

The Parents' Guide to

NAW 2024

For National Apprenticeship Week



HIGHLIGHTS:

- Options at 16 and 18
- Vocational routes to work
- Non-degree apprenticeships
- Degree apprenticeships
- Work experience

The Parents' Guide to National Apprenticeship Week

5 - 11 February 2024

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Introduction

As a parent, you're more likely to know about the university route to careers rather than the apprenticeship route. You may not have personal experience of apprenticeships or even know anyone who has taken one. This could sway you towards dismissing apprenticeships as a second-rate option rather than a first-choice career plan. Don't rule out the fact that an apprenticeship could be the right choice for your child. They offer the opportunity to combine study with paid employment resulting in a professional qualification. There are no tuition fees (these are covered by the employer and the government) and the salary can cover living expenses.

Apprenticeships used to be associated with trade industries (such as electricians, mechanics or plumbers). Nowadays, apprenticeships can be taken in a wide range of industry sectors and provide entry to all types of careers, including accounting, banking, IT, law, management and television.

Relatively new to the apprenticeship suite are "degree apprenticeships", offering an "earn while you learn" route to BSc or BA status. There are also options to take short term apprenticeships. If your child is not comfortable with committing to several years of further study, they can take one or two year options and still gain recognized, valuable qualifications.

Taking an apprenticeship is not an easy option and competition can be fierce. It takes organization and dedication to balance work, where your child will be expected to contribute to the same standards as everyone else, and study. Holidays are far fewer than at college or university. However, if they learn more easily through practical application, the work-based nature of apprenticeships will suit them well and they will obtain valuable experience which will strengthen opportunities in finding rewarding work when the apprenticeship is over.

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A great pathway to career success

Apprenticeships are a fantastic choice for many students, either straight after GCSE or after sixth form. They provide a way of getting qualifications while doing a real job and are a great alternative to full-time study for those students that prefer practical experience over classroom learning.

Apprenticeships help build solid, professional skills transferable from one organisation to another. Employers pay a salary and tuition fees are covered by the employer and the government. Apprenticeships can last from one to five years – and result in a professional qualification.

Qualifications

Apprenticeships offer students versatility. Depending on their age, experience and qualifications already achieved, there are different entry levels for apprenticeships, starting at Level 2 (straight after GCSE for those that have few or no GCSE passes) through Level 6/7 (degree level). The qualifications obtained at each level range from GCSE/BTEC equivalent, A/T Level, diploma/foundation right through to masters degree. Qualifications are nationally recognized.

Length of study

Apprenticeships can last for just one year or as long as seven (or more) depending on the final qualification. If your teen isn't comfortable with committing to several years of further study, they can take one- or two-year options and still gain recognized, valuable qualifications. Better still, if they change their mind later on and decide they wish to extend the apprenticeship to gain higher level qualifications, this is often possible. This means they don't have to make decisions about long-term commitment when they are young or unsure of their future direction, but needn't miss out on getting higher level qualifications if they decide later that's what they want to do.

Work and study

As well as doing the job itself, apprentices will get dedicated time during the working week to study the education element of the apprenticeship. This usually takes place at a college, university or other education centre. However, it may also be necessary to spend personal time completing projects and keeping on top of studies, so just like being in full-time education, there may be "homework" during evenings and weekends.

Finance

Tuition fees for apprenticeships are paid by the government/employer. Apprentices are also paid a wage for their time, so they will usually complete their apprenticeship debt free. However, there will be costs for education materials, travel to and from work and possibly living expenses (if they are not based at home).

After the apprenticeship

Many apprentices are offered full-time roles with the company where they have served their apprenticeship. However, if your teen wants to try a different company, or even a different industry, they'll have first-hand experience in the workplace. This can provide a significant edge over those that have obtained qualifications through full time education, when applying for other jobs elsewhere.

Find out all about apprenticeships, including:



- Types of apprenticeship - the qualifications needed at each entry stage
- The pros and cons - why apprenticeships are ideal for some teens but not for others
- Degree apprenticeships - how they differ from full-time university degrees
- How to research an apprenticeship
- The application process
- How you can help them prepare for interview to make the best impression
- What you can do to help them get them ready for life at work

[Click here](#)



Typical length

12-18 months

Entry requirements:

None or few

Qualifications obtained:

GCSE, BTEC or equivalent

Who's it for?

Mostly for 16-year-olds with limited or no academic qualifications.



Typical length

3-5 years

Entry requirements:

A levels or equivalent

Qualifications obtained:

Higher national diploma / foundation degree

Who's it for?

Mostly for those who want to qualify for professional career paths without attending university or college.



Typical length

12-24 months

Entry requirements:

Usually 5 GCSEs

Qualifications obtained:

A levels or equivalent

Who's it for?

Mostly for 16-year-olds with reasonable academic achievements but who don't want to study in sixth form.



Typical length

3-7 years

Entry requirements:

At least 2 A levels or equivalent

Qualifications obtained:

A BA or BSc degree or higher

Who's it for?

Mostly for those with excellent sixth form results that want to study for a degree or similar whilst working.

Level	Qualification / educational routes		
8	Doctorate (PhD)		NVQ 8
7	Masters degree (MA)		Degree apprenticeship / NVQ 5, 6, 7
6	Bachelors degree BA or BSc		
5	Foundation degree FdA or FdSc	Higher National Diploma (HND)	Higher apprenticeship / NVQ 4
	Higher National Certificate (HNC)		
3	A levels Grades A-E	International Baccalaureate	Advanced apprenticeship / NVQ 3
	T Levels	BTEC (extended) diploma BTEC certificate	
2	GCSE Grades 4- 9 (C, B, A or A*)	BTEC first diploma	Intermediate apprenticeship / NVQ 2
1	GCSE Grades 1- 3 (D,E,F or G)	Foundation diploma / entry level qualifications	Traineeship / NVQ 1
	Academic route	Vocational route	Applied / work route

Levels of Education

In England, Wales and Northern Ireland there are 8 qualification levels (1 - 8) plus an entry level qualification for those just starting. Generally, the higher the level, the more difficult the qualification is. Levels 1-3 are typically taught in schools and colleges.

With so many different qualifications, it can be hard to know what they mean and where they might lead to next. To help you understand, we've created a summary of what the levels mean comparing the different routes to higher education.

School membership

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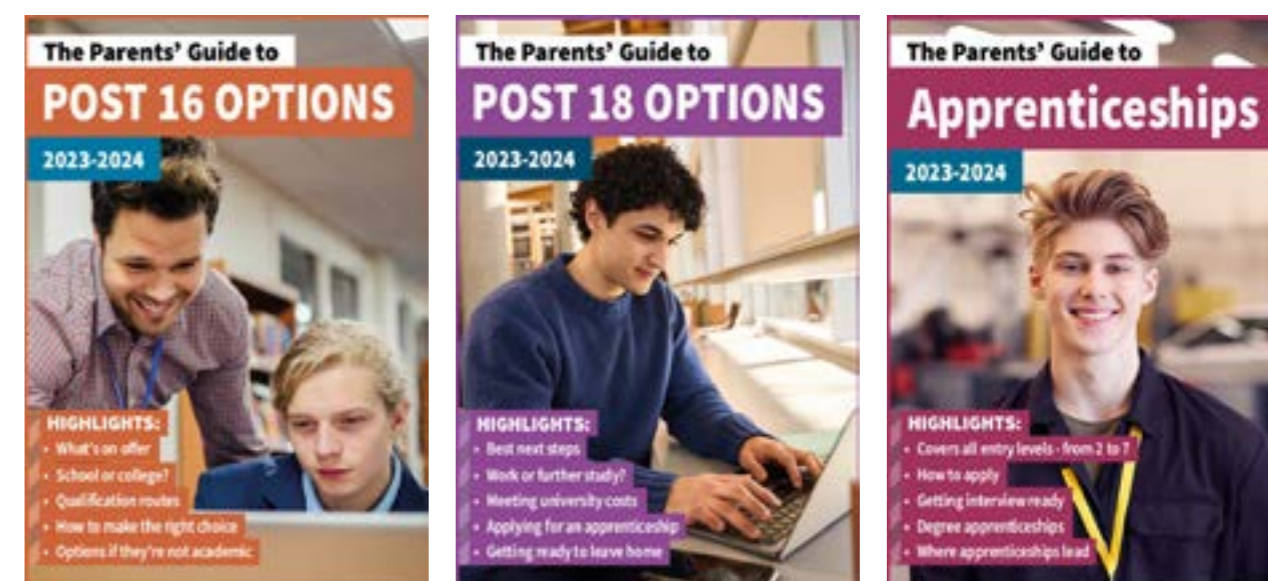
Apprenticeships vs. full-time study

Advantages	Considerations
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▷ Apprenticeships provide focused and applied training for those who already have a strong interest in a job or industry. ▷ Not everyone is suited to academic learning and apprenticeships provide a practical approach to obtaining qualifications. ▷ Apprenticeships provide paid employment with a structured approach to learning. ▷ Apprenticeships develop key transferable skills which are considered lacking in the labour market. ▷ Apprenticeships may provide future employment within the company and working within an organisation may reveal job roles they did not know existed. ▷ Gaining work experience and on the job training may provide your child with a competitive advantage when applying for a job. ▷ Degree apprenticeships offer the chance to gain a BA or BSc without incurring the debts associated with studying at university. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▷ Apprenticeships may narrow options early on. Your child will need to have a fairly clear idea of the type of career they wish to pursue. ▷ It may be difficult for your child to combine studying with working. ▷ The salary of an apprentice can be quite low and your child will also need to consider financing their travel and living expenses if they are not living at home. ▷ Your child may feel that they are missing out on the 'student life' if taking a degree apprenticeship. However, some universities still offer their degree apprentices a strong student experience. ▷ Many companies provide graduate schemes for university leavers on completion of their degree. ▷ Entering the work place at an early age may lead to fatigue. ▷ Degree apprenticeships are still quite new so there is a limited number of vacancies at the moment.



- ✓ Does your child have a clear idea of the type of career or job they want to pursue?
- ✓ Is your child more suited to an applied and hands-on working environment?
- ✓ Is your child organised and able to balance work with academic study?
- ✓ Will your child perform better under the guidance of a supervisor in a work environment?
- ✓ Will your child enjoy the combination of different learning environments?
- ✓ Does your child enjoy practical / active homework assignments?

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Finding an apprenticeship

There's a wide range of ways to seek out apprenticeships and we recommend using a selection of options rather than relying on one.

Government website

Most apprenticeships are posted on the Government's website. By creating an account, your child can set up alerts and filters to see opportunities that are of most interest to them and to be emailed when new opportunities arise. However, not all apprenticeships will appear.

Industry sector

It's smart to check apprenticeships directly on company, university or college websites. If your child doesn't know which of these sites to select, then they should first do some research on which industry sector may be of interest, and then find companies within this sector.

Job boards

National job agencies will also advertise apprenticeships and options can be narrowed to review within local distances from home or specific job types. This might be a particularly good way to seek out apprenticeships in level 3-5 range.

Companies direct

Another alternative is for them to identify companies that are of interest and check those websites for apprenticeships.

Be warned! Applications to well-known international companies (such as Amazon, Coca-Cola, Facebook, Google, Virgin) will be highly competitive; however, it might be a good starting point for identifying what's included in the apprenticeship and seeking out other companies that provide similar content.

School careers advisor

If your child is still at school or college, then getting them to speak with their careers advisor is a good move. Careers advisors are often the first to hear from companies advertising new apprenticeships

School membership

Our school membership package gives you access to a unique members' area with our yearly calendar of upcoming events, our most popular online articles and a referral directory of reliable websites for more resources.

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Top 10 apprenticeship employers: 2023

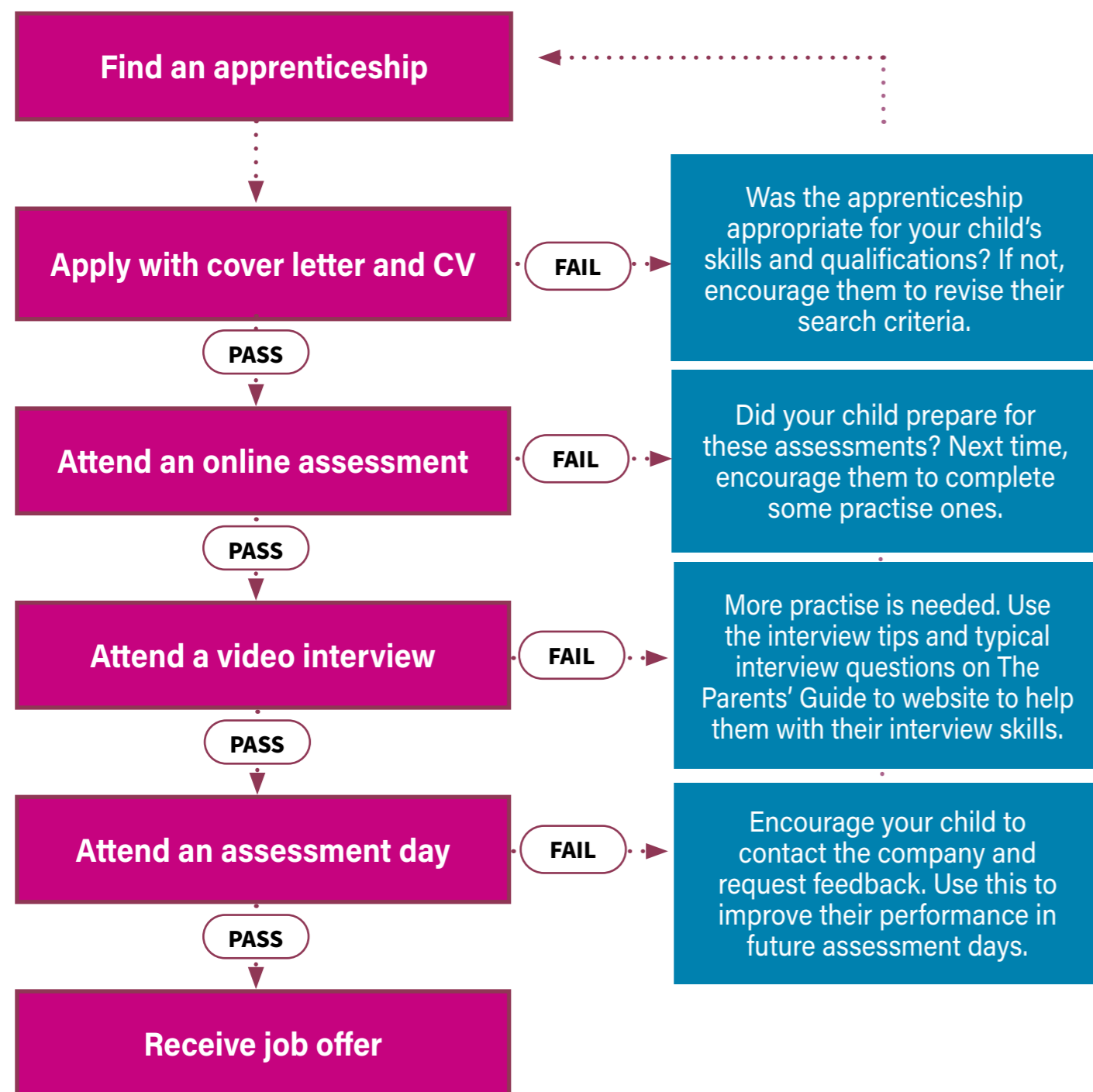
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Based on 6,816 reviews - statistics compiled by www.ratemyapprenticeship.co.uk
For the most up-to-date version, [click here](#).

Applying for an apprenticeship

The application process is very similar to applying for a conventional job and, with the exception of degree apprenticeships, opportunities can arise at any time of the year.

Your child will need a CV, to be able to complete an application form, be interview ready and may need to complete aptitude tests. Plenty of practise is a good way to prepare.



Dealing with rejection

As apprenticeships continue to grow in popularity, so too have the number of student applications. For some of the larger company names, places can be highly competitive.

Bear in mind that letters of decline are likely to happen in the lead up to examinations. Try your best to prevent this from having a negative impact on your child's study or revision efforts by following some of these strategies.

1. Try to encourage your child to research and apply for more than one apprenticeship scheme. Aim for at least five apprenticeships - just like university applications - choosing five helps your child to avoid placing all their eggs in one basket.
2. Encourage your child to request feedback from the company. Whilst not all companies offer this, many do. Feedback will help your child understand the reasons for not being successful and will help them improve for future interviews. Companies have a lot of experience in providing feedback of this kind and it is likely to be sensitive and constructive.
3. Be there. Listen carefully to their feelings and reassure them that in the long-run, things will work out.
4. Apprenticeships are available all year round. If they have not been successful yet and have already finished school, encourage them to take on an internship or some additional work experience to help strengthen future applications.

Help your teen cope with stress, including:



- How to spot the signs of anxiety and stress
- Ways to help right away
- Long term strategies to build their resilience
- Coping with rejection
- Encouraging healthy routines
- Looking after the basics
- Habits that can make stress worse
- Where and when to get help and support

[Click here](#)



A spotlight on T Levels

T Levels are an exciting new option in sixth form education that provide a recognized qualification tailored to industry needs and skills. It's a great choice for students that want to learn practical skills relevant to certain jobs, regardless of whether they want to go on to study for a degree, take alternative further education or go straight into the workplace.

One T Level is equivalent to three A levels and the course lasts for two years. T Levels involve a mix of classroom learning (about 80% of the course time) and practical experience (about 20% of the course time) including a 45 day

on-the-job placement in a genuine business. Afterwards, students may go on to university, alternative higher education, another job, an apprenticeship or they may be offered an opportunity with the company where they were placed.

T Levels are a vocational alternative to A levels (because they focus on industry) and include practical study as well as classroom learning. They differ from apprenticeships because the study and working time is reversed. Unlike BTECs, T Level courses were developed with businesses and offer an industry placement.

FIND YOUR NEAREST T LEVEL

Search for colleges and schools who start delivering T Levels in 2020 and 2021



Find out all about T Levels, including:



- What's involved and where they might lead afterwards
- The subject choices available as of 2023
- What they'll learn on the course
- The qualifications needed to take them The industry placement - why it's a winner
- A summary of alternative options if T Levels are not right for them

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Our specialist guides for parents:

The Parents' Guide to
POST 16 OPTIONS
2023-2024

HIGHLIGHTS:

- What's on offer
- School or college?
- Qualification routes
- How to make the right choice
- Options if they're not academic

The Parents' Guide to
T LEVELS
2023-2024

HIGHLIGHTS:

- T Levels explained
- What's available
- Doors they open
- Links to industry
- Students they suit

The Parents' Guide to
Apprenticeships
2023-2024

HIGHLIGHTS:

- Covers all entry levels - from 2 to 7
- How to apply
- Getting interview ready
- Degree apprenticeships
- Where apprenticeships lead

The Parents' Guide to
POST 18 OPTIONS
2023-2024

HIGHLIGHTS:

- Best next steps
- Work or further study?
- Meeting university costs
- Applying for an apprenticeship
- Getting ready to leave home

The Parents' Guide to
University
2023-2024

HIGHLIGHTS:

- What's the right course
- Questions for open days
- UCAS explained
- What to put in a personal statement
- Results Day 2024

The Parents' Guide to
Homelife & Study
GCSEs
2023-2024

HIGHLIGHTS:

- Why the basics aren't basic
- Creating routines
- How to help them revise
- Managing exam nerves
- Setting them up for success

The Parents' Guide to
Homelife & Study
sixth-form
2023-2024

HIGHLIGHTS:

- Why the basics aren't basic
- Creating routines
- How to help them revise
- Managing exam nerves
- Setting them up for success

The Parents' Guide to
Helping your teen stand out
2023-2024

HIGHLIGHTS:

- Hobbies and passions matter
- Most sought after skillsets
- How to get work experience
- Which hobbies develop which skills
- Play to their strengths

The Parents' Guide to
Helping your teen cope with stress
2023-2024

HIGHLIGHTS:

- Spotting the signs
- Quick-fix solutions
- Building their resilience
- Why the basics aren't the basics
- Where to get support

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#NCW2024
4TH-9TH MARCH



National Careers Week 2024:

National Careers Week is a celebration of careers guidance and free resources in education across the UK. The aim is to provide a focus for careers guidance at an important stage in the academic calendar to help support young people leaving education.

National Careers Week, this year from 4th - 9th March 2024, is the perfect platform to advise and inspire the next generation as

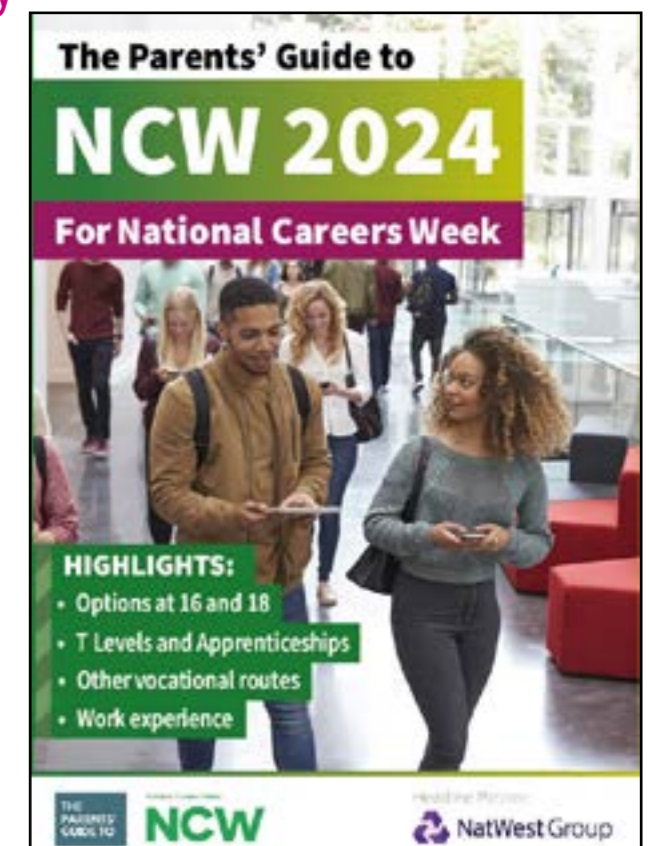
they enter the world of work. It encourages education providers to bring together students, local employers and advisers through careers events and activities.

During National Careers Week every school, academy and college can offer careers advice and guidance to their students, with support from us with free resources, information on current career opportunities and advice on activities and exercises to

run. And access doesn't stop at the end of #NCW2024! Our dedicated websites are available throughout the year!

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- **The Parents' Guide to National Careers Week and Green Careers Week**
(published February and October)

Each publication reaches
+600,000 parents of teens
(Years 10-13)

Each publication is
promoted regularly
throughout the year
via our website,
networks and
partner sites

A photograph of a woman and a young girl sitting on a couch, looking at a laptop screen. The woman is wearing a white and grey plaid shirt and has her hand on the girl's shoulder. The girl is wearing a bright green hoodie and has her hair in braids. Both are smiling broadly.

[Click here to learn more](#)