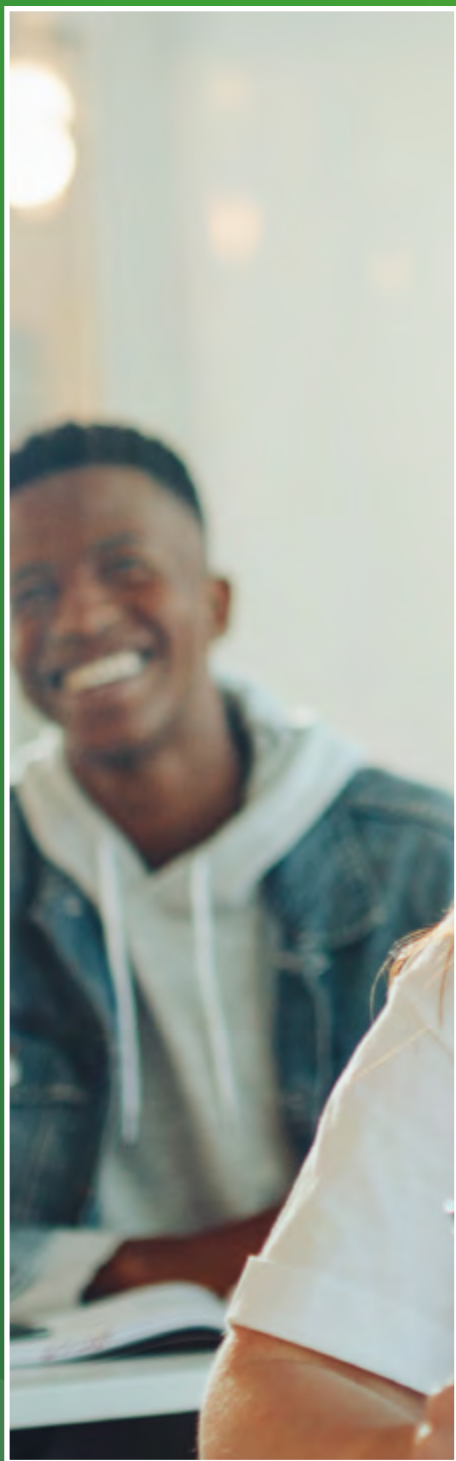


THE  
PARENTS'  
GUIDE TO

National Careers Week

NCW

Headline Partner:



The Parents' Guide to

NCW 2023

*National Careers Week 6-11 March*

# Contents

*I'm interactive!  
Click me if you want to  
go to the chapter*

## The Parents' Guide to:

We provide support for parents about choices teenagers face after GCSE and sixth form, as well as advice on teenage health and wellbeing. We specialise on Years 10-13 as it's a time when teenagers face many important decisions and parents play a pivotal role in guiding them.

Our specialist guides have all the information parents need in one place, written in a style that's easy to read and include links to reliable sources so they can find out more. We are not sponsored, so our advice is unbiased. We work with 1,500 schools and reach over 600,000 parents in England and Wales.

Wherever we refer to parents, we mean parents and carers – this includes anyone with significant caring responsibilities for children, for example grandparents, older siblings and foster parents.

[www.theparentsguideto.co.uk](http://www.theparentsguideto.co.uk)

[www.nationalcareersweek.com](http://www.nationalcareersweek.com)

## Keep up to date:

If you're interested in regular updates about how you can help your teenage children: [www.theparentsguideto.co.uk/join-us](http://www.theparentsguideto.co.uk/join-us)



# Welcome to NCW 2023

## From National Careers Week:

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 6th - 11th March 2023, 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 #NCW2023! Our dedicated websites are available throughout the year!

## National Careers Week:



## From The Parents' Guide to:

National Careers week (NCW) is a great opportunity for parents to get familiar with routes their teens can take into the workplace. There are lots of different ways your teen can get on track for great career pathways, no matter how they learn best. In this guide we'll give you an overview of what's available for teens at 16, 18 years' old and beyond.

The Parents' Guide to is dedicated to supporting parents of teens. We provide a variety of resources for parents about choices teens face after GCSE and sixth form, as well as advice on health and wellbeing.

We specialise on parent needs through Years 10-13 as it's a time when teens face many important decisions and look to their parents for support.

## Join us

If you're interested in regular updates about other ways you can help your teenage children, click below and join our online community.

[Sign me up!](#)



# Resources

## Parent newsletter

Are you a parent of a teenager aged 14-19 years' old? Do you live in England, Wales or Northern Ireland? Subscribe to our fortnightly parent newsletter and receive up-to-date and reliable advice, resources and the latest news and information about your child's education straight to your inbox.

Sign up here: [theparentsguideto.co.uk/join-us](https://www.theparentsguideto.co.uk/join-us)

Parent homepage: [theparentsguideto.co.uk/parents](https://www.theparentsguideto.co.uk/parents)



## Future of work guide

Navigating the future of work can be daunting and overwhelming, especially when there is so much uncertainty about it. This guide has mainly been created to help careers advisers and teachers to better navigate and understand the future of work, so in turn they can help students to better prepare for it, but parents/carers may also be interested.

The Future of Work Guide focuses on the changes to the world of work which are expected to happen due to the Fourth Industrial Revolution and resulting automation.

Download it here: [nationalcareersweek.com/2022fow/](https://nationalcareersweek.com/2022fow/)



## Careers board game

To help you talk to your teen about their future, we've created a board game that saves you worrying about which questions to ask. You can play too!

By playing the game together you create a two-way conversation, with them finding out more about you, as well as you finding out more about them:

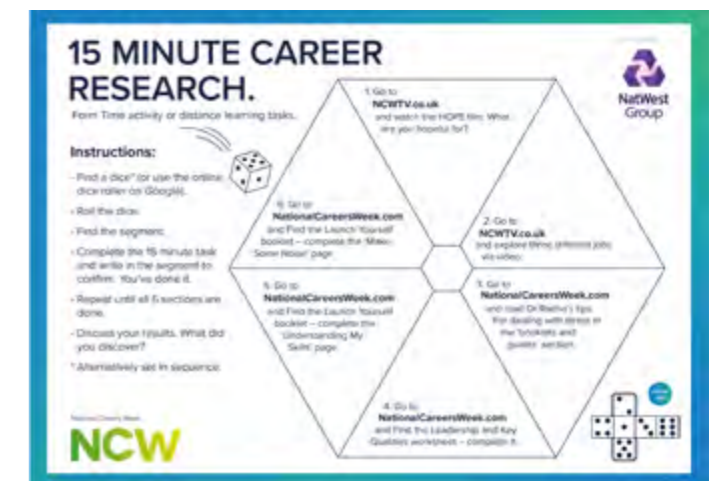
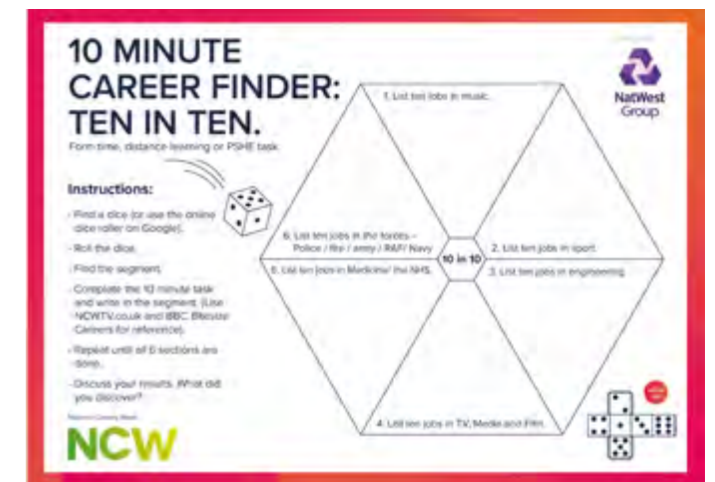
[www.theparentsguideto.co.uk/post/talking-to-your-teen](https://www.theparentsguideto.co.uk/post/talking-to-your-teen)



## 10/15 minute careers games

We designed these three dice-inspired games to task young people to find out about themselves, their skills, their career options and their futures. Ideal to play at home - you just need a dice or online number generator.

[nationalcareersweek.com/download/25381/](https://nationalcareersweek.com/download/25381/)



# How to talk to your teen about their future

It can be tricky to get teens to talk about anything, especially what they might want to do next. However, it is important they think about their future, what they might like to achieve and what they need to do

now so they can get themselves on the right track.

To help you, here are eight useful tips on how to talk to your teen about their future.



- 1** **Accept their idea of success may be different to yours**  
*Their dreams and ambitions might not align with your ambitions for them. This can be disappointing, but let them walk their own path.*
- 2** **It's OK if they're not sure on a career route yet**  
*They don't need to make that decision right now. They do need to develop skills that will help them progress, and that should be their focus.*
- 3** **Encourage them to turn passions into money-makers**  
*They're more likely to be successful (and happier) pursuing a career in something they enjoy.*
- 4** **Help them navigate their limitations**  
*Not being academic should not be a barrier to success and there is usually more than one way to reach a destination.*
- 5** **It's OK if they change their mind!**  
*Reassure them that if they tell you they have their heart set on one direction, then later change their minds, you won't berate them for it.*
- 6** **Encourage them to explore all their options**  
*Help them plan out a route that focuses on their strengths. Different educational routes can often provide entry points into the same industry.*
- 7** **Help them if they are struggling to look far ahead**  
*Setting short-term, achievable goals will help them strive towards a long-term ambition.*
- 8** **Empower them: they have control over their future**  
*The decisions they take and what they do matters.*

# The Parents' Guide to ... career pathways

Options after GCSE:
Full time study
A levels
T Levels
BTECs
Other technical qualifications
Exam retakes
Work and study
Apprenticeships (levels 2-3)
Supported internships
Traineeships

Options after sixth form:
Full time study
University
Higher technical skill courses e.g. foundation degree, HNC/Ds
Work and study
Apprenticeships (levels 3-7)
School leaver programmes / Internships / Traineeships
Work
Employment
Start a business
Other
Gap Year
Exam retakes

Options after Higher education:
Full time study
Postgraduate study e.g Masters degree or PHD
Work / work and study
Graduate jobs or paid employment
Apprenticeships (levels 6-7)
Internships / work experience
Non-paid employment / volunteering
Start a business
Other
Gap Year / travel

Strengthen job applications with:
Work experience
Volunteering
Travel/gap years
Hobbies and interests demonstrating soft skills
Academic enrichment opportunities
Testimonials and references

## Find out more:



If you're interested in other ways you can help your teen gain the competitive advantage, mostly by doing things they enjoy - click here.

# Vocational routes after GCSE

The main options for your teen are for them to continue in full time education or take an apprenticeship/ training. They cannot go into the workplace without some educational component to the role. Things they should consider are the type of qualification they are going to study; what type of learning suits them best (classroom or practical); and what they enjoy. Options can include:

## BTEC Nationals

Study takes place over a two year period and is a combination of both practical and theory. Knowledge is tested through course work and a final examination (comprising 40% of the total grade).

## T Levels

T Levels are a vocational alternative to A levels and involve a mix of classroom learning (about 80%) and practical experience (about 20%) including a 45 day on-the-job placement in a genuine business.

## Other technical qualifications

Other qualifications available include Cambridge Technicals, City and Guilds, National Vocational Qualifications and Tech Bac (similar to the International Baccalaureate). They are vocational driven courses – i.e. centred around jobs and are well suited to students who prefer a more practical working style but still want to include classroom learning in their education.

## Apprenticeships

Apprenticeships are real jobs which include learning elements which might take place at university, college or an education provider. Apprenticeships were developed to help address the skills shortage in UK businesses. Sixteen year olds can start an apprenticeship at Level 2.

## Supported Internships

Internships are usually short term arrangements without a formal qualification. They do offer an insight into business, networking opportunities, the possibility of job offers afterwards and the ability to learn practical, transferable skills.

## Traineeships

Traineeships are short-term work placements lasting up to a maximum of six months. The work experience element includes at least 100 hours on the job training to help provide the necessary experience to undertake apprenticeships or other employment.

### Find out more:



*If you're interested in understanding more about your teens Post 16 options and which qualifications might suit them better, click here.*

# Vocational routes after sixth form

Important considerations include whether they want to include some form of studying, how they will finance living expenses and course fees (and whether you can afford to help them), whether they're happy to move away from home or stay close by and what they enjoy.

## Apprenticeships

Apprenticeships are real jobs which include learning elements which might take place at university, college or an education provider. Apprenticeships were developed to help address the skills shortage in UK businesses. Apprenticeships can range from level 2 to level 6/7 (degree apprenticeship).

## Employment

Going straight into a job offers work experience but not a qualification. However, it is possible to create a personal training plan if desired.

## Gap Year

Traditionally, this is a year spent travelling overseas, but it needn't focus exclusively on that. Volunteering and work experience can also be incorporated.

## School Leaver Programmes

School leaver programmes offer opportunities to join the workplace straight after sixth form studies and commence skills development and career progression through experience as well as studying to obtain a nationally recognised qualification. Entry requirements vary from employer to employer.

## Internships

Internships are usually short term informal arrangements with an employer and do not result in a formal qualification. They do offer an insight into business, networking opportunities, the possibility of job offers afterwards and the ability to learn practical, transferable skills.

## Traineeships

Traineeships are short-term work placements lasting up to a maximum of six months to help young people become "job ready". The work experience element includes at least 100 hours on the job training to help provide the necessary experience to undertake apprenticeships or other employment.

## Starting a business

If your teen has the enthusiasm and ability, starting a small business needn't be costly and could give them an edge over others when it comes to interviews. This doesn't mean full-time commitment – it's something they could fit around studies or part-time work.

## Find out more:



*If you're interested in understanding more about your teens Post 18 options and which options might suit them better, click here.*





# The Parents' Guide to... Educational routes

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)			
4	Higher National Certificate (HNC)			Higher apprenticeship / NVQ 4	
3	A levels Grades A-E	International Baccalaureate	T Levels	BTEC (extended) diploma BTEC certificate	Advanced apprenticeship / NVQ 3
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 highlighting academic, vocational and work-based routes to higher education.

# 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.

## What's involved?

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.

Students receive a nationally recognised grade and a breakdown of their achievements on the course, including how they did on their work placement.

If they don't pass all elements of their T Level, they'll receive a T Level statement of achievement outlining what has been completed.

## Where can they lead?

T Levels offer a broad range of further opportunities after sixth form, including:

- job from their placements
- jobs from related industries
- apprenticeships
- university
- alternative further education

This means that students with a T Level qualification can go on to study for a degree, a related higher level apprenticeship, take a different course or go straight into a job. Alternatively, they can go on to a higher level education or work in a non-related field if, during the course of study, they didn't enjoy their industry specialism and want to take a different path.

## Find out more:



*If you're interested in understanding more about T Levels, what it involves and whether it's right for your teen click here.*

## FIND YOUR NEAREST T LEVEL

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






HM Government

Get The Jump

Go next level  
with a T Level

GET  
THE  
JUMP  
SKILLS  
FOR LIFE  
T LEVELS

## Help your child make informed choices about their future

Many young people aren't aware of the different choices open to them when they leave school or college.

As well as apprenticeships, there are other technical alternatives to A levels which your child may not know much about, such as T Levels.

A T Level is a qualification that 16 –19 year-olds can take after their GCSEs and is broadly equivalent in size to three A levels. This two-year course has been developed with employers and businesses, so that the content meets the needs of industry and gives students a head start in their chosen career.

T Levels are unique as they combine classroom study with in-depth industry placements that last at least 45 days so that young people gain valuable work experience in their chosen sector. There are 16 T Level subjects available including digital skills, engineering & manufacturing, business administration

and health and science. Seven more subjects will launch in September 2023. With a T Level, students can progress straight into skilled work, university, higher technical education or an apprenticeship.

**Find out more about T Levels from current and former students:**

### John, student, Lincoln University, Architecture, Science and Technology:

*"The combination of classroom-based learning and an industry placement was hugely beneficial, as they both offered different opportunities.*

*Including a work placement within my learning proved to be invaluable. I learnt and developed key skills for the workplace and experienced a real working office where I learnt how business can be conducted, within the construction industry."*

### Kian, student, Lancaster University, Software Engineering:

*"The highlight of the course has been with my industrial placement, having created a mobile app for room-booking at the Hampshire Constabulary Headquarters being an amazing project that I am glad to have worked on.*

*I started a degree at Lancaster University in September. A degree paired with the work experience I have gained through the T Level will create an expansive portfolio to approach companies with, whilst developing my knowledge of Computer Science."*

### Bandhana, T Level Student, Health and Science:

*"I'm currently applying to university for an adult nursing course and when I graduate, hopefully, I'll be a registered adult nurse. I can go to university, I can do an apprenticeship, or I can go straight into work because I've gained the basic skills."*

**Find out more on all the education and training choices available to young people on the [Get the Jump content hub](#).**

# Apprenticeships: 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.

## 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 recognised, 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.

## 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.

# Apprenticeship levels



**Typical length**

12-18 months

**Entry requirements:**

None or few, but can vary depending on the apprenticeship

**Qualifications obtained:**

GCSE, BTEC or equivalent

**Who's it for?**

Mostly for 16-year-olds with few or limited 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 full-time.



**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.



## A smarter way to get started.

Our apprenticeships help young people kick-start their careers and discover their potential. Our community of experts provides support, and our global organisation offers countless opportunities to develop, progress and make an impact.

**Discover our range of apprenticeship programmes.**

**Find out more**

**Early careers programmes | Deloitte UK**

# Researching apprenticeships

Apprenticeships vary in the qualifications that can be achieved, length of commitment and balance between work and study. They may involve moving away from home. With so many variables, it might help to think about the different elements separately to work out which type of apprenticeship suits your child best.

## What level of apprenticeship is appropriate?

First, your child needs to decide which level of apprenticeship they wish to take. This will be determined by two things:

- Having the necessary qualifications to be accepted;
- How long they intend to commit to their apprenticeship.

For post-GCSE apprenticeships, your child will need 5 GCSE passes to apply for Level 3 or a minimum standard of Maths and English to apply for Level 2.

To apply for a post-sixth form apprenticeship, your child will need Level 3 status (two A levels or equivalent) and in some cases (even for lower level apprenticeships), they may need to have exceeded this.

Alternatively, they may opt to take a different type of apprenticeship (i.e. higher at Level 4 or 5). They will still obtain a recognised professional qualification (but not the equivalent of a degree) and their commitment to the apprenticeship will

be shorter (between one and two years usually). Later they could choose to build on their apprenticeship to gain further qualifications up to masters level.

Degree apprenticeships offer an attractive alternative to studying full time at university, whilst still obtaining a BA or BSc. Like university, this will mean committing to three or four years study and – unlike university – it will mean working in a real job too! Level 7 degree apprenticeships offer the chance to obtain a masters degree.

## What sectors are they interested in?

Next, they should decide on their area of interest and see what apprenticeships are available within that sector. If they don't know where their areas of interest lie, it's time to do some research! Of course, careers advisers can help at school, but they might want to jump online themselves. If they get bored reading about a certain sector, chances are that's an indication the sector isn't for them. Getting some work experience is also a good way of deciding whether reality matches up to the theory of a dream job.

## Will the apprenticeship help them get the career they want?

There's no need to be too specific about the job or role they ultimately want, but it's important that they can see a correlation between their apprenticeship, the areas of study, the experience it will give them, and where they want to be in the future (say five years' time).

## Top 10 apprenticeship employers: 2022



1.  Softcat

2.  YOUR LONDON AIRPORT  
Gatwick

3.  M  
&G

4.  sage

5.  nationalgrid

6.  mace

7.  BT

8.  savills

9.  WHITBREAD

10.  Mitchells  
& Butlers

Based on 4,000 reviews - statistics compiled by [www.ratemyapprenticeship.co.uk](http://www.ratemyapprenticeship.co.uk)  
For a list of the top 100 apprenticeship employers click [here](#).

# Work Experience

Work experience is important for getting into any career. It provides your teen with first-hand experience of what it's like to work; dealing with colleagues and the public; working to deadlines and how it feels to do things "for real".

If they're lucky, they might find work experience within an industry that is related to their course or ultimate job goal. If this is the case, it can help your child discover more about the industry and may help them realise whether it is or isn't for them. A lesson much better learned sooner than later!

## How to find work experience

1. Your child can speak to the careers team at school. They have excellent connections with local and national employers.
2. Do you have any contacts, through your own work, friends or family that could help and take on your child?
3. They can contact employers directly and ask.
4. Get them to apply for a job (Saturdays, evenings, holidays) – it may not be their aspirational job, but it's work experience and they'll learn a lot from it (as well as earning some money).

## Virtual work experience counts

Virtual work experience, also referred to as online, remote or digital, is a broad term that includes any opportunity which provides young people with an insight into what it's like to work in an industry or job role while at home. Opportunities expanded during lockdown and proved so successful they look set to stay. Most virtual work experiences range from half a day to one week, but some may last longer depending on the nature of the work experience and the age of your child.

Not all virtual work experience is the same. Some are open to everyone and provide a platform for students to discover more about the job, view pre-recorded videos on what it's like to work with the organisation and go on virtual tours. Others may require your child to go through an application process and offer regular online meetings with a supervisor, individual project work, networking sessions, training opportunities and video tutorials.

## What are the benefits?

**Think global** - Virtual work placements are open to everyone and location does not need to be a limiting factor. This opens many possibilities for your child to explore new jobs and industries in areas that may not be possible face to face.

**It's free** - The majority of virtual work placements are free and working from home will also mean your child will not incur any travel related costs.

**Future proof** - Remote working is likely to be important to many businesses in the future and learning how to conduct business and work online will develop extremely valuable skills for the modern workplace.

**Transferable skills** - It's not always easy working from home and taking part in virtual work experience placements will help your child develop those soft skills that all employers are seeking, such as self-motivation and time-management.

**Knowing what's right (or what isn't)** Understanding what a job or a career entails might help your child make decisions about whether or not that role is right for them in the future.



## Find out more:



*If you're interested in other ways you can help your teen gain the competitive advantage, mostly by doing things they enjoy - click here.*



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**Amazing**  
Apprenticeships

**THE  
PARENT  
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**Is the teenager in your life looking to make choices about their next steps?**

**Are you ready to support them to research their options?**

**How much do you know about the opportunities and career paths available?**

**What advice is out there?**

**The Parent Perspective Podcast**

The Parent Perspective Podcast explores the world of careers by speaking to engaging experts and inspiring special guests, from a wide variety of backgrounds. All from the parent perspective!

**Our amazing host**

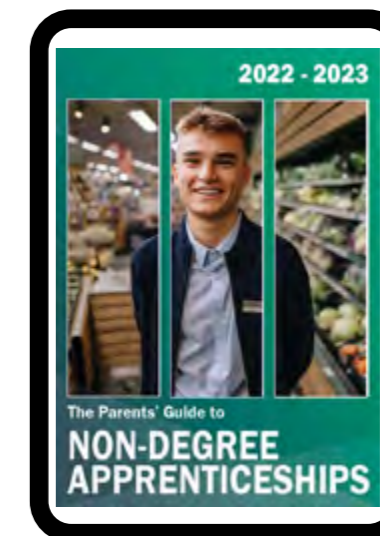
Respected broadcaster and mum of four, Rachel Burden, hosts the latest season, bringing her own perspective as a parent to the podcast and asking the questions you want answered.



# Visit **The Parents' Guide to** for more support:

## Parent Guides

Our range of interactive guides provide you with easy to follow advice, hyperlinks to reliable sources and the most up-to-date information.



## Parent newsletter

Sign up to our parent newsletter and receive free support, advice and resources on how you can help your teenage children straight to your inbox.



## Support articles

You may be interested in:

1. [Helping your teen find work experience](#)
2. [Teach your teen the skills to study effectively](#)
3. [Stressed out teen? – 10 ways to reduce stress instantly](#)
4. [Why starting a business helps develop transferable skills](#)
5. [Ways to keep your teen safe online](#)

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