.
- Written instructions help me remember what to do.
- I may need a little extra time at the start while I learn the routine.

The right support can help you show what you are capable of.

Wellbeing and extra support

Thinking about your future can feel exciting. It can also feel stressful. Anxiety, low confidence, family issues, caring responsibilities, money worries or health needs can make it harder to focus on college, training, work or volunteering.

You could speak to

- a parent or carer
- a teacher, tutor or SENCO
- a school or college support worker
- a youth worker
- a GP
- a careers adviser
- No Limits or another support organisation
- a trusted adult

If things feel urgent

If you feel unsafe, at risk or unable to cope, tell someone straight away. Speak to a trusted adult, contact your GP, call NHS 111 or use an urgent mental health support service. If you or someone else is in immediate danger, call 999.

You matter more than any course, job or deadline.

Travel, costs and financial support

Money and travel can make a big difference, especially in a rural area like the New Forest. Do not rule something out before checking what support may be available.

Things that can cost money

- travel
- lunches or meals
- course equipment or books
- uniform or work clothes
- safety boots or protective equipment
- tools or technology
- travel to interviews or work experience

Ask early about

- college bursaries and hardship funds
- 16 to 19 Bursary Fund where eligible
- travel support
- meal support
- support for students with SEND
- help if your family is on a low income
- whether equipment or uniform is provided

Money and travel are real issues. Asking about support is part of planning your next step.

Career ideas and sectors

You do not need to choose your whole career at 16. But it can help to explore broad areas of work and notice what interests you.

Think about what you enjoy

- Do I like practical work?
- Do I like working with people?
- Do I prefer being indoors or outdoors?
- Do I enjoy using technology?
- Do I like solving problems?
- Do I enjoy caring for others?
- Do I like animals, nature, sport, food, design or making things?

Career area	Examples to explore
Health and social care	Care assistant, support worker, healthcare assistant, pharmacy assistant, dental nurse, nursing, therapy or social work routes.
Childcare, teaching and education	Nursery assistant, early years practitioner, teaching assistant, learning support, youth work, teaching routes later.
Animal care and equine	Kennels, catteries, stables, animal rescue, veterinary reception, veterinary care assistant, equine groom, wildlife work.
Outdoor, conservation and environment	Ranger, conservation assistant, forestry, gardening, landscaping, ecology, environmental education, coastal projects.
Hospitality, catering and tourism	Cafe, kitchen, chef, hotel, housekeeping, visitor attraction, events, travel and tourism, customer service.
Construction and trades	Carpentry, plumbing, electrical, bricklaying, decorating, plastering, roofing, tiling, surveying, site management.
Engineering and motor vehicle	Mechanic, vehicle technician, welding, fabrication, maintenance, CAD, manufacturing, robotics, marine or agricultural machinery.
Digital, media and creative	IT support, web design, coding, cyber, social media, photography, video, design, music, theatre, animation, marketing.
Business, admin and customer service	Admin, reception, customer service, finance, HR, marketing, sales, project support, local government roles.
Emergency and public services	Fire, police, ambulance, lifeguard, coastguard, armed forces, councils, civil service, community safety, call handling.
Retail, leisure and sport	Shop work, supermarkets, leisure centres, gyms, swimming, coaching, events, cinemas, theatres, activity centres.
Farming, horticulture and land-based	Farming, livestock, horticulture, nurseries, gardens, estates, grounds maintenance, farm shops, food production.

How to explore a career area

- Ask a college what course could lead there.
- Search for apprenticeships in that area.
- Try work experience or volunteering.
- Ask someone already doing the job what a normal day is like.
- Look at entry-level jobs and what training they include.

You do not need one perfect career idea. You just need something worth exploring.

New Forest seasonal work and local routes

The New Forest has particular local work patterns. Some opportunities are seasonal, especially where businesses depend on visitors, holidays and outdoor activity.

Local areas where seasonal or entry-level work may appear

- hospitality, cafes, pubs, restaurants and hotels
- holiday parks, campsites, visitor attractions and events
- retail, farm shops and garden centres
- care homes, childcare and community support
- equine yards, stables, animal care and kennels
- farms, horticulture, landscaping and grounds maintenance
- outdoor activity centres, leisure and sport
- cleaning, housekeeping, admin and customer service

When to look

- January to March for some summer and tourism roles
- March to May for Easter and summer work
- September to November for Christmas retail, events and hospitality

Useful search words

- apprentice
- trainee
- junior
- assistant
- school leaver
- entry level
- seasonal
- part time
- weekend
- work experience
- volunteer

Green careers in the New Forest

Green careers are jobs that help protect, manage or improve the environment. In the New Forest this could include conservation, forestry, ecology, land management, farming, horticulture, outdoor education, recycling, sustainability, planning or climate-related work.

- New Forest National Park Authority Youth Portal
- green careers, apprenticeships and internship pages
- conservation volunteering
- land-based courses and outdoor work experience
- community environmental projects

The New Forest is not only a place to visit. For some young people, it may also be part of a future career.

Starting your own business

Some young people are interested in earning money by doing something of their own. You might have an idea for selling products, offering a service, making things, repairing things, creating digital content, dog walking, gardening, baking, photography or design.

Before starting, ask

- What am I offering?
- Who would pay for it?
- What would it cost me?
- Do I need training, insurance or permission?
- How will I stay safe?
- How will I keep records?
- Who can advise me?

The King's Trust may be useful for enterprise support, particularly for young people aged 18 to 30 with a business idea. Start small, ask for advice and be careful with safety, money and online arrangements.

A business idea does not have to be big to be worth exploring.

Jobcentre Plus, DWP and new national support

Some older young people, especially aged 18 to 24, may need support from Jobcentre Plus or the Department for Work and Pensions. This handbook is not a benefits guide, because rules and eligibility can change.

Jobcentre Plus and DWP information may be relevant if you are looking for work, claiming benefits, need help with employment support, or want to understand wider government support for training, skills and work.

Start with [GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk) for benefit and Jobcentre Plus information.

Use [New Forest District Council employment, skills and training support](#) pages for local signposting.

- Ask directly whether a service is suitable for your age and circumstances.
- For detailed benefit questions, use official advice rather than relying on old information.

New national support to watch

Government support for young people, apprenticeships and technical education can change. This handbook does not name individual politicians or parties, because the important thing is what support is actually available.

Recent national measures include extra focus on technical education, apprenticeships and work routes. Some schemes are aimed at employers rather than young people directly, so it is best to ask Jobcentre Plus, a careers adviser or a training provider what currently applies.

- For young people aged 18 to 24 who are claiming Universal Credit and looking for work, Jobcentre Plus may be able to explain current Youth Guarantee, Youth Jobs Grant, Jobs Guarantee, Youth Hub or sector-based training support.

- For apprenticeships, check the latest GOV.UK information on apprentice pay, funding and any support available where family finances could make taking an apprenticeship difficult.
- Always check current details on GOV.UK before making decisions, because national schemes can change or be introduced in stages.

For older young people, official websites are the safest place to check current rules.

Staying safe when looking for work or volunteering

- Check that the organisation is genuine.
- Tell someone where you are going.
- Do not go to an unknown private address alone.
- Be careful about sharing personal information online.
- Do not pay money to apply for a job.
- Ask about supervision if you are under 18.
- Trust your instincts if something feels wrong.
- Speak to a trusted adult if you are unsure.

If you are contacting an employer

Use a polite message, do not share unnecessary personal information and keep a record of who you contacted. If you are invited to visit, ask where to go, who to ask for and whether a parent, carer or support worker can come with you if needed.

Your first week in work or on placement

Starting somewhere new can feel awkward. That is normal.

- Arrive on time or a little early.
- Ask who you should report to.
- Put your phone away unless you have permission to use it.
- Ask questions if you are unsure.
- Write down instructions if that helps.
- Be polite to customers and colleagues.
- Tell someone as soon as possible if you are ill or delayed.
- If you make a mistake, say so and ask how to put it right.

No one expects you to know everything in your first week. They will expect you to listen, try and ask for help when you need it.

Care-experienced young people and young carers

Care-experienced young people

If you are care experienced, you may be entitled to extra advice, support or help with planning your next steps. Speak to your personal adviser, social worker, virtual school contact, college support team or another trusted professional.

Ask what support is available for education, training, apprenticeships, work, travel, equipment, housing, money and wellbeing.

Young carers

If you help care for someone at home, this may affect your education, training, work or wellbeing. You may be able to get support from New Forest Young Carers / Community First, your school or college, your GP or another trusted adult.

You could say: "I help care for someone at home and I think it is affecting my next steps. Is there support available?"

Your responsibilities matter. So does your future.

If you are 19 to 25 and need support

This handbook has been written mainly for young people aged 16 to 18, but some information may also be useful if you are 19 to 25 and looking for work, training, volunteering, an apprenticeship, confidence support or a new start.

Some organisations support young people beyond 18, especially if you have SEND or an EHCP, are care experienced, are not currently in education, employment or training, are looking for work, need confidence or wellbeing support, want to volunteer or want to start a business.

A useful question

I am [age] and looking for help with work, training or my next step. Is your service suitable for me?

Parents, carers and professionals

Young people often make better decisions when they have calm, practical support around them. That does not mean telling them what to do. It means helping them explore options, ask useful questions and take the next step.

How you can help

- talk through interests and strengths
- visit colleges or training providers
- compare different routes
- look for apprenticeships, work experience or volunteering
- write a CV and practise interviews
- plan travel
- ask about financial help
- contact support organisations
- think about what support may be needed

Helpful questions to ask

- What subjects or activities do you enjoy most?
- Do you prefer being indoors or outdoors?
- Would you rather study, work, or do a bit of both?
- What would feel like a manageable first step?
- What support would make this easier?
- Is there anything you definitely do not want to do?

If things have gone wrong

Try to respond calmly. The aim is not to blame. The aim is to reconnect the young person with support, learning, work experience, training or employment.

The goal is not to force every young person onto the same path. The goal is to help each young person find a path that works for them.

Quick contacts: New Forest and nearby

Details can change. Always check the organisation's own website before applying, visiting or making plans.

What you need	Organisation	Website / phone / email
Careers advice	National Careers Service	Website: https://nationalcareers.service.gov.uk/ Phone: 0800 100 900
Key help if 16-18 and unsure what to do next	Hampshire County Council Education Participation Team	Website: https://www.hants.gov.uk/educationandlearning/participation-lifelong-learning/education-participation Email: careers_service@hants.gov.uk Phone: 01962 846193
Hampshire education and learning information	Hampshire County Council	Website: https://www.hants.gov.uk/educationandlearning
Search for apprenticeships	Find an apprenticeship	Website: https://www.gov.uk/apply-apprenticeship
College and post-16 options	Brockenhurst College	Website: https://www.brock.ac.uk/ Phone: 01590 625555 Email: enquiries@brock.ac.uk Admissions: admissions@brock.ac.uk
Vocational courses and apprenticeships	Totton College	Website: https://www.totton.ac.uk/ Phone: 023 8087 4874 Email: info@totton.ac.uk Apprenticeships: apprenticeships@totton.ac.uk Apprenticeships phone: 0300 123 3385
Land-based, animal and outdoor routes	Sparsholt College	Website: https://www.sparsholt.ac.uk/ Phone: 01962 776441 Email: courses@sparsholt.ac.uk Apprenticeships: apprenticeships@sparsholt.ac.uk
Volunteering	Volunteer First / Community First	Website: https://volunteerfirst.co.uk/ Website: https://www.cfirg.org.uk/
New Forest green opportunities	New Forest National Park Authority	Green careers: https://www.newforestnpa.gov.uk/get-involved/children-young-people/green-careers/ Website: https://www.newforestnpa.gov.uk/
Confidence, work skills and enterprise	Youth Options / Better Futures	Website: https://youthoptions.org.uk/ Phone: 01794 525510 Email: enquiries@youthoptions.org.uk
Wellbeing and wider advice under 26	No Limits	Website: https://nolimitshelp.org.uk/ Phone: 02380 224 224 Email: enquiries@nolimitshelp.org.uk
SEND advice	Hampshire SENDIASS	Website: https://www.hampshiresendiass.co.uk/ Phone: 0808 164 5504 Email: information@hampshiresendiass.co.uk
EHCP or SEN enquiries	Hampshire SEN Service	Website: https://www.hants.gov.uk/educationandlearning/send/contacts Phone: 01329 316165 Email: SENHelpdesk@hants.gov.uk
Young carers	New Forest Young Carers / Community First	Website: https://www.cfirg.org.uk/wellbeing/young-carers/ Phone: 0300 500 8085 option 6 Email: youngcarers@cfirg.org.uk

Starting a business / confidence	The King's Trust	Website: https://www.kingstrust.org.uk/ Phone: 0800 842 842
Employment, skills and local family signposting	New Forest District Council	Young people and families: https://newforest.gov.uk/article/3679/Young-people-and-families Employment and skills: https://newforest.gov.uk/article/1107/Employment-skills-and-training-support

A simple way to ask for help

Young person message

Hello, my name is [name]. I am [age] and I live in the New Forest area. I am looking for advice about education, training, work, volunteering or apprenticeships. I am not sure where to start and would be grateful for any help or guidance. Thank you.

Parent, carer or professional message

Hello, I am supporting a young person aged [age] who needs advice about education, training, work, volunteering or apprenticeships. Please could you let me know whether your organisation can help, or whether there is another service you would recommend? Thank you.

Before contacting an organisation, it can help to write down

- your age and where you live
- whether you are in school, college, work or training
- what you are interested in
- whether you have SEND or an EHCP
- whether travel is a problem
- what support you think you may need
- your phone number or email address

The right contact can make things feel much less confusing.

My next three steps

You do not need a perfect plan. Try writing down three small actions.

	Step	My note
1	One thing I am interested in:	
2	One person I could ask for help:	
3	One website or organisation I will contact:	

A small first step still counts.

Sources checked before publication

These sources were checked while preparing this Draft 1 public comment version in August 2026. Contact details, eligibility and services can change, so check directly before publication or before making plans.

Topic	Source / website
Post-16 participation	GOV.UK - school leaving age
Apprenticeships	GOV.UK - Find an apprenticeship
Minimum wage rates	GOV.UK - National Minimum Wage rates
T Levels and industry placements	T Levels DfE industry placements
16 to 19 Bursary Fund	GOV.UK - 16 to 19 Bursary Fund
Hampshire Education Participation	Hampshire County Council Education Participation
Hampshire education and SEND	Education and learning SEN contacts
Hampshire post-16 transport	Hampshire post-16 transport
Brockenhurst College	brock.ac.uk
Totton College	totton.ac.uk
Sparsholt College	sparsholt.ac.uk
Youth Options / Better Futures	youthoptions.org.uk
Volunteer First / Community First	volunteerfirst.co.uk cfirst.org.uk
New Forest National Park Authority	Green careers NPA website
No Limits	nolimitshelp.org.uk
Hampshire SENDIASS	hampshiresendiass.co.uk
New Forest Young Carers	Community First young carers
The King's Trust	kingstrust.org.uk
New Forest District Council	Young people and families Employment and skills
Jobcentre Plus / DWP	GOV.UK - Jobcentre Plus guidance JobHelp
Youth Jobs Grant / new national support	GOV.UK - Youth Jobs Grant GOV.UK - opportunities close to home

Final publication check: confirm contacts, age ranges, eligibility, transport and bursary information directly with each organisation.