

ACCESSING APPRENTICESHIPS

A GUIDE FOR TEACHERS AND CAREERS ADVISERS SUPPORTING CARE EXPERIENCED YOUNG PEOPLE WHO ARE CONSIDERING APPRENTICESHIPS.



Why are apprenticeships a great option for care experienced young people?

Apprenticeships can be a brilliant option for any young person to consider, including young people currently in care and care leavers. They provide an opportunity for the individual to earn a salary, whilst continuing to gain skills and qualifications. Care experienced apprentices may also be eligible to access the Apprenticeship Care Leaver's Bursary of £3,000 in addition to their salary (please see page 5 for more information).

Apprenticeship basics...

- Apprenticeships are typically a full-time job with training.
- They enable an individual to earn a salary whilst also gaining new skills and qualifications.
- There are nearly 700 different apprenticeship standards linked to thousands of job roles suitable for those just starting out in their careers all the way up to Master's level.

Accessing Apprenticeships

Apprenticeships are real jobs, and therefore the apprenticeship application process can be vary between different employers. Some young people will find the apprenticeship application process fairly complex to navigate (especially compared to other options such as applying university or college).

There are some unique factors that you may find it useful to consider when supporting a young person in care, or leaving care, to explore and apply for apprenticeship opportunities. These are set out in this guide.



Become is a leading charity for children in care and young care leavers, offering services and campaigning with young people for change in the care system. Find out more about their work:

[Home Page - Become \(becomecharity.org.uk\)](http://www.becomecharity.org.uk)

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You can learn more about the basics of [‘What is an apprenticeship?’](#) in this Rapid Read.



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1

Exploring apprenticeship roles

With almost 700 different apprenticeships available, there may be many apprenticeship job roles that the student is unfamiliar with. There may also be some apprenticeships that they feel would be unattainable or unsuitable, so it is important to be ambitious for them, support them to explore their options and help them believe that they can access any opportunity they are interested in. Some care experienced young people miss out on key parts of their education due to disruptions in their home life and may need help understanding the qualifications they need to access an opportunity.

Activity ideas:

Set up a 1:1 or small group session and ask students to explore different apprenticeships. Ask them to make a list of apprenticeships they might be interested in and discuss the benefits or any concerns the student may have about that apprenticeship. Visit the Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education (IfATE) [website](#) to see the full range of apprenticeship standards.

Useful resources and websites:

- Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education (IfATE) [website](#)
- Download the Amazing Apprenticeships [subject resources](#) and play the [Apprenticeship Arcade](#)

2

Searching for vacancies

Apprenticeship vacancies are not all advertised in one place. A variety of websites can be used to search for apprenticeship vacancies, as well as other routes such as social media and word of mouth. Some programmes are designed specifically to support care experienced young people, such as the [Care Leaver Covenant website](#) as well as some targeted initiatives from local authorities. Please note that some care experienced young people will be living in a borough outside of the local authority they are or were in the care of.

Activity ideas:

Ideas: Set up a 1:1 or small group session to discuss and explore the different jobs platforms. Create a list of useful websites and links to refer to when searching for apprenticeships.

Useful resources and websites:

- Register on Find an apprenticeship and set up alerts www.gov.uk/apply-apprenticeship
- Visit Connects to view vacancies <https://mycovenant.org.uk/for-care-leavers/connects/>
- Look at the Civil Service Care Leaver internship scheme <https://www.civil-service-careers.gov.uk/civil-service-care-leavers-internship-scheme/>
- Contact Become Propel yourself into work - Become becomecharity.org.uk

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3

Location, location, location

The student may not be familiar with the geography of the area that they are searching for vacancies within, especially if they have recently moved and may not feel certain that this is the area they will still be living in. Although local authorities will try to take a young person's current commitments into consideration when housing them, it can be important to keep location in mind when researching roles or starting an apprenticeship.

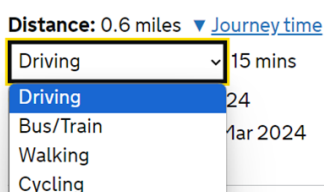
Activity ideas:

Encourage the young person to think about exploring the location. You can use maps to help to show the surrounding towns and areas, and also look at travel routes and public transport options. If they identify a vacancy that they are interested in applying for, help them to look at the location of the employer and to think about how they would get there, the time it would take to travel and the costs that might be involved for using public transport.

Some local authorities will also offer travel schemes to support young people in their area, and they may also offer subsidised or fully funded transport options.

Useful resources and websites:

- The Government Find an Apprenticeship website includes a tool where an individual can add a postcode and look at vacancies within a radius e.g. 5 miles, 10 miles, 15 miles etc. This website also enables the user to look at approximate distance whether Driving, Bus/Train, Walking or Cycling <https://www.gov.uk/apply-apprenticeship>



Distance: 0.6 miles ▼ Journey time

Driving	15 mins
Driving	24
Bus/Train	1hr 20 mins
Walking	1hr 20 mins
Cycling	1hr 20 mins

Did you know....?

Research conducted by **Become** in 2023 showed that on average, a child in care is moved 18 miles from their home area – with some children moved more than 500 miles. More than 1 in 5 children in care in England (17K) are living more than 20 miles away from home.

[#GoneTooFar campaign - Become](#)
(becomecharity.org.uk)

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4

Overcoming barriers to work

There can be many barriers facing young people in care and those leaving care when considering moving into employment, but there is also lots of support and assistance available.

This section sets out some common barriers and challenges that may occur, and provides some suggestions for supporting the young person to address them.



The young person may not have internet access at home or a suitable device to use for job searching or completing applications.

Some local authorities will provide young people in care and education with a laptop. If not, you could explore whether the school/college can lend the young person a laptop to use at home. You could also help them locate their nearest public library, where they can access free internet and computers.



The young person may not have a professional outfit that makes them feel confident and comfortable to wear to an interview.

Remind them that if they're in receipt of Universal Credit, their Jobcentre work coach can use the DWP's Flexible Support Fund to buy them some suitable clothing or if they're still in care, they can speak to their social worker or local authority for help.



The young person may not feel able to identify goals or work towards their goals, due to things like stress or low self-esteem.

Talk to them about Coaching with Become, to help them identify their strengths, turn problems into solutions, set goals and create plans for what's next, and feel more positive about life and the future:

[Coaching - Become \(becomecharity.org.uk\)](https://becomecharity.org.uk)



Once the young person has secured an apprenticeship, they may not have the funds to travel to work.

Offer financial wellbeing sessions to help students understand the financial implications of starting an apprenticeship, including a budgeting activity. Empower young people to explore available grants via their local authority or charitable organisations like The Rees Foundation [Rees Foundation | Financial help for care experienced people - Rees Foundation](#) or if they receive Universal Credit, encourage them to contact their Jobcentre work coach to access the Flexible Support Fund.

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5

Apprenticeship Salary

Apprenticeships offer a wide range of different salaries, depending on the employer, sector and apprenticeship level. Some employers will start their apprentices on the National Minimum Wage for Apprentices, whereas other employers will pay significantly more. Many young people that are in care or leaving care will want to consider the affordability of the opportunity, especially if they are due to live independently and will need to manage their own budget. Their local authority will be able to provide information on any additional grants and support available to them and, if they receive Universal Credit, their Jobcentre will be able to advise on how earning a salary could impact their benefits.

Activity ideas:

Help the student to understand the range of salaries, why different employers will offer different amounts and how starting an apprenticeship will impact them financially. Use the Find an Apprenticeship website to look at different vacancies and to consider the starting salaries being offered. They may also find it useful to create a budget planner (see example below).

Useful resources and websites:

- Amazing Apprenticeships' [Rapid Read: Apprenticeship finances](#)
- Free online budget builder [The Money Charity Budget Builder - Create Your Own Budget](#)
- Care Leaver Covenant Factsheet for [Care Leavers Apprenticeship Factsheet](#)

6

Apprenticeship Care Leaver's Bursary

Apprentices who are in care or are care leavers under the age of 25 could be entitled to a £3,000 bursary once they have been on their apprenticeship for more than 60 days. Please note, there are eligibility requirements, including that the apprentice must have been in local authority care for a period of at least 13 weeks since their 14th birthday. The apprentice's training provider will claim the bursary for them and will require written confirmation from the local authority to access the bursary. This does not have to be paid back and aims to help to remove financial barriers to accessing and completing apprenticeships.

Activity ideas:

Support your student to think about ways the £3,000 could help them in their apprenticeship e.g. travel, equipment, supporting with home costs or other responsibilities to ease pressure whilst working.

Useful resources and websites:

- Amazing Apprenticeships' [Apprenticeship Care Leaver's Bursary Flowchart](#)
- Government guidance for [Care experienced apprentices](#)

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7

Apprenticeship Applications

Application processes for apprenticeships vary by employer, with some asking for a CV and others with multi-stage processes. Not all employers will provide feedback throughout the process and so it can be challenging for applicants to manage and maintain motivation. Students may also be asked to provide information or documentation that they may not have access to or networks to support them with, such as reference requests, certificates or identification documents. Application and interview questions can also be quite challenging for students when exploring academic/work history and students may not know how best to explain changes in schools or gaps in their CV timeline.

Activity ideas:

Discuss ways that students can prepare for and manage the application process, such as how to monitor deadlines, being responsive to emails or asking for updates/feedback. Explore how to respond to typical interview/application questions and identify the skills/strengths they possess or have gained through their experiences. It could be useful to also help the students to think about any documentation or ID that may also be required, so that they can apply for any they don't have or find alternative solutions (for example, using a letter from their local authority to verify their ID). The local authority would have responsibility for supporting a young person in care with their documentation.

Useful resources and websites:

- Amazing Apprenticeships [Care Leavers Guide to Apprenticeships](#)
- Amazing Apprenticeships [Step-by-step Guide to Applying for an Apprenticeship](#)
- Become [Propel yourself into work - Become \(becomecharity.org.uk\)](https://becomecharity.org.uk)



Step-by-step Guide to Applying for an Apprenticeship

There are lots of ways to stand out in the application process and ultimately, employers are looking for the candidates who are most passionate and suited to their organisation.

This guide will help applicants to prepare for the application process and be ready to show that they are the right person for the role.

<https://amazingapprenticeships.com/resource/guide-to-applying-for-an-apprenticeship>

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8

Additional support when applying

Students with additional support needs can discuss this with the employer to see what adjustments can be made to the application process, to make it more accessible for them. This could include having additional time, shadowing/meeting the team in advance of an interview to feel more comfortable, or seeing the interview questions in advance, for example. If the young person has a learning difficulty or disability, the employer is required to make reasonable adjustments to support them and will usually ask them to disclose their support needs as part of the application process.

Activity ideas:

Support your student to research and think about what adjustments could be made to help them during the application and recruitment process, especially those with identified support needs through an Education, Health and Care (EHC) plan. Use the DWP [Health Adjustment Passport](#) with students to help them to think about the different support needs that they may have and to introduce them to the idea of support that could be available through both their employer, and through Access to Work if required.

Useful resources and websites:

- DWP [Health Adjustment Passport](#).

9

Sharing their care-experienced background

Some students may not feel comfortable sharing their experience of care with employers, which they are not required to do during the application process or as an apprentice. However, there can be advantages to disclosing your care experience to managers (whilst not having to share with other co-workers). It may help the student access additional support and funding, for example, the Care Leaver Bursary (see #6).

Some employers and local authorities ringfence opportunities for care experienced young people or guarantee an interview, but the student would need to share their background to demonstrate their eligibility.

Activity ideas:

Encourage students to view and frame their care experience as a positive attribute, for example: "As someone with lived experience of the care system, I am very independent, resilient and empathetic and can quickly adapt to new and changing circumstances; qualities which I know are essential for all professional roles but will be especially valuable in a [insert sector] position."

Discuss what they think the advantages and disadvantages of disclosing their experience of care with an employer would be. What would the benefits/challenges be?

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10

Signpost to support

Unique provision is available to support children in care via their Virtual School (which is part of their local authority). Your student can speak to their Social Worker or Personal Adviser (PA) within the local authority to understand how the Virtual School or Leaving Care team may be able to support them further, for example, by providing careers guidance, support with applications/interview preparation, access to funding or equipment, financial advice and more.

Activity ideas:

Encourage your student to find their 'local offer', which provides information about all the services and support that is available to care leavers from their local authority, including information about both their statutory entitlements as well as any discretionary support that a local authority chooses to provide.

Useful resources and websites:

- Become's Care Advice Line is an incredible resource for both young people and the professionals supporting them, to access advice and support on the rights and entitlements of care experienced young people. The Care Advice Line team provide practical support and solutions to difficult issues and make suitable referrals to both internal services and external support agencies, including advocacy.

[Care Advice Line - Become \(becomecharity.org.uk\)](https://becomecharity.org.uk)

Care Advice Line: 0800 023 2033 WhatsApp: 07860034982

Join the network



The Moving On Up Network is a collaboration of like-minded organisations who are working to support an increase in care experienced young people accessing and progressing through apprenticeships.

The Network will meet 4 times per year (online) sharing:

- Stories of individuals with lived experience.
- The latest government updates.
- Examples of successful approaches.
- Resources to support you and your organisations.
- Upcoming events or opportunities to support.

[Amazingapprenticeships.com/moving-on-up](https://amazingapprenticeships.com/moving-on-up)

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USEFUL RESOURCES

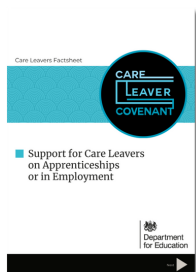


Summary of support available to Care Leavers

A useful 8-page guide by the Care Leaver Covenant setting out the different types of support that a young person leaving care is entitled to.

Click here to access the guide:

<https://indd.adobe.com/view/0ef8a0e1-ea54-4d0c-a123-bd0a38bff2ca>



Summary of Care Leavers on apprenticeships or in employment

A useful 6-page guide by the Care Leaver Covenant providing different examples of how apprenticeship salary, universal credit and housing benefit might be calculated.

Click here to access the guide:

<https://indd.adobe.com/view/1dd6a2bd-e1a3-4d30-af1f-09f952c9dc6a>

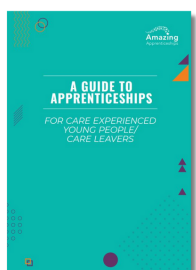


Care Leaver's Apprenticeship Bursary (flowchart)

A flowchart that can be used to help an apprentice to understand if they are eligible to apply for the Care Leaver's Apprenticeship Bursary.

Click here to access the flowchart:

<https://amazingapprenticeships.com/resource/moving-on-up-care-leaver-bursary-flowchart/>



A guide to apprenticeships for care experienced young people

This guide for young people contains concise and clear information about apprenticeships and what help is available for those care experienced people who are considering an apprenticeship, including financial assistance.

Click here to access the guide:

<https://amazingapprenticeships.com/resource/care-leavers-guide/>

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