

Dear Parents/Carers and students

Welcome to our Post 16 Options Event. The event will give you the opportunity to talk to representatives from a wide variety of employers, local colleges, further and higher education establishments as well as training providers. You will be able to investigate different pathways and learn what is required to access particular courses, programmes and careers.

Students have undertaken preparation work in school as part of our school careers provision and have already begun the process of investigating post 16 pathways. This event will enable you to explore this initial work undertaken by speaking to the various guests and developing your understanding of what is available after school.

This booklet also contains useful information on the different options available and the entry requirements for these options. Useful weblinks have also been provided so that you (parents and students!) are able to continue planning in confidence at home. We have signposted what we believe to be the best websites/support as the range of information available can be quite overwhelming!

Students have already been provided with open day and deadline information for the popular local colleges. This information can be found on the school VLE, ECHO and has also been posted on SMHW. The websites for these colleges also contain this information and applications are now commonly submitted online via college websites.

Students in Year 11 will receive support from teachers, form tutors and Connexions throughout the application process. Time will also be designated during afternoon registration sessions to complete and submit applications and during Careers, Well-Being and Life Skills lessons students will be taught how to complete applications, prepare CVs and perform well at interviews.

A notes page has been provided in this booklet for you to record useful information when visiting the different stalls.

Please do not hesitate to contact either myself or Mrs Stanley if you require any additional support or information.

Regards

Mr A. Rashud

Notes...

Which Route? - Key points

Apprenticeships

- Apprenticeships are jobs with training leading to nationally recognised qualifications in a specific trade or skill. They can be accessed either after school or after college.
- Apprenticeships vary in length with an Intermediate Level 2 Apprenticeship usually taking around 12 to 18 months and an Advanced Level 3 Apprenticeship around 24 months.
- An Apprenticeship may include time away from the workplace to do some training at a college or training centre, but most training and assessment is done on the job.
- Earn while you learn, Apprentices are paid a minimum of £3.30 per hour however many Apprentices earn significantly more, with the average Apprenticeship wage standing at £170 per week.
- There are a wide range of Apprenticeships available. Around Greater Manchester the greatest numbers of vacancies are in Business Administration, Customer Service, Accountancy, ICT, Retail and Childcare. Apprenticeship vacancies also include Design, Hospitality, Construction, Surveying, Engineering, Teaching Assistants, Dental Nurses and, Estate Agents.
- After completing an Apprenticeship, young people can continue to train for an advanced, higher, or degree level Apprenticeship, or a related vocational qualification (depending on the framework). Alternatively, young people can go on to university, or take a professional qualification that leads to a specific job role.
- Apprenticeships give valuable industry experience which is an advantage when looking at progressing a career.

A levels

- A levels are generally taken over 2 years. Students usually study 3 full A levels.
- From 2017, most A levels will be designed as 2 year courses.
- Assessment is mainly focussed on examinations.
- Entry requirements are at least 5 Cs at GCSE to start a programme of A levels. Higher GCSE grades will improve your chances of success in A Level studies. A grade C in mathematics and English is required for many A level subjects. You will often need at least a B in Mathematics and/or relevant Sciences to take these subjects at A level. For some other subjects Bs in specific GCSEs may be required.
- By studying 3 or 4 separate subjects, future options are kept open. Certain progression routes will require certain subjects to be taken. Advice and guidance is recommended when choosing subjects.
- Students who successfully complete some level 3 courses (e.g. BTEC level 3 Extended Diplomas) will be able to progress to University/Higher Education or an Advanced/Higher Apprenticeship.

Vocational

- Courses last 1 or 2 years dependant on level
- Offers practical experience which may include work placements
- Assessment is mainly focussed on coursework and practical projects.
- Entry requirements vary due to a variety of course levels available. School leavers can go directly onto level 3 in some subjects however they are likely to need 5 Cs at GCSE, sometimes including mathematics, English and/or Sciences. Courses are often also available at levels 1 & 2 for those with lower grades.
- Generally more suited to those who have some idea about their future career direction, although it may be possible to change direction if you decide the course is not for you. Some courses are relatively broad (e.g. Business Studies) whereas others are very specific (e.g. Hairdressing). It is important to seek advice and guidance before choosing a course.

- Students who successfully complete lower level courses can progress to higher level college courses or intermediate apprenticeships.
- Students who successfully complete a level 3 course may be able to progress to University/Higher Education (need to have studied a BTEC level 3 Extended Diploma) or an advanced/higher apprenticeship. It is likely that a student would choose a Higher Education course in a similar subject.

How to Apply - Tips

Apprenticeships

To apply for an Apprenticeship, your son or daughter can:

- Go to the National Apprenticeship Service (NAS) website for information, search for Apprenticeship vacancies and apply online. www.gov.uk/apply-apprenticeship
- Contact a training provider directly and see vacancies on individual provider websites (see the list of local providers at the back of this guide).
- Attend open days run by training providers.
- Talk to the Connexions Personal Adviser in school about where and how to apply.
- Keep looking in the local newspapers as vacancies are often advertised there.
- Your Council Jobs website advertises jobs in Greater Manchester Councils. www.yourcounciljobs.co.uk
- Employers take on Apprentices throughout the year with many vacancies advertised from Easter and have start dates suitable for school and college leavers. Some larger companies advertise earlier in the year for September starts.

A level/Vocational

- College courses can be applied for online or by using a paper application form.
- All colleges have course information online, information can also be found in their prospectus.
- Attend college open days. Many colleges have open days throughout the year, particularly in September and October to help with prospective students. Details for open days can be found on College websites.
- Individual colleges have varying application closing dates; ensure you know when these are. The earliest is mid November.
- Ask for advice and guidance to ensure your course choices match your career ideas.

How can you help your son or daughter?

- Talk to them about their career ideas. Check they have looked at job profiles for careers they are interested in. Job profiles explain which skills and qualifications they would need to get into that job. You can also read about what the work would be like, the average salary they could expect and what the career prospects are. The National Careers Service has a wide range of job profiles on their website nationalcareersservice.direct.gov.uk or type *job profiles* into a search engine
- Have they checked and are they aware of all the different routes (A levels, Vocational and Apprenticeships) and do they know which ones suit their learning style. Do they know if their career ideas require a certain route, or are their alternative routes?
- Encourage them to research and to visit colleges, providers and the National Apprenticeship Service website. Encourage them to talk to colleges and training providers if they come into school and contact them for information about the college, the courses and open days.
- Help them fill in application forms accurately, neatly, but also in a way that helps their application stand out from the crowd.
- If they are offered an interview, help them prepare by discussing the kind of questions they may be asked, how they should dress and behave and the questions they could ask.

- If they have successfully been offered a college course or apprenticeship, ask them to find out whether there are conditions attached, such as GCSEs they need to pass.

Useful websites

<https://nationalcareersservice.direct.gov.uk> - there are two channels available to help young people – a helpline available from 8am until 10pm 7 days a week (0800 100 900) and online information on more than 130 industries with 800 different job profiles.

www.getingofar.gov.uk- everything you need to know about Apprenticeships and Traineeships including a vacancy matching service. Your child can register and search for ideal jobs based on postcode, job role or sector.

www.ucas.com – a comprehensive source of information and advice about higher education, offering information on how to choose courses and different types of study.

www.parentalguidance.org.uk - a website for parents supporting their children with career choice.

www.careersadviceforparents.org - an expert source of impartial advice and information for parents.

www.plotr.co.uk - provides games, in-depth articles, sponsored worlds, insider knowledge and inspirational stories to support career choice and exploration.

www.thecdi.net - The Career Development Institute is the professional body for the career development sector in the UK. In addition to promoting good practice and quality, it maintains the online Register of Career Development Professionals.

RPA

RPA stands for Raising the Participation Age. The Government has risen the age at which young people need to continue in education or training.

Wide ranges of learning opportunities are available:

- Continue in full-time education, such as Sixth Form College or FE College.
- Follow a full-time work-based learning route (e.g. Apprenticeship or Traineeship).
- Undertake part-time education or training for about one day a week (280 hours of learning per year) if they are:

Employed,

Self-employed

Volunteering full-time (defined as 20 hours or more a week)

Traineeships

Traineeships can be used as a stepping stone into Apprenticeships. If your son or daughter is motivated to get an Apprenticeship but lack either the experience or the skills employers are looking for then Traineeships can help. Traineeships are an opportunity to gain real work experience, job skills and improve your English and mathematics, if needed.

The programme can last up to a maximum of six months with the content tailored to your individual career needs. At its core are a high-quality work experience placements, work preparation training and English and mathematics if needed.

Traineeships are advertised regularly at www.gov.uk/find-traineeship

Entry Requirements

This table lists some common examples of past and present qualifications along with an indication of their level on the Regulated Qualifications Framework (formerly the Qualifications and Credit Framework (QCF)). The Framework is used in education and employment to help compare the size, level of difficulty and content of different qualifications.

Level	Qualification Examples
Entry (1-3)	Entry Level Award, Certificate, Diploma English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) Skills for Life Functional Skills (English, maths, ICT) Essential Skills
1	GCSEs (grades D-G) ¹ Award, Certificate, Diploma (City & Guilds, CACHE, OCR, BTEC/Edexcel/Pearson) English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) NVQ Level 1 First Certificate Functional Skills Essential Skills Music (grades 1-3)
2	GCSEs (grades A*-C) ¹ O Levels (grades A-C) CEs (grade 1) Award, Certificate, Diploma (City & Guilds, CACHE, OCR, BTEC/Edexcel/Pearson) English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) NVQ Level 2 National Certificate/Diploma Intermediate apprenticeship Functional Skills Essential Skills Music (grades 4-5)
3	A Levels (grades A-E) AS Levels Award, Certificate, Diploma (City & Guilds, CACHE, OCR, BTEC/Edexcel/Pearson) English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) Access to Higher Education Diploma Foundation Diploma (Art and Design) NVQ Level 3 Advanced apprenticeship National Certificate/Diploma International Baccalaureate (IB) Diploma Music (grades 6-8)
4	Higher National Certificate (HNC) Certificate of Higher Education (CertHE) Higher apprenticeship
5	Higher National Diploma (HND) Diploma of Higher Education (DipHE) Foundation Degree NVQ Level 4
6	Degree with Honours (eg BA Hons, BSc Hons) Degree apprenticeship Graduate Certificate Graduate Diploma Ordinary Degree (without Honours)
7	Postgraduate Certificate Postgraduate Diploma Master's Degree (eg MA, MSc, MBA, MPhil) Integrated Master's Degree (eg MEng) Postgraduate Certificate in Education (PGCE) NVQ Level 5
8	Doctorate (eg PhD, DPhil, EdD, DClInPsy)

1 - A new grading system for GCSE exam results is being introduced from summer 2017.

Eventually, all GCSE exams will be graded from 1 to 9 rather than the current A* to G, with 9 the highest grade. Grade 4 will be equivalent to grade C on the previous system.

