

The right to education...

Education doesn't have to stop when you are 16. Carrying on could help you get more out of life – like getting the job you want and having the chance to reach your goals.

You have the right to:

Study for free for GCSEs, A-levels, NVQ Level 1, 2 or 3 or equivalent qualifications, if you don't already have these. If you are studying for these qualifications full time you have the right to apply for income support and housing benefit until you are 21, so long as you started the course before you turned 19.

Be offered a place at a sixth form college, college or training provider by the end of September 2009, if you left year 11 in summer 2009 or summer 2008. This could be a college course, an Apprenticeship, an Entry to Employment (E2E) course or employment with training to NVQ Level 2. This is called 'The September Guarantee'.

Apply for Care to Learn if you are in learning, are aged 19 or under and have children. This could give you up to £160 per child per week for childcare costs and travel. If you are 20 or over you could get similar help from the Sixth Form College Childcare Scheme, the Free Childcare for Training and Learning for Work scheme, or Discretionary Support Funds from your learning provider. Check www.direct.gov.uk for more information and to see if you are eligible.

Get a £2,000 bursary if you are studying higher education at college or university, and started in September 2008 or after this. A bursary is a one-off payment that you don't need to pay back. Local authorities have a duty to pay this, and they cannot put it towards course fees or accommodation. It is up to you to decide how you spend it.

Improve your reading, writing and maths for free if you don't already have GCSEs at grade C or above, or equivalent skills or qualifications.

Apply for Education Maintenance Allowance (EMA) if you are aged 16-18 and studying for 12 hours or more a week. Or apply for an Adult Learning Grant (ALG) if you are 19+ and studying for 12 hours or more a week for your first full Level 2 or Level 3 qualification. (Full Level 2 is the same as 5 GCSEs grades A*-C, and Level 3 is the same as A-levels.) These offer weekly payments of up to £30, plus possible bonuses. Check www.direct.gov.uk for more information and to see if you are eligible.

Ask about Learner Support Funds for equipment you need in your learning, or to help you stay in learning. Find out more about these funds from your local college or learning centre.

"I was given a second chance that I thought I'd never have again. I'm now at college doing hairdressing. It's going really well. The college and staff are trying to push me to get the qualifications I need. I've been through exams that I've passed and achieved. That was brilliant. I was amazed that I can actually achieve what I want to do"

Dean

Your rights in education, training and employment...

Local Government Association



niace
promoting adult learning

...for young people leaving care in England

niace

Promoting adult learning



Local Government Association

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The right to an Apprenticeship...

Apprenticeships are a great way to learn skills and get qualifications on the job, while earning money.

You have the right to:

- Be offered an Apprenticeship, providing you have the right qualifications and are under 25. This should be a legal entitlement by 2013.
- Earn £95 per week or more if you are an Apprentice. (This doesn't apply to Programme-led apprenticeships). This is the minimum pay rate from 1 August 2009.

The right to a fair wage...

You have a right to be paid the minimum wage. The rates from 1 October 2009 are:

- £5.80 an hour for people aged 22 and over
- £4.83 an hour for people aged 18 to 21
- £3.57 an hour for young people aged 16 or 17

This is just the minimum – you could earn a lot more. (There are different rules for Apprenticeships.)

The right to support...

You have a right to:

- Support from the local authority that was responsible for you when you were in care, until you are 21 or as long as you are in an agreed programme of education and training as outlined in your pathway plan. A Social Worker or Personal Advisor should work with you to create a pathway plan – to help you plan a future that is right for you. This should include assistance around education and employment.
- Support from Connexions up to the age of 19. Connexions provides information and advice to young people on getting to where they want to be in life.

Finding out more...

Try visiting your local library where access to the Internet is free for members.

Apprenticeships – Lots of information about Apprenticeships including how to find one
www.apprenticeships.org.uk
08000 150 600

Careers Advice Service – Information, advice and guidance about learning and work for adults aged 16+
www.direct.gov.uk/careersadvice
0800 100900

Connexions – A service offering information and advice to young people
www.connexions-direct.com
080 800 13 219

Direct Gov – A government website with loads of information about a range of public services, including education and employment
www.direct.gov.uk

Get Ready for Adult Life – Information and advice to help prepare you for adult life. You have to register
www.getreadyforadulthoodlife.org

Moving On – An information guide for young care leavers
www.info4movingon.org.uk

National Care Advisory Service (NCAS) – An advice, support and development service for young people in and from care (age 13–25) and those who work with them
www.leavingcare.org
020 7336 4824

“If it wasn't for the Connexions worker, I would never have got to university. I didn't think I could do it, but he thought I could and he and my foster carer encouraged me a lot and helped me to apply. Now I am there and I love it!”

From Ofsted (2009):
Support for Care Leavers

“I've been really looking forward to my working and training scheme. I know it's not like they will just chuck me into a job that is cheap labour – they will make sure I get something out of it.”

Ryan