

Welcome...

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During the final year of compulsory education your son/daughter will have important decisions to make about their future. You will have an important role to play in helping them to make their choices.

Continuing in Education

Most young people in London choose to remain in education after Year 11. If your son/daughter chooses this option, they will have a choice of going into a school Sixth Form, a Sixth Form College or a College of Further Education. They will have a range of courses to choose from including:

- **Academic courses** (for example, A levels and GCSEs, in subjects such as Maths, English, Geography and so on)

- **Vocational courses** (for example, Business Studies, Plumbing, Information Technology or Beauty Therapy)
- **Specialist courses** (for example, English as a second language or courses for young people with disabilities).

Their choices will be influenced by their interests, career ideas, GCSE subjects and grades and where they would prefer to study.

Work and Training

For young people who would prefer to continue their learning in a work environment, a range of work based learning programmes are an option.

Entry to Employment (e2e)

This programme is aimed at young people who are not quite ready to start an Apprenticeship and may need extra support to develop their skills and confidence.

Apprenticeships

These lead to NVQs at level 2, key skills and technical certificates.

Advanced Apprenticeships

These lead to NVQs at level 3, key skills and technical certificates.



Choice is the online e-prospectus for Londoners aged 14-19. Choice helps young people living in London to access details of all free learning opportunities open to them. It also provides a range of tools to help young people consider careers options and plan the best route to achieve their preferred course or profession.

Education Maintenance Allowances (EMAs)

These are weekly payments of up to £30 paid for two or three years, directly to young people who continue their education beyond 16 or go into e2e. They may also receive bonuses if they remain on their courses and make good progress.

To qualify young people must:

- live in a household where the income in 2008/9 was £30,810 or less*
- be doing at least 12 hours guided learning on any academic or vocational course at school or college, or be on an Entry to Employment programme.

EMAs will not affect other benefits young people or their families may be receiving. It will be paid on top of any other support provided by the government or any earnings from part-time jobs. For more information phone **0800 121 8989** or visit www.direct.gov.uk/ema.

*The maximum £30 per week will be paid irrespective of family income when doing e2e.

Month by month, The year ahead

September

During the year, the Connexions Personal Adviser who visits the school, will make sure that your son/daughter has an opportunity to find out more about their options in order to help them reach a decision about their next step.

- Check that your son/daughter has the sixth form or college prospectuses they need, with application forms
- Find out when the open days/evenings are
- Check deadlines for application to popular courses.

October

Many schools have Year 11 parents' evenings at this time of year. This is an opportunity for you to ask about post-16 qualifications, training courses in your area and to make plans for the future.

November

Many schools start mock GCSEs now. This is a trial run before the real exams. If results are very different to what was expected or hoped for, it is time to think of a back-up plan for post-16 options.

December

If your son/daughter is still uncertain about what option(s) might suit them, suggest they talk to a PA and try using computer programmes which are available at your local Connexions centre and may also be available in school. Many colleges will be accepting applications for courses now.

January

Check out a variety of benefits and allowances available to students who study after 16 such as Education Maintenance Allowances (EMAs). More information on EMAs is on page 2 of this newsletter and it is also worth visiting www.dfes.gov.uk/financialhelp. Local colleges also have money to support students who need it. Each college has different rules so you will need to check with them.

February

Recruitment for Apprenticeships and Work Based Learning begins. If your son/daughter is interested, they should discuss their ideas with their Personal Adviser and apply through the Connexions centre (or direct to employers and training providers) as soon as possible.

March

Your son/daughter may be called for interviews, if they haven't heard from the colleges applied to, it may be worth contacting them now.

April

Most schools will help students to put together a revision plan. Encourage your son/daughter to stick to it!

May

Exams! A stressful time for all.

- Make sure that they know that you are willing to listen if they need to talk.
- Ensure the rest of the household knows they are going to have to be supportive and tolerant for the next few weeks.

June

The official school leaving date is Friday 25th June 2010. After this date your son/daughter can legally work full time. Check with them that they have received their National Insurance Number but if they haven't then phone **0845 600 0643**. If your son/daughter is staying in full-time education, you can continue to receive Child Benefit up to the Monday after their 20th birthday. You should receive details from the Child Benefit Centre – make sure you return the letter or call on **0845 302 1444**.

July

If your son/daughter has decided not to continue with full-time education then they should register at the Connexions centre where they can get help with preparing a CV, completing application forms and interview techniques. Jobs and training vacancies are displayed at each Connexions centre, and staff can arrange interviews with employers and training providers for them.

August

Results! GCSE results come out on Tuesday 24th August 2010. If this means your son/daughter needs to rethink their plans, contact your local Connexions centre. You can also contact colleges direct to find out if there are spaces available and if they are accepting late applications for alternative courses.

Where to get help

Young people have a lot more options than ever before in their choice of education and/or training at the end of Year 11. Connexions can help your son/daughter by providing:

- access to a Personal Adviser (PA) who can provide information, advice & guidance
- impartial advice & guidance on learning and career options
- advice on a wide range of issues e.g. housing, health etc and liaising with other professionals on their behalf
- opportunities and help to identify suitable college/university courses
- help with preparation of CVs/application forms and arranging interviews for training courses and employment.

Personal Advisers are based in schools/colleges/youth clubs and Connexions One Stop Shops.

To find your local Connexions centre

visit www.centrallondonconnexions.org.uk or call **020 7938 8080**.

Help is also available from 8am–2am, 7 days a week from Connexions Direct. Young people and parents/carers can contact the service by calling **080 800 13 2 19 ***, text **07766 4 13 2 19** or web chat/web cam with adviser/secure message board at www.connexions-direct.com.

(*Calls from landlines are free but the mobile networks may charge, ask the adviser to call you back).

This information is available in alternative formats, call **020 7938 8080**.

If you have any comments on this publication, email: info@centrallondonconnexions.org.uk.

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