

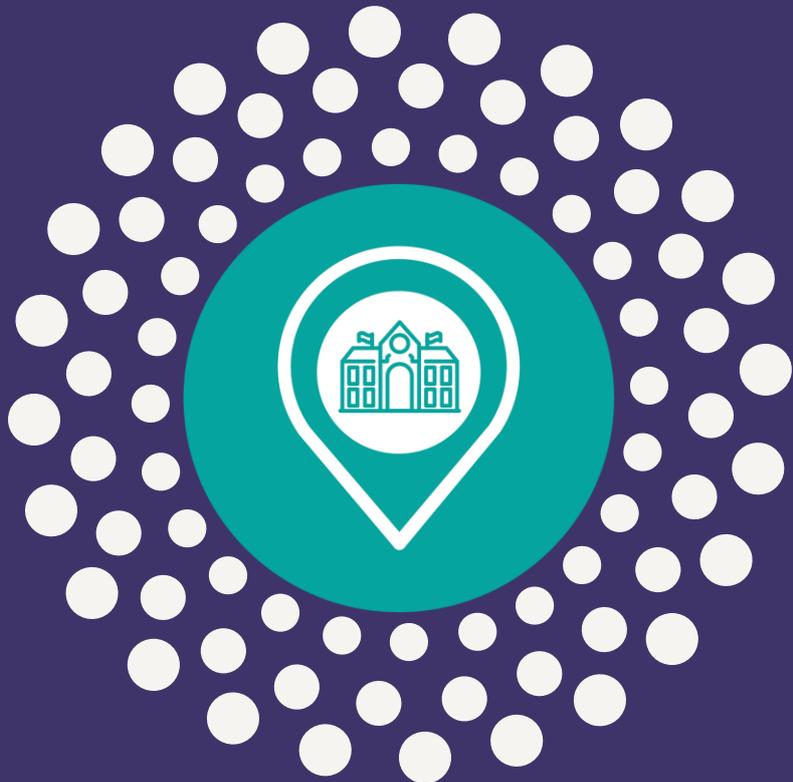
TAKE YOUR PLACE

FINDING YOUR WAY

Making post-16 and post-18 choices
A guide for service children and military families



2023/2024



neaco

takeyourplace.ac.uk

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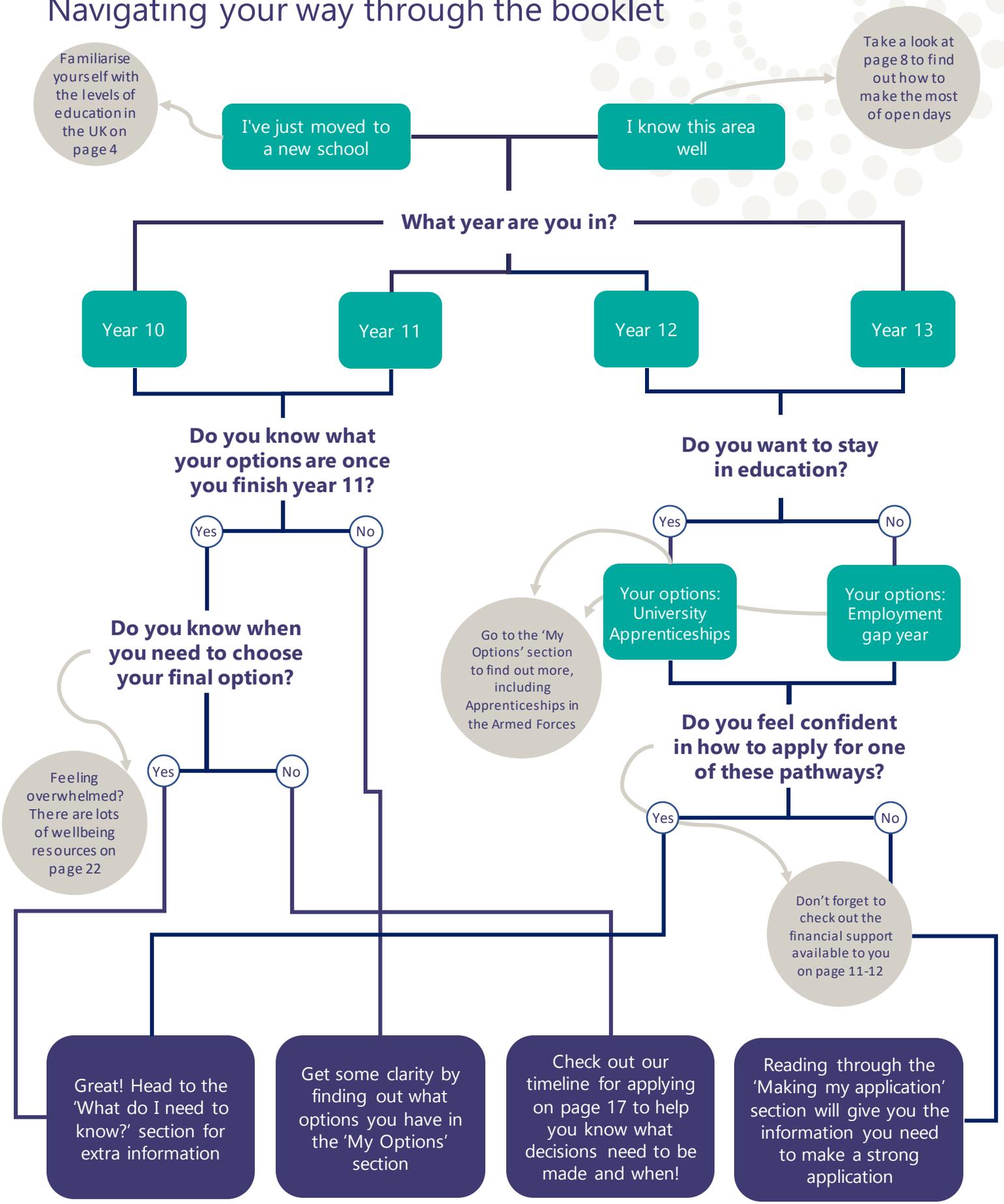
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FINDING YOUR WAY

Navigating your way through the booklet



WHAT IS HIGHER EDUCATION AND WHY SHOULD I BOTHER?

Higher Education covers any study and qualifications that you gain above Level 3. The table below shows the different types of qualifications you can achieve and at what levels.

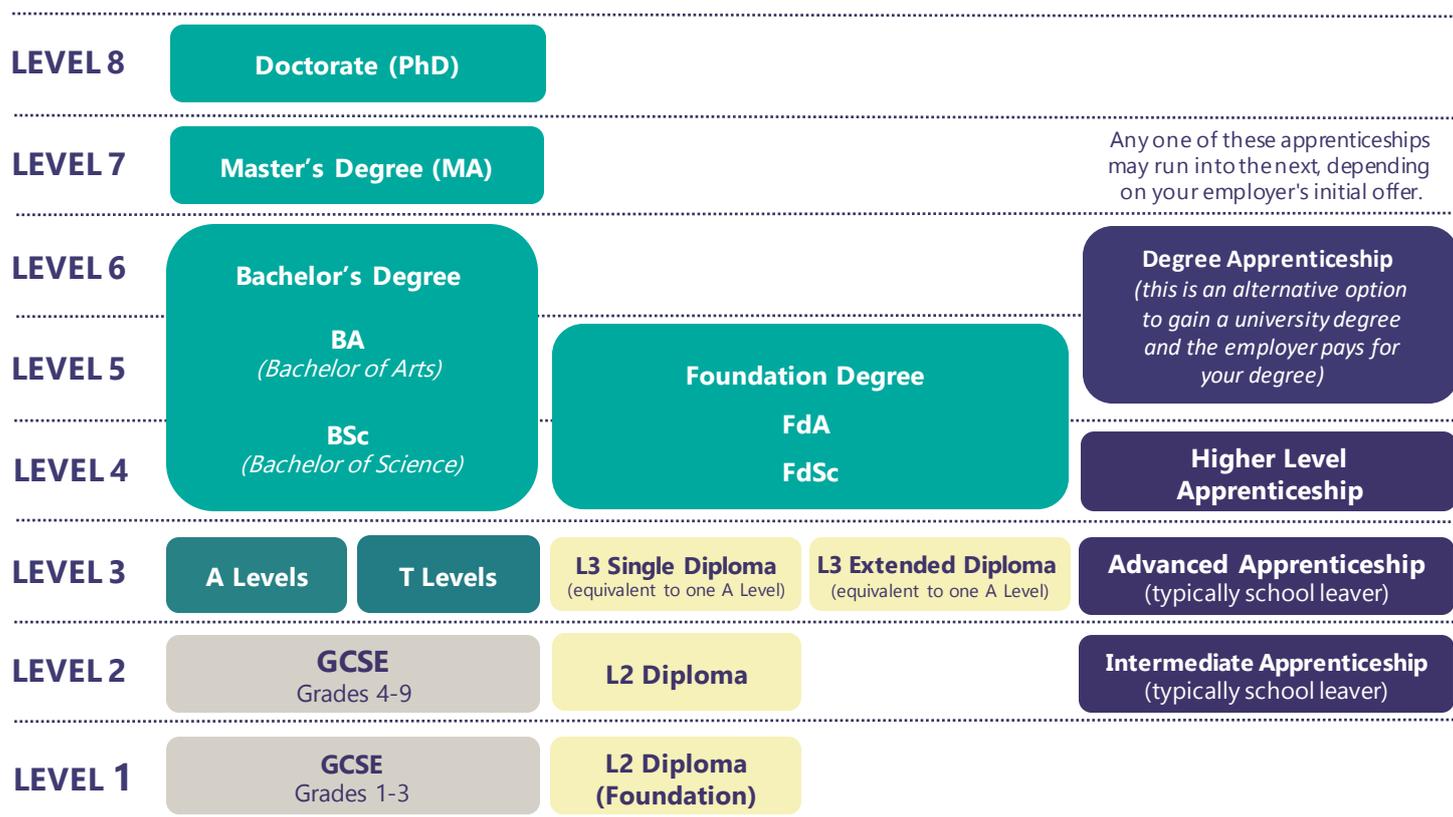
Most people going to university study A Levels first, but many universities will also accept people who have studied BTECs or taken an Access to HE course. The new T Level courses, which are an alternative to A Levels, are also accepted by a range of universities. If you have studied for qualifications overseas; these can often still count towards your university application. Always check with the individual institution and UCAS first, you may need to request a statement of comparability if the qualification is from outside of the UK.

You can study for a degree full-time or part-time at university. You can also access higher education through a Degree Apprenticeship where you work and study at the same time. Many large employers are now offering these schemes, including the Ministry of Defence, which is the largest provider

of apprenticeships in the UK. This is a great way to earn money and gain valuable experience whilst completing your degree. People go to university for many reasons and gaining a degree can improve and widen your career choices. Going to university is an opportunity to explore a subject you enjoy, make new friends, have new experiences and gain skills.

There can also be financial benefits to gaining a degree. Recent statistics show that 75% of employers look for a degree in any subject and that the average graduate starting salary is £30,000. Studies have also found that a graduate can earn £200,000 more than a non-graduate over their lifetime and that 65% of graduates are in full time employment within six months of graduating.

COMPARING THE DIFFERENT LEVELS OF HIGHER EDUCATION



POST-16 OPTIONS

A Levels

Study a subject you took at GCSE in greater depth or choose a new one, such as, Economics, Law or Psychology. You could take three broad subjects you are interested in to keep your career options open or choose ones you need for a specific career.

- **Duration:** 2 years
- **Entry requirements:** Course dependent, typically five GCSEs Grade 9-4 (usually including English and Maths)

EPQ: The Extended Project Qualification (EPQ) is a Level 3 (A Level standard) qualification offered alongside your three A Levels. It involves choosing a topic, carrying out research, then creating either a 5,000 word report or a 'product' accompanied by a 1,000 word report. After that, you must deliver a small 10-15 minute presentation to a group of non-specialists about your topic. The EPQ allows you to develop your personal interest in a topic you care about. The skills you'll develop as a result of completing an EPQ (e.g. project planning, decision making, record keeping, evaluation and presenting) are invaluable in most jobs and university courses.

It is worth half an A Level. An A* in the EPQ is worth 70 UCAS points, an A 60, B 50, C 40, D 30 and an E 20.

T Levels

Designed in partnership with employers to give you the skills and knowledge to progress in the workplace. Combines classroom learning with industry placements to prepare you for skilled work or higher-level study.

- **Duration:** 2 years
- **Entry requirements:** Course dependent
- **Work experience:** At least 45 days on industry placement

Technical and Vocational Qualifications

Qualifications which teach you how to carry out tasks specifically related to an industry/role you want to be involved in. Level 2 Qualifications are usually equivalent to one GCSE, a one year Level 3 Certificate is usually equivalent to one A Level and a two year Level 3 Diploma is usually equivalent to three A Levels.

- **Duration:** Course dependent, generally Level 2, 1 year, and Level 3, 1-2 years
- **Entry requirements:** Course dependent
- **Work experience:** Course dependent



POST-18 OPTIONS

University/Bachelor's Degree

An academic course that's usually studied at a Higher Education Institution. Learn through lectures, seminars, group projects and independent study. There's funding available to support you and you can study full or part-time.

- **Duration:** 3 to 4 years
- **Location:** At a university, college or online; you could go away to study, stay local or go abroad
- **Entry requirements:** Universities set their own entry requirements; you'll usually need A Levels or equivalent qualifications



Apprenticeships

Intermediate, Advanced, Higher and Degree Apprenticeships combine practical on-the-job skills training with off-the-job learning. You'll get training that is relevant to your job and be paid a salary. Start at a level to suit you, with support if you have special needs or a disability.

- **Duration:** Intermediate: Level 2, 12-18 months, Advanced: Level 3, 24 months approx., Higher: Level 4 or 5, up to 5 years, Degree: Level 6, 3-6 years
- **Location:** Typically, you'll spend 80% of your time in the workplace and 20% off-the-job with some study in a college, training centre or Institute of Technology (IoT); however, this can differ between apprenticeships
- **Entry requirements:** Will be dependent on the industry, job role and apprenticeship level

Degree Apprenticeship

Degree Apprenticeships are a new type of programme offered by some universities. Students can achieve a full Bachelor's or Master's degree as part of their apprenticeship.

These programmes are being developed by employers, universities and professional bodies working in partnership. Degree Apprenticeships combine working with studying part-time at a university. Apprentices are employed throughout the programme, and spend part of their time at university and the rest with their employer. This can be on a day-to-day basis or in blocks of time, depending on the programme and requirements of the employer.

They can take between three to six years to complete, depending on the course level.



ARMED FORCES APPRENTICESHIPS

The Ministry of Defence is the largest provider of apprenticeships in the UK, offering over 20,000 different schemes in a variety of areas. Armed Forces Apprenticeships are much more about a lifestyle than other apprenticeship schemes; if you enjoy a life of adventure and variety, they could be the perfect choice for you! Perks include free accommodation, around the world travel and great earning potential.

Undecided on which force to join?

Research, research, research...each force will have varying entry requirements and lifestyles, so it's important to do your research to see which force you are best suited to. Be sure to check each individual application criteria so you know if you are eligible to apply or not.

What types of apprenticeships could I do?

Below are a few examples, these range from Level 2 right through to degree level!

- Public Services and Health
- Engineering
- Telecommunications
- IT
- Logistics
- Aviation
- Intelligence
- Dental Nursing



When to apply?

Applications for apprenticeships tend to open in the January of the year you wish to begin your training. Bear in mind that the recruitment process can take between six and nine months to complete. The apprenticeship aspect begins during phase two (trade) training after the first 10 weeks of basic training. Before commencing your apprenticeship, you will need to meet all of the entry and eligibility criteria for the role that you have applied for.

When applying to join any of the Armed Forces, you'll be sent to an assessment centre. Here you will be tested on an array of things, including your numeracy and literacy skills, soldier potential and fitness level.

Where else to go for help?

Visit your local Armed Forces Careers Office, as well as your in-school Careers Adviser. The Careers Office will have people there to answer your questions and guide you through the application process.

Armed Forces friendly employers like Amazon and Aviva also offer a range of Apprenticeships. Find more information [here](#).



recruitment.raf.mod.uk/apprenticeships

jobs.army.mod.uk/regular-army/what-you-get/apprenticeships-skills/

royalnavy.mod.uk/careers/levels-of-entry/apprenticeships

ratemyapprenticeship.co.uk/public-sector-apprenticeships-armed-forces

<https://www.forcesfamiliesjobs.co.uk/apprenticeship-opportunities/>

MAKING THE MOST OF OPEN DAYS AND OPEN EVENINGS

Choosing your post-16 and post-18 options can be an uncertain time so it's important to do your research. The more research you do, including attending open days and evenings, the more informed your choices will be.

Open events are important in supporting your decisions. Attending open events allows you to get a feel for the institution, the staff and the area you'll be studying in. It is a great opportunity to ask questions and speak to those that will be teaching you.

Some universities offer summer schools and open days. There may be special considerations made for Service Children when applying for/attending such things. Contact the university's Student Support Team and ask them if they offer any bespoke support.

Funding support varies and you may also be able to get some money from your college or sixth form to support you in funding transport to/from open events, taster days, etc.

Some universities will offer travel bursaries to attend their open events. Contact them directly to ask as you may fit the criteria for support!

What to ask at open days?

Visiting a university is the best way to get a real feel for the place. If you are going to move somewhere and study there for three years then you need to visit to know that it is the right place for you.

The option to tour the uni before choosing it would've been extremely useful, so if the opportunity is there, definitely take it.

**Rhianna, Service Child
Biomedical Science
Kings College, London**

Most universities employ Student Ambassadors to show visitors around. These are current students at the university and are a great source of information. You might also want to visit the Student Services or Academic Support Departments to find out about support for service children.

What to do if you miss an open day?

Most universities will be more than happy to show around any prospective students outside of an open event. You should contact the Student Life/Student Recruitment Team to arrange this directly with them.

Some questions you might want to ask include:

- What is the accommodation like?
- Do most people live in halls of residence?
- What is the town or city like? Is it student friendly?
- Is there good transport to the university and around the local area?
- Is there a Student Services or Support Department that can help if you are having any difficulties?
- Are there any jobs available on campus or locally for students?
- Do you have Creative Forces Ambassadors?
- What bursaries, scholarships or fee waivers are there and how do you apply?
- Do you offer any specific support for service children?

HOW TO MAKE THE BEST CHOICE FOR POST-16 STUDY

When exploring your post-16 options, it is important to make the most of open evenings and days. Grab hold of opportunities to speak with course leaders and teachers at both further education colleges and sixth forms to find out more about the courses on offer.

You will typically be picking between qualifications such as A Levels, BTECs, Technicals and Diplomas, all of which can vary greatly in terms of content, the way you are taught and assessed, and the value they carry when applying for post-18 options. Most Higher Education Institutions recognise the skills gained across study at Level 3 but some institutions may have strict entry criteria. For example, the University of Cambridge and Oxford will not accept BTEC qualifications.

It is also important to consider how you want to spend your time; sixth form study typically includes five days a week at school, whilst college may only require you to attend two-three days per week. Both settings vary in their expectations of students.

The most important thing to remember when choosing your post-16 options is to focus on

the subject(s) you enjoy and explore where you could take this interest in the future. Some students are amazed that they can study music full time at college and then apply for a music-based degree.

Research is your best friend. Focus on your ambitions and interests, and don't get caught up in what others are doing or want you to do.

Post-16 study can open up lots of opportunities for the future.

Check out the Careers Pilot website to explore where the subjects you love could lead.

- <https://www.careerpilot.org.uk/job-sectors/subjects>
- <https://www.prospects.ac.uk/further-education/post-16-career-choices>



Are you unsure what you want to do in the future?

Then *facilitating A Levels* could be the answer; these include subjects like Maths, English, Science, Humanities and MFL. They support you to develop a number of transferrable skills and keep your post-18 options open.

Pick something you enjoy doing and, ultimately, you won't be regretful. If you have any issues, go and talk to someone; a different point of view is always useful and talking aloud can make things seem much more obvious.

**Rhianna, Service Child
Biomedical Science
Kings College, London**

HOW TO MAKE THE BEST CHOICE FOR POST-18 STUDY

The most important thing to consider about your next steps is discovering what you enjoy! You will be studying a subject in depth at post-18 and you need to have a genuine interest to keep you engaged and motivated.

Gaining a degree in any subject will give you an advantage, but some careers do require a specific degree. It's a good idea to do some research first, especially if you already have an idea of what you would like to do in the future. For most careers, it's the skills you gain from your degree that are important.

For example, History is a broad degree and the skills you will gain include analysis, investigating, debating, reflecting, evaluating, researching and critical thinking, which are applicable to multiple careers.

There are over 37,000 courses available at nearly 200 universities in the UK, so there is plenty of choice! There are subjects you will have studied at school, but there will also be subjects you won't have studied before, such as, Criminology, International Relations and Law. You can research courses using UCAS or by viewing university websites.

Take time to read the course descriptions and to understand what topics you will be studying. Also look at how the course will be taught and assessed. If you don't like exams, try finding a course which is more assessment based.

Courses can be structured in different ways; you can study one subject or you can combine two subjects with a Joint or Combined Degree. If you choose a Joint Degree, you will study both subjects equally, with Combined Degrees often split 60:40 between the two subjects.

Some universities offer Sandwich courses where you study for two years, spend a year working in a related job and then spend a final year at university.

There are lots of options, so it's really important to spend some time researching and finding the best choice for you.

I have always been interested in science, but had no idea what career I wanted. My course offered a wide variety of modules which has allowed me to discover which areas I most enjoy.

**Rhianna, Service Child
Biomedical Science
Kings College, London**



FINANCE FOR HIGHER EDUCATION

Applying for Student Finance

Applications for Student Finance are completed online at www.gov.uk/student-finance. You don't have to wait until your place is confirmed to make your application.

You may be able to borrow money to help pay for university or college tuition fees and to help with living costs. You might get extra money on top of this, for example if you're on a low income, are disabled or have children.

If you do borrow money your tuition fees will be paid directly to your university, and your maintenance loan will be paid into your bank account. As a first step, you need to create an online account with a password.

The Student Finance website states it takes around 30 minutes to fill in an application. You will need the following items to complete your application, your passport (if you have one), your proposed university and course, your National Insurance number (if not previously supplied) and your bank account details.

You will also be asked for the address details of a family member or friend that Student Finance can use if they lose contact with you.

Your Student Finance entitlement for the maintenance loan (living costs) will depend on your household income. Your maintenance loan is paid in three annual instalments – September, January and April of each year. You will receive your first payment after you have registered with your institution. The amount you will receive depends on where you are studying and the length of your academic year.

More information can be found here <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/higher-education-for-service-children>

Disabled Student Allowance (DSA)

Disabled Student Allowance covers the extra costs you have due to mental ill health, a long term illness or any other disability. How much you get depends on your individual needs and not on your income. You can apply for DSA when you apply for student finance online. You will need to supply evidence of your disability, such as, a letter from a GP, a dyslexia assessment or similar. This evidence needs to be as current as possible.

Once you have applied and been accepted for DSA, you will be asked to book a "study needs assessment" with a DSA approved organisation. The cost of this is covered by Student Finance. This assessment will determine the nature of the help you need, e.g. specialist IT equipment or a non-medical helper. This process typically takes around six weeks, so you should try and arrange your assessment as soon as possible and, ideally, before you start your course. Otherwise, you may find that your first assignments are due in before you have support in place. Usually the DSA will be paid directly to the organisation providing you with the service or the equipment. You don't generally receive cash, but may be offered support like printing credits. You will have to pay the first £200 towards the cost of any computer equipment.



EXTRA FINANCIAL SUPPORT

We understand how important financial security is for students from Armed Forces backgrounds, especially if they are living away from home, whether this be in the UK or overseas. Depending on your circumstances, there could be extra financial help available. Many organisations offer scholarships and bursaries for service children to help with the costs of university.

Students with families overseas

Children of Service Personnel permanently assigned overseas, who are attending university and studying for their first full-time degree, are eligible for three return flights home during the main holiday periods - Christmas, Easter and Summer. These are at public expense during each academic year. More information can be found here: <https://aff.org.uk/advice/education-childcare/university/>

Scholarships and Bursaries

Scholarships are typically awarded to students who have a particular talent, such as, sporting, musical or academic abilities.

Bursaries are money given by organisations to support students who might be in need; students typically need to meet certain criteria in order to be awarded these. Both scholarships and bursaries do not need to be paid back.

There are some scholarships and bursaries open to applications from service children, including, but not limited to:

Armed Forces Children's Education Trust exists to assist in funding the education of dependants of Service men and women, both currently serving and retired. Grants are available to those up to the age of 25. <https://armedforceseducation.org/>

The Lord Kitchener National Memorial Fund

provides scholarships of £1,500 to children of serving or retired UK Armed Forces Personnel aged 17-21. Applicants should apply before they start their first degree at a UK university. The selection process is by competition and approximately 21 scholarships are awarded each year. <https://www.lknmf.com/>

Armed Forces Bereavement Scholarship Scheme

The Bereavement Scholarship Scheme is available to provide University and Further Education Scholarships for the children of Service Personnel whose death has been attributed to Service since 1990. <https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/veterans-uk>

You may find that your situation meets the criteria for grants and scholarships from one of the institutions on this website: www.scholarship-search.org.uk

Further information about scholarships and bursaries for service children:

<https://aff.org.uk/advice/education-childcare/university/>

<https://www.scipalliance.org/resources/support-for-service-childrens-access-and-success-at-he>

Students will make repayments for their student loan once they are earning over £25,000 per year (for courses starting after August 2023). You will replay 9% of what you earn over the threshold. More information can be found [here https://www.gov.uk/repaying-your-student-loan/what-you-pay](https://www.gov.uk/repaying-your-student-loan/what-you-pay)



POST-16 APPLICATION PROCESS

You've reached Year 11 and you're considering your next steps. Where do you start and how do you apply? This is your easy guide to applying for post-16 options. The application process will typically start in the Autumn Term of Year 11, but don't worry if you are starting this process later, you still have time.

What are your post-16 options?

The post-16 qualifications you might study towards could include:

- **A Levels**
- **BTECs**
- **Technicals**
- **T Levels**
- **Diplomas**
- **NVQs**

Your post-16 options are listed on page 5, re-visit this section as a reminder

Making an application

You can apply directly through your chosen college, sixth form or training provider. Applications are likely to be made via online application forms, but always check this first. You can apply to as many schools, sixth form colleges and colleges as you choose to. It would be recommended to have a preferred and back-up choice depending on your predicted grades and choice of subject.

In the application you will need to provide your personal details, including predicted GCSE grades and you may also be asked to put together a short paragraph to outline your reasons for applying, often called a Personal Statement.

The contact in your school to speak to about your options is:

What is a Personal Statement?

A Personal Statement is an opportunity to share your reasons for applying for the course/subject(s) and to share your relevant skills, experience and personal attributes. It should be written in your own words.

After you apply, you will be invited to an interview with the Head of Sixth Form or Course Lead who will discuss your application with you.

I want to understand how the mind works and how mental illness manifests in the brain. Therefore, I plan to study Psychology at A Level.

**Charleigh, Service Child
Year 11 student**

Extra Support

Whilst studying at post-16 level, you may be eligible for the **16 to 19 Bursary Fund**. This can help with things like books, travel or equipment if you will struggle with education or training costs. You can ask your school or college about this bursary.

If you have an **Education Health and Care (EHC) plan**, you can get support to choose your next steps and extra help when you are in education, training or work.

<https://nationalcareers.service.gov.uk/careers-advice/career-choices-at-16>

POST-18 APPLICATION PROCESS

The world is now your oyster! In your second year of Level 3 study, you can apply to study at Level 4 and above. You might have ambitions to head off to university or to study for a further year locally. There are lots of options, but the application process can vary.

Applying to a UK university

To apply to a UK university you need to complete a UCAS application form online. You complete one application and this is then sent to the universities of your choosing. You can apply to five universities or less, but not more.

You will be asked to add your personal contact details and education so far, including all the grades you have received for any qualifications you have taken.

Most people complete their UCAS application when they are at school or college, but it is possible to apply as an independent student. If you aren't currently studying, then you may need to apply independently.

A reference is required and this is usually added by your teacher or personal tutor. If you are applying independently, you will still need a reference and, ideally, this will be an academic reference, so you may need to contact your previous school or college for help. It is recommended that both you and your referee include that you are from an Armed Forces family in your Personal Statement and reference. The aim is to better understand the experiences of students as they apply for HE study.

You can also identify as being from an Armed Forces family by ticking the box on your UCAS application.

This information is confidential and won't be used against you! It does, however, let the right person at the university or college know that you might need other support. It also ensures you are recognised as a home student, rather than an international student, if you are living outside of the UK at the time of your application.

Applying to individual institutions

If you have opted to study a shorter course or perhaps want to stay local, you may be considering applying to only one or two institutions. This might be relevant to students who are interested in HNC/HND routes or industry relevant courses. You should contact the providers directly in this instance to complete an online application form.

Gap Years

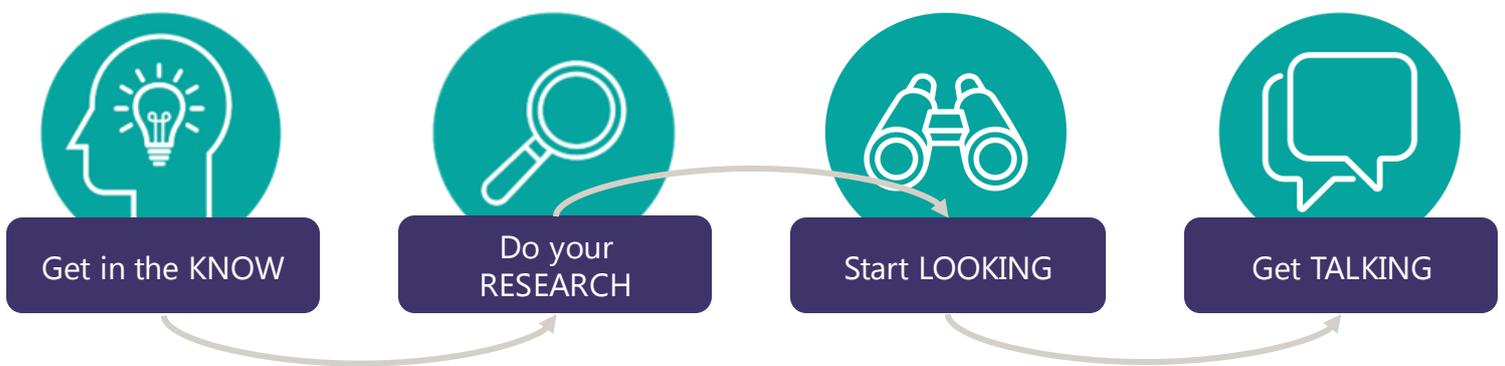
If you are considering a gap year, you'll already probably be aware that there are a mixture of things you can do. From working to earn money, to volunteering and travelling. It is important to consider how you intend on spending your gap year and what you want to achieve by taking one. Especially when applying to universities, admissions tutors will want to know how you plan to spend a gap year and what skills or experiences you hope to gain.



APPRENTICESHIPS APPLICATION PROCESS

When it comes to applying for an apprenticeship in the UK, you will need to think of it like finding a job. You apply through the employer and, because of this, apprenticeships don't follow the same deadlines as applying to university. The deadline and application process is down to the employer.

It might surprise you to learn that the process of applying for an apprenticeship can take several months. Therefore, you want to make sure that you have done your research first so any applications you progress with is time well spent.



KNOW

- Identify the pros and cons of doing an apprenticeship for you
- Know what is important to you and note down your skills; this will help when writing applications

Remember

You can apply for apprenticeships while submitting other applications on UCAS or at college

RESEARCH

- Check out the range of industries that employ apprentices
- Learn about other people's experiences of applying for and completing apprenticeships
- Find out what the employer wants – how can you do this?

LOOKING

- Apprenticeship vacancies appear online throughout the year
- Browse vacancy sites and sign up for job alerts
- Go to open days and careers fairs for direct contact with apprenticeship providers

Write down one place you can find apprenticeship vacancies...

Apprenticeships are

JOBS!

TALK

- Contact employers and training providers
- You can approach employers or training providers to see if it is possible to set up an apprenticeship
 - APPLY!

WRITING YOUR PERSONAL STATEMENT

Your Personal Statement is your opportunity to tell the university why you want to study your chosen subject and to demonstrate that you will be an engaged and motivated student.

You write one Personal Statement that is sent to the five universities of your choice. You are limited to a maximum of 400 characters or 37 lines of text, so it's important that you are clear and concise.

Structure is key and we suggest the following; Introduction (10%), Academic Interest (60%), Super-Curricular Activities (10%), Extra-Curricular Activities (10%) and, finally, finish with a strong Conclusion (10%).

Please scan the QR code at the bottom of this page to access a Personal Statement template.

Top tips for writing your Personal Statement:

- Start your draft early! The earlier you start and the more drafts you do, the more support you can get with editing and the less stressed you will feel.
- You do not have unlimited space so use your words wisely!
- Structure is important! Make sure you consider that 70% of your Personal Statement should be your topic of interest covering academic interest and super-curricular activities. Examples of these could include attending university open days, taster sessions, any relevant work experience or projects that you've completed.
- Do not use bullet points. When making a point, always elaborate. Tell them why you want to study the course, show them that you're motivated and prepared for a career in your chosen field, and tell them about any relevant experience.



Sharing your experience

Sharing your experience as a service child in your statement is optional, however, if you feel comfortable, it is recommended that you do. From your unique experiences, you will have gained insight and skills in areas that could support you in student life and your studies.

Some ideas of things you might like to mention;

Mobility, deployment and moving overseas.

What skills have you developed in these areas?

Resilience, advanced social skills, adaptability, high level of self-management, significant maturity, exposure to different cultures and people.

Remember that, alongside your Personal Statement, you can ask your college or school to submit a reference for you. This can highlight the impact military life has had on your education experience. This could include mentioning high levels of mobility or impact of deployment of a parent. This may result in a contextualised offer which reflects the student's individual circumstances leading up to Higher Education.

I included a small paragraph about being a service child in my Personal Statement.

**Rhianna, Service Child
Biomedical Science
Kings College, London**

APPLICATION TIMELINE

POST-16 OPTIONS



Autumn

Spring

Summer

YEAR 10

Spring/Summer Term

Start to consider what you might like to do once you leave school after Year 11 and begin your research

YEAR 11

September

Go to open days and evenings (physical and virtual) for the institutions you are interested in attending. Having a preferred option and a back-up choice is recommended.

February - April

You may be invited to an interview for the sixth forms or colleges where you have applied

August

Results Day!

September – October

You might be invited to a meeting with your school's Careers Advisor or your tutor to discuss your options and make sure you know the entry requirements for your preferred options.

Spring Term

You will start to receive responses to your applications and should know by April.

April – most applications submitted by now

Not got into your preferred or back-up option?

Your local authority has a duty to make sure you are offered a suitable place by the end of September. This is known as the **September Guarantee**.

September – December

Once you have an idea of where you might like to go, start your applications.

Many colleges keep applications open until the start of term or courses are full

December – Sixth form application deadline

MOVED SCHOOL LATER IN THE YEAR?

If you have joined a new school after September or haven't been able to apply according to this timeline, don't worry. Use this checklist to make sure you have done everything you need to:



- Research the options that you have in your area. Focus on understanding the different institutions and what qualifications they offer.
- Speak to your school's Careers Advisor or your tutor to have an open conversation about what options are right for you. Find out if your school helps with applications, for instance, do they use a one-stop shop like Help You Choose?
- Contact the institutions you want to apply to and ask when their deadline is for applications. Telling them you are a service child may allow flexibility in deadlines, giving you the same chance to make a strong application as your classmates.
- Make your application.

APPLICATION TIMELINE

POST-18 OPTIONS



University

Apprenticeship

Employment

YEAR 12

Spring/Summer Term

Start to consider what you might like to do once you leave school next year and begin your research.

March - June

Your school or college will start giving you lots of information about your choices, including university. They will probably be asking what you want to do and giving you tasks to do, such as, drafting a Personal Statement.

July

Start to get specific. Create a list of the options you are most interested in. For instance, writing down the courses and universities you are interested in or the apprenticeships and their application process.

Summer - Early Autumn

Book your place at open days (physical and virtual).

Speak to the institution if you need support attending the open day as they often have funds available!

September

UCAS applications Open.

October early UCAS Deadline for Oxford/ Cambridge & Medicine/ Vet Med/ Dentistry applicants.

October - November

Write your application and discuss with your Careers Advisor and/or tutor. Your application can be submitted now, if you are ready. Universities will run Applicant Days and interviews during this time too.

Late Autumn - Spring

Universities will begin to send offers via UCAS and early applicants may be invited for testing.

January

UCAS applications close.

Easter

Decide on your first and second choice universities.

May

Deadline for applying for Student Finance.

August

Results Day!

September – March

Many employers start advertising their apprenticeships for September starts.



June – September

Recruitment processes can sometimes take three months. Starting with submitting applications, attending interviews, offer of employment and pre-employment checks

YEAR 13

YOU'VE APPLIED - WHAT NEXT?

You've made your application...pew!

What next? Perhaps you have to attend an interview or audition. Maybe you have to sit an entry test or prepare a portfolio. Try not to worry, there is lots of support and advice available to you.

Preparing for interviews

Many colleges, sixth forms, employers and universities will invite students along to an interview or audition. In some cases these will be compulsory depending on the course you have applied to study.

If you are looking to apply to study a degree in Medicine, Dentistry, Nursing, Education, Music, and Art & Design, you are more than likely to be invited to interview.

Interviews help both students and course tutors to find out if they're a suitable match. Sometimes they may want to see your work ahead of the interview, but they will give you plenty of notice if this is the case.

Here are some top tips to help you prepare:

- **Plan ahead** - double check details in the invitation, i.e. date, time and location, and get a good night's sleep.
- **Make a good impression** - Plan your route whether you are using public transport or travelling via car and dress suitably. Be mindful of your manners and body language.
- **Try to relax** - interviews can be a daunting experience, but this is totally normal, especially when it is your first! Try to enjoy the experience and don't panic if they ask you something you don't know the answer to. Ask them to repeat the question and give it a go.
- **Familiarise yourself with your application/ Personal Statement** - your interviewer will have read this, so ensure you know what you included and be prepared to talk about it.

- **Prepare a few responses to common interview questions** - for example, 'can you give me an example of a time you worked in a team?' and 'can you tell me a little bit about your reasons for applying for this course/ role?'
- **Prepare questions to ask** - look through the course details or job description again and write down two-five questions you'd like to ask at the end of the interview. These should show your passion for the course/role.

The University of Oxford and Cambridge will not offer candidates a place without an interview, regardless of the course. University College London and Imperial College London may also invite candidates for an interview.

Submitting a portfolio or taking an admissions test

Instead of an interview you may be asked to submit a portfolio or take an admissions test. In this case, the university will let you know what you need to do and by when. If for any reason you can't meet their requirements, you must let them know as early as possible.

It is worth speaking with your teacher/tutor about preparing for these too, they might be able to help you prepare a monologue or music piece for example.



PARENT/CARER ADVICE



Tips and advice for parents/carers

Whether or not you have a history of Higher Education in the family, the best thing you can do is to talk to your child about their options.

Encouraging your young person to stick with their education and not to get disheartened, even if they get some disappointing assignment or mock exam results, can support their self-confidence and help them to do well, accepting that failure is a natural part of learning.

Universities are looking for potential and can make contextual offers that take into account the fact that service children may have had a disrupted education.

Arm yourself with as much information as possible and when it comes to open evenings and days, don't be afraid to ask questions with or on behalf of your child.

You can find details of what extra support is offered by schools, sixth forms and universities by speaking to someone within the Welfare/Pastoral Teams or Wellbeing/Student Services.

Being a service child you're less dependent on parents always being around and also used to moving around, so settling into a new place alone was probably less daunting than for some. However, when I got dropped off to uni, my Dad was deployed and so that made the journey getting to uni more difficult, almost not allowing for a proper goodbye before you leave home for the first time.

**Rhianna, Service Child
Biomedical Science
Kings College, London**

What you can say to encourage young people

- You will be able to live independently and make your own decisions.
- You will always feel proud of your achievements and gain confidence from them.
- You will find clubs and societies for every interest imaginable.
- You will have access to more jobs when you qualify (40% of jobs ask for a degree).
- You will fit in. Higher Education welcomes all kinds of people from all types of backgrounds.
- You can study a subject you're good at and care about.
- You will have the potential to earn more money (on average graduates earn 55% more over their working lives than those who start work at 18).
- You will have the chance to choose a city or town you would love to live in.
- You will meet new people and make lasting friendships.
- You will have access to lots of support to help you get there and stay there, so why not take advantage of it?



FINDING YOUR WAY

Your pathways on a page

Throughout this guide you've read lots of information that is key to consider when it comes to choosing your post-16 or post-18 options. Everything you've been told should help you make an informed decision no matter when or how quickly that decision needs to be made.

This page is for you to write down and remember who and what you need to help make the best decision for you. Feel free to cut it out and keep it handy during careers meetings or conversations about your options.

I know where I can study in my area?

YES / NO

(circle your answer)

I would like to visit:

Who is my biggest influencer when making decisions?

I must choose my options by...

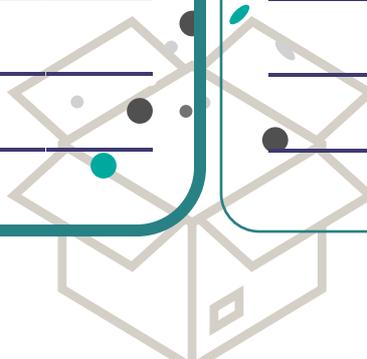
The three most important things I want to remember are:

I know I can access additional support because I am from a military family?

YES / NO

(circle your answer)

This is where I can get that support:



WELLBEING SUPPORT AND ADVICE

We know that making big decisions can be hard, so it's important you look after yourself. Every school, sixth form, college and university is different, so you will need to ask about support when you visit or have an interview, but there are some general sources of information that you might find useful.

[Fasttomato.com](https://www.fasttomato.com) - Your school or college may give you a login for this website which includes general careers information.

[youngminds.org.uk/young-person/](https://www.youngminds.org.uk/young-person/) - Lots of useful information and support for now and when you go to university.

[studentminds.org.uk](https://www.studentminds.org.uk) - Access support online and find out if your university has signed up to the Student Minds Mental Health Charter.

[studentspace.org.uk](https://www.studentspace.org.uk) - Lots of information and support, including videos by students talking about their experiences of starting university.

[ucas.com](https://www.ucas.com) - The website through which you will need to make your application. Also includes lots of information and video clips on choosing and filling in the application form. Links through to the websites of each individual institution.

[thestudentroom.co.uk](https://www.thestudentroom.co.uk) - The Student Room bills itself as the UK's largest online student community. Includes chat functions and a tool to build your Personal Statement.

[The Uni Guide](https://www.theuni.co.uk) - The Uni Guide (now part of the Student Room, but formally part of Which website) includes subject by subject profiles on each university.

[Unifrog.org](https://www.unifrog.org) - Your school or college may give you a login for this website which includes general careers information.

[Amazingapprenticeships.com](https://www.amazingapprenticeships.com) - A leading organisation in the education sector, founded to tackle misconceptions about apprenticeships and promote the benefits.

[Kooth.com](https://www.kooth.com) - Online mental wellbeing community.

[Unitasterdays.com](https://www.unitasterdays.com) - Provides recordings of previous taster events and promotes upcoming opportunities to visit universities online or in-person.

[UK Armed Forces Covenant](https://www.ukarmedforcescovenant.com) - Can help you when applying to Higher Education.

[Whatuni.com](https://www.whatuni.com) - Helps you to compare university degrees in the UK.

[Takeyourplace.ac.uk](https://www.takeyourplace.ac.uk) - Impartial information and advice to help students make informed decisions about their future.

[nationalcareers.service.gov.uk](https://www.nationalcareers.service.gov.uk)

[Allaboutschoolleavers.co.uk](https://www.allaboutschoolleavers.co.uk)
[Careerpilot.org.uk](https://www.careerpilot.org.uk)





TAKE YOUR PLACE

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