



**The Westminster  
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# **Futures and Careers**

[careers@westminster.sandwell.sch.uk](mailto:careers@westminster.sandwell.sch.uk)

Information for Parents and Carers of  
Students in Post 16

# FUTURES

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Careers is called Futures in The Westminster School.

The Westminster Schools Careers programme is much wider than jobs or employment, so we have renamed it FUTURES.

We believe a 'positive career' means something different to different people, but it will typically include being happy with the way a young person spends their time, being able to make a contribution to their community and being able to have a decent standard of living, so not just about work or employment. The Westminster School introduces the FUTURES programme to all our students from Year 7 and the programme continues until your young people leave school or Post 16.

The includes activities such as meeting the school Careers Adviser and taking part in the FUTURES programme activities to help them think about what they want to do when they leave school and what options and choices they have. For further information about the FUTURES programme and about Careers please visit: <https://thewestminsterschool.co.uk/careers-guidance/>



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# Careers Advice in Post 16

Your child will have careers interviews in school to discuss what their ideas are for after Post 16



If your child has communication or complex needs, alternative ways of interviewing will be used, sometimes this may involve the careers adviser observing in class so they are then able to offer you the most appropriate information on options.



The Careers Adviser will get in touch with you and share these ideas with you and offer you information, advice and guidance or discuss at EHCP meetings.



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# EHCP's and Sandwell SEND Team

You will be asked by Sandwell SEN (or your home local authority if not Sandwell) to fill in a preference form or to tell them your preference for where you want your young person to go after Post 16.

You will need to tell Sandwell SEN (or your home local authority) your choice even if you want to apply for The Westminster Specialist College Post 19.

If you want your young person to go to college, you will need to apply – we can help you with the application – the application should be in before December of your child's last year. In Post 16 this is usually in Year 14. Sandwell SEND (or your home local authority) will send a copy of your young persons EHCP to the college to make sure they can meet the needs of your young person.

If your young person wants to apply for work/training/apprenticeships and are ready for this option we can support them to do this.



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# Options for after Post 16

Your young person may apply to The Westminster Specialist College 19-25. The college is for students who are ready to take part in Supported Internships, work and employment and need to have some independent work and travel skills.

Go to local colleges – either on Foundation learning courses where the students will continue to get support for their learning needs. Or if they are ready may move onto mainstream courses but with EHCP support, this will depend on qualifications gained.

Study programme/Traineeships/supported/apprenticeships – These are only appropriate if the student is ready for work and has the appropriate skills and qualifications needed to do the job. With EHCP support.

In some individual cases local colleges are not able to meet the needs of the individuals EHCP so you may need to look at Specialist colleges, but local colleges should be considered first.

Work – Access to work, your young person may apply for support in a job or get help with finding employment if they are ready for this.

For some student's further education is not appropriate so an Adult Social Care assessment would be recommended to see if day activities would be more suitable.



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# The Westminster Specialist College

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The Westminster Specialist College (SPI) provides specialist education for young people aged 19 – 25 who have a primary diagnosis of Moderate Learning Difficulty as defined in their Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP).

The provision is focused predominantly on Employability and therefore students **must** be able to demonstrate a realistic trajectory and ambition to enter into employment.

To apply for a place at the college you will need to confirm this at your young person's annual review in Year 14 and complete an application form which can be found on the college website.

Please note that not all applications are successful and it is strongly recommend that you also consider a second choice of college if applying. For more information please visit: <https://twspecialistcollege.co.uk/>



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# Local Colleges

**Sandwell College** – Offer a Foundation learning course which is suitable for students with learning difficulties and those wishing to improve their English and Maths as well as the opportunity to undertake a vocational qualification in Hair and Beauty, Horticulture, Travel, Business, Catering, Art and Design, Drama, Sports, Animal Care and Childcare.

<https://www.sandwell.ac.uk/school-leaver-courses/foundation-learning/>

**Dudley College** – Offer a number of Foundation learning courses from Entry Level 1-3 which are suitable for students with learning difficulties. Courses are based at their Aspire Broadway and Aspire Brierley Hill campuses.

<https://www.dudleycol.ac.uk/Courses/Full-Time>

**Walsall College** – Offer a number of supported learning courses leading to higher levels of study or greater independence. These courses are ideal for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities or for those who may need additional support for a variety of reasons.

<https://www.walsallcollege.ac.uk/all-subjects/supported-learning-courses/>



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# Specialist Colleges

- If you feel that a local college is unable to meet the needs of your young person you may want to consider specialist colleges.
- However, please note that generally a specialist independent college will only be considered once the local authority are satisfied that this is the most appropriate provision to meet need and therefore it is advisable to look at local college provision first.
- Here are a some of the most local specialist colleges in our area – or you can look at **NATSPEC** for more information about different specialist colleges and to look at other colleges nationally.
- <https://natspec.org.uk/colleges/search/>

## Local Specialist Colleges

- QAC (Queen Alexandra College) - <https://www.qac.ac.uk/>
- Glasshouse College (Including Argent College) - <https://www.rmt.org/glasshouse/>
- The Hive College - <http://www.wsucbpt.co.uk/>
- Trinity College - [referrals@trinityspecialistcollege.co.uk](mailto:referrals@trinityspecialistcollege.co.uk)
- Heart of Birmingham Vocational College - <http://www.hbvc.ac.uk/>
- SENSE - <https://www.sense.org.uk/get-support/centres-education-and-day-services/sense-college/>



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# Residential Colleges

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- Some of the specialist colleges are not local so if you like a college which is a bit further away you may need to consider residential opportunities.
- Residential colleges are not offered often by Local Authorities but if it is needed/essential it is usually part funded through education/social care and health.
- It is important to discuss with your social worker/health worker so they are prepared for these discussions with the SEND Team at your Local Authority.



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# Local/Specialist College Applications

- If you are considering a local college or specialist college we strongly recommended that you visit them on an open day to find out more about the college and the courses on offer for your young person as soon as you can.
- Dates for open days can be found on college websites. However, if you need any support to book on or need some additional help please contact us.
- Please remember that if you are considering specialist college the local authority also advise you to consider a local college as well, therefore it may be worthwhile to visit both.
- Once you are ready to apply you will need to fill in the college application forms and inform SEN that you want them to send your young persons EHCP to the college (Consult). This can also be done at the young persons annual review.
- The School Careers Adviser can help you with the application forms – which will need to be submitted as soon as possible.
- Once application forms are received, the college will deal with them and usually offer an interview, arrange to view EHCP and also do assessments to ensure it is the right place for the young person and look at if they can meet need.
- The college will then make a decision and inform the Local Authority of the outcome.



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# Decision

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- If the decision from college to place is a YES – your Local Authority will present it to their panel to discuss and you will be informed if they agree to fund the place.
- If the panel agree – a planned transition will be arranged and the college will contact you to arrange this.
- If the panel do not agree to place and the decision from the Local Authority is a NO – you have a right to appeal and we would suggest you discuss this with SENDIASS on how to do this. For more information please visit <https://www.sandwellsendiass.co.uk/>



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# Study programme/Training/Apprenticeship Providers

## STUDY PROGRAMMES (PRE-APPRENTICESHIPS)

- For young people who are not sure what job area they want to do but are nearly ready for work. They offer the chance for them to try out different job areas, gain practical qualifications and support with their English and maths. They can progress onto a Traineeship following the completion of a Study Programme.

## TRAINEESHIPS

- For young people who want to get an apprenticeship and are nearly ready, but need to develop their skills and experience. They offer work experience and help with English and maths. These can be applied for directly with training providers. Young people can progress onto an Apprenticeship following the completion of a Traineeship.

## APPRENTICESHIPS/SUPPORTED APPRENTICESHIPS

- Apprenticeships give young people the opportunity to combine on the job training with studying for a qualification. Apprenticeships are available across a wide range of job areas. If you have an EHCP then a minimum of Entry Level 3 qualification in English or maths can be acceptable, if agreed by the employer.



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# Work – Supported Employment Team

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## Think Sandwell Specialist Employment Team

- The Think Sandwell Specialist Employment team is a supported employment service for residents with a disability or health condition who would like to find work but would need additional support to do so.
- To access this service your young person must be looking to work, be motivated and willing to participate and independent enough to access training, job club, work placements and regular reviews with their employment advisor.
- You or your young person can self refer to this service or the school can make a referral on behalf of the young person.
- For more information about the service please visit:

[https://fis.sandwell.gov.uk/kb5/sandwell/directory/site.page?id=JkeWwLB\\_C-4](https://fis.sandwell.gov.uk/kb5/sandwell/directory/site.page?id=JkeWwLB_C-4)



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# Access to work grant scheme

Access to Work is a government grant scheme which supports people who have a physical or mental health condition or disability in work. The support a person gets will depend on their needs. Through Access to Work, they can apply for:

- a grant to help pay for practical support with your work
- get advice about managing their mental health at work
- money to pay for communication support at job interviews

Access to Work could also give a grant to pay for:

- a British Sign Language interpreter
- specialist equipment
- extra transport costs, such as a taxi where no public transport is available
- a support worker or job coach to help in the workplace



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For more information please visit: <https://www.gov.uk/access-to-work>



# Adult Social Care Assessment

- Some young people may not be able to go to college so may need some support or activities in the community.
- A social care assessment will identify if your young person meets the national eligibility criteria for adult social care.
- Everyone is entitled to a care and support assessment. You do not have to pay for the assessment, however, you may have to pay for services offered afterwards.
- School can make a referral and put in a request on your behalf or you can email [sandwell\\_enquiry@sandwell.gov.uk](mailto:sandwell_enquiry@sandwell.gov.uk) or call 0121 569 2266 to speak to someone.
- You can also look in the Sandwell Information Point directory of care and community organisations to find services in Sandwell and then contact them yourself or ask a friend or relative to do so. You may have to pay for some services yourself but others may be free.
- For more information please visit: [https://www.sandwell.gov.uk/directory/11/information\\_point](https://www.sandwell.gov.uk/directory/11/information_point)



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# Leaving School

We know that thinking about when your young person has to leave school is a worrying time but....

- We can offer you support in order to make the best decisions.
- We can keep you up to date with options available as these do change.
- We are here for you if you wish to discuss anything further
- You can contact The Futures Team by calling the school or by email at [careers@westminster.sandwell.sch.uk](mailto:careers@westminster.sandwell.sch.uk)

**Ben Taylor - Strategic Lead/Deputy Head**  
**Jenny Onafowokan - Level 6 Careers Lead**  
**Sukhie Sandhu - Trainee Careers Advisor**

**Kerry Lowe - Move Forward Progression Coach**  
**Joseph Lonsdale - Careers Advisor Connexions**



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