

ASK Webinar: Understanding the post-16 and post-18 apprenticeships and technical education options

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amazingapprenticeships.com/resources/ask-webinar-understanding-the-post-16-and-post-18-apprenticeships-and-technical-education-options

Helen Twomey:

Hi everyone. Welcome to the first in the series of webinars this year. Very excited to be kicking off the programme. We're going to have lots to talk about today. So welcome to this webinar: Understanding the post-16 and post-18 apprenticeships and technical education options. I am Helen Twomey, I'm the Schools and Resources Manager at Amazing Apprenticeships. Today's session is being brought to you by Amazing Apprenticeships and the ASK programme, now being managed by the Careers and Enterprise Company and still funded by the Department for Education.

So, a really exciting time. As I said, this is the first in a series of monthly webinars that have been developed to support anyone and everyone who is supporting, working with, young people who are looking at their next steps and considering technical education. So one webinar a month for the next year and we'll tell you how to sign up for those in a little while. As always with webinars we're in webinar function, which means that you are muted and your cameras are off. The webinar is being recorded and that means that the recording and the slides will be sent to you afterwards by email if you registered for this.

The Q&A box is open, so you can't talk to us, but the Q&A box is open and we would absolutely love to hear your questions and we'll be checking those throughout the webinar and then we'll put some of those hopefully to our fabulous guest speaker and I'll be answering some as well as we go along.

I'm going to just do a quick poll. We've got lots of people who have joined us, which is brilliant. So I'm going to just quickly launch this poll for you. Question: How confident do you feel in supporting young people making their post-16 and post-18 options? So let's have a look. Quite a big question, isn't it? That's quite a wide question because you might feel really secure in some options and not so secure in others and hopefully we'll cover some of that today. So, a really nice mix actually. Okay, I'm going to end the poll and have a quick look at the answers. So, yeah, 37% not confident at all. So we're glad you're here, we're here to support you. We've got lots of other things that will support you after this webinar as well. Fairly confident, brilliant, 53% and very confident, excellent 9%. If you're very confident and you've got some really good things to share that we don't today, then please do share that with us in the Q&A.

Okay so really, really excited to introduce Nicola Hall, the Director of Education and Development at the Careers and Enterprise Company. So a really, really exciting first speaker for us. So Nicola, I'm going to hand over to you if that's okay.

Nicola Hall:

Thank you so much for being here. Thanks Helen. That's a lovely introduction. Thank you. Good afternoon everyone. I'm absolutely delighted to be here as a guest of Amazing Apprenticeships this afternoon and recording this first webinar of the series. So, for those of you who don't know me, I'm Nicola Hall and as the Director of Education for the Careers and Enterprise Company, essentially I represent the national body for careers education in England. Prior to working for CEC, my background is as a headteacher and a long, long time ago, the equivalent of a Careers Leader in secondary schools in the north of England. And so I have

empathy with all of you on the call today who have joined to continually learn or to refresh your knowledge and understanding of options available to learners. But I think more importantly than my educational background, I'm also here today as the mum of a year 11, a current year 11 son who is right in the middle of making his own choices for his post-16 and of course consequentially his post-18 journey. And so I'm here to learn from all of you as well and hopefully some of your questions will give me some clarity.

I thought that a good place to start this webinar this afternoon was with a brief reflection on what apprenticeships and technical education actually are. Many of you have already said that you're really confident in your knowledge around that, but of course the landscape changes all of the time and there is new terminology and developing terminology and offers that are constantly coming online within these two pathway parts of the education sector overall. So both of these cut across post-16 and post-18 pathway choices. Both of these options add great value, richness and choice to progression options for young people overall. And I think most importantly both apprenticeships and technical education opportunities both have valuable and flexible progression routes at their qualification end point. So this is kind of depending on your point of choice and point of making an options decision, you have your next steps to consider beyond that immediate choice in front of you overall.

So apprenticeships? Everybody is more and more familiar with apprenticeships now. We know that young people are saying to us that they feel like they have much stronger information about apprenticeships than they did have maybe five years ago. And that is undoubtedly as a consequence of the work of our partner organisations such as Amazing Apprenticeships but also the ASK providers that we work with alongside Careers Leaders and careers development professionals within the system overall. We still have a challenge though with conversion to apprenticeships for young people. So they know more but they're still not so confident necessarily in making those choices. So you know, the slides summarise what an apprenticeship is and this information will come to you. But generally speaking as an apprentice, be that at level two, level three or beyond, you are an employee of an organisation. That doesn't necessarily mean though that you are making a decision that takes you on a pathway for the rest of your professional life. An apprenticeship is a gateway and a qualification in the same way that any other that a young person might choose is and offers a young person the opportunity to make different choices as they qualify at the end of their apprenticeship too.

From the perspective of technical education these are options that are often newer in terminology and less understood potentially than the apprenticeship landscape now. So recently of course cohorts of T Levels have been introduced and have been growing and developing across the last few years. T Levels are equivalent to three A-levels and they also include a placement of up to a minimum 315 hours. Technical education qualifications are co-designed with employers to ensure real relevance to the world of work. Newer terminology in the technical education landscape also refers to higher technical education and higher technical qualifications and these include Higher National Certificates, Higher National Diplomas which are more commonly known as HNCs and HNDs and also foundation degrees. So the higher technical qualifications sit at a tier below undergraduate qualifications.

This diagram I think is one which I personally find really useful and one that we refer to a lot at the Careers and Enterprise Company which is designed essentially to outline the whole suite of pathways and qualifications available to young people all the way through to level eight which is a PhD level qualification. And I think sometimes this is a diagram that's also really helpful to use with parents because it articulates very clearly the levels at which qualifications exist but also for me the equity of different types of qualifications within the system. So that you can see straight away that the purple band or the pinkish coloured band at level three, also the first post-16 tier of options that young people are most likely to take has the articulation of academic

and technical and apprenticeship qualifications running all the way through. There is no difference in validity of any of those programmes across the board. And I think it's important to remember equity when we're thinking about different types of qualifications, particularly in the apprenticeship and technical education landscape. Pathways are not comparable by teacher, parental or provider preference or by preconception. Preconception is often misconception. So I think it's important for young people to be able to see that apprenticeships and technical education sit absolutely alongside and equitably with other qualifications in the system and at what level they can be accessed at.

Now at post-16, young people may consider the balance of work-based learning versus classroom approaches. You know, when they're thinking about their options overall, key questions to consider for young people really should be around their learning style, their preference as to whether they prefer to be an employee or a student, the types of learning patterns that would run across the course of a year, whether they feel that they would like their learning to be driven and underpinned by an income and other lifestyle commitments that those young people may have that also might influence their choices around whether to take apprenticeships or technical education as one of their options. And so these questions will help young people to start to make choices between whether they would choose an apprenticeship pathway or a technical education pathway. Levels of prior education and prior learning and predicted results will also help to make some of those choices. And post-16 providers will absolutely be able to help give further information about the range of options that are available across the apprenticeship and technical education landscape overall.

There is a huge range of support that is available for educators and for parents and for young people themselves around apprenticeships and technical education and the sector that is currently evolving and developing. And I think the most important thing in the context of this support, the support from ASK, but also the support from Amazing Apprenticeships and others, is that it remains very current, so it's constantly updated and keeps ahead of the information that is coming out from the Department for Education particularly, and from other qualification providers. So it's really appropriate that if you use the recommended range of support that's available to you, you know that it's absolutely trusted and absolutely up to date in terms of being able to support your learners to your best ability. So if you're an educator then without question, ASK is a programme of support with resources to help schools and colleges navigate the technical and apprenticeship education landscape. Full details of how to access the ASK programme and how to support your learners are included in the link on this particular slide overall, and I really recommend that you visit this link and start off with the ASK Explainer video for a neat overview of what's available to you within your institution.

If you are however, also an educator, but potentially a learner or a parent, then these three options available to you are very tailored to be digestible sets of information, very up to date and tailored specifically to the audiences that may wish to understand the information available. Each of these offers of support are accessed by the QR codes that are on the screens ahead of you. So Amazing Apprenticeships has a suite of resources that are tailored direct to parents, for instance, but also directly to educators, and there is an absolute plethora of resources available on their website and easy to access and easy to digest. If you are simply looking for information about different types of training options and you want to know simple explanations of each offer that is available at each level, then a great place to head is the Skills for Careers website. And the Skills for Careers website is set up in a very informational way. You can search depending on your age, depending on your preferences and depending on what style of learning you want to look for. So it's a really helpful overview of the options that are available to you. And within that site you can also choose whether you are a training provider, whether you're a school, whether you're a young person, whether you're a parent. And then similarly over the course of the last year, UCAS then launched their apprenticeship support service as well. So this allows you, when you're considering your post-18 options, to be able to look at apprenticeship offers alongside university and higher education offers. So it enables your students, your learners thinking about their post-18 choices, to be able to make really direct comparisons of what's available in the marketplace for them and their next steps overall. So if, this information is really important that you use this information as a kind of, I suppose the desktop research element of a young person making their choices moving forward. And I think it's also really important to remember that when

young people are making choices they should be exploring, researching and filtering this type of information down so that they can excellently prepare for opportunities for their targeted personal guidance sessions with qualified Careers Advisers. That time is precious within an organisation, be it a school or a college. And resources of course are always finite. So the better young people are prepared for those conversations with their Careers Advisers the more impact will be able to be delivered from those sessions. And I am absolutely confident that almost all Careers Advisers would be really receptive to the option of having conversations with their schools and colleges about helping to develop programmes that enable young people to really filter those suites of information down and help them to start thinking about their preparation for their next levels of conversation overall.

Finally I just wanted to link together some of the signposting. This is more so for Careers Leaders working in schools and colleges but similarly for parents as well or teachers, teachers working in schools or colleges or indeed progression tutors particularly in sixth forms. And there is then a direct link now between the ASK programme, the work that Amazing Apprenticeships do and the network of Careers Hubs that exist all over the country.

The Careers and Enterprise Company have 44 Careers Hubs which essentially are a place-based network of support for careers education and guidance. So if you work in a school or a college or you are a parent, the first thing, the first port of call for you is to talk to your Careers Leader. Every institution should have a named Careers Leader and that Careers Leader should be named on their website. That Careers Leader is then connected to a dedicated Enterprise Coordinator that is based in your locality within the Careers Hub. And that Enterprise Coordinator is your connector basically to all the products, services and information that is relevant to your local area. So local labour market intelligence for instance, can be driven to you through your local Enterprise Coordinator. They can help provide additional information, guidance, support and services about the different types of apprenticeship and technical education offers that are available within your local area and also a great connection to local employers within your area. They will be very tuned in to the types of apprenticeships and technical education offers that are live and open to young people within your area and be able to have those conversations with you to provide additional guidance overall.

So that's the end of my, essentially my 20 minutes of input into this session. But of course, most importantly, it's an opportunity now for us to have some rich conversation for the remainder of the webinar and I will do my best alongside Helen to answer any questions that you have as a consequence of the topic that we've spoken about today.

Helen Twomey:

Thank you so much, Nicola. Yeah, I've just written down about five things I want to now action from listening to you. Thank you so much. And we've got lots of questions to look at. So I'll just pick a couple to start with and get going? Really interesting one. Are you able to do an apprenticeship and then go on to university?

Nicola Hall:

Yes, you absolutely are able to do that. So you can pursue an apprenticeship at 16 or at 18, but then when you've completed that apprenticeship, you can use that as one of your routes and pathways into a university choice.

Helen Twomey:

Thank you. Then, I'm going to go with one that says, where can I apply for an apprenticeship?

Nicola Hall:

Okay, so there are different options available for applying for apprenticeships. Some of them are directly through your local college or your local training provider. Some of them are direct to employers and organisations themselves. And I think this is one of the interesting parts of UCAS launching their apprenticeship service over the course of the last year is that they try to bring together those opportunities in one place from a post-18 perspective. There is not a coordinated application process for apprenticeships in the same way that we would see for universities. And of course that's because employers have very different needs at very different times and they don't run on an academic timeline in the same way that a higher

education institution would. But I think what's important is the collation of the apprenticeship opportunities being brought together in one place enables then a young person, alongside with their Careers Leader, to think and plan for the timeline of applications that lead into apprenticeships. At the Careers and Enterprise Company we're getting increasing numbers of requests from employers who are really interested in how they can support young people with preparation for application support for apprenticeships. They are really keen that young people are supported as well as possible to be able to make good quality applications because they do look different, the process looks different to a higher education institution.

There should be opportunities for all young people within their school or college careers programme to be able to have encounters with employers and to be able to ask questions of employers about their processes. But increasingly a Careers Leader should be able to have conversations with their local Careers Hub around the apprenticeship opportunities that are available in your immediate area and what those application processes consist of for employers within your area.

Helen Twomey:

Thank you, Nicola. And also to flag Find An Apprenticeship, which is the DfE's huge online job site where you, I'm sure lots of you are on it, are getting your students on it. Lots of exciting changes have happened to it lately which are launching now. So we'll send out some more information about that when we send out the recording and the slides after this. Find An Apprenticeship is a great place to start with lots of filters, you can set up alerts, all sorts of really exciting features. So had to get that one in, sorry Nicola!

Nicola Hall:

Please do jump in.

Helen Twomey:

So much to remember, isn't there, when it's a big question like that as well. We've got so many questions. There was one link to that which is, can you get UCAS points for doing an apprenticeship?

Nicola Hall:

That's a very good question, which, Helen, you may know the answer to.

Helen Twomey:

I do know that, yes you can. I know that there's been some changes to that but I don't want to speak with authority. Yes, you can get UCAS tariff points but I'm going to say I'm going to come back to that person with that one if that's okay. I believe it's not started just yet but it's happening really soon so it's definitely in discussion, if it hasn't happened yet, it's happening really soon so I will come back to you if that's okay. Really, really good question though and lots of people want to know. Gosh, we've got loads of questions Nicola. We've got a couple of interesting ones actually that you would be a really good person to answer this one. How do I connect to an Enterprise Coordinator and is this available to all schools Careers Leads?

Nicola Hall:

Well I was going to say absolutely yes but that's too blunt an answer. So if you are in a maintained secondary school or academy within England then yes, you are absolutely entitled to be part of your local Careers Hub and that offer extends to all special schools and independent special schools. You are not, we aren't mandated at the moment to provide enterprise coordinator to build independent secondary schools into Enterprise Coordinator caseloads. So that's the kind of one exception. However in almost all cases all Careers Hubs have a local community of practice that bring together all of their Careers Leaders in their local area and the majority of those Careers Hubs do have independent school representation within those communities of practice as well. But essentially in order to connect to your Enterprise Coordinator if you visit the Careers and Enterprise Company website then you can find out how to join your local hub and you can register that you want to join your local hub. Or equally you can contact my team via education@careersandenterprise.co.uk and we will be able to connect you to the relevant person in your locality to have that initial conversation.

Helen Twomey:

Brilliant. Actually Nicola, that links to another question how do I contact my hub? So would that be the same?

Nicola Hall:

Yeah, so there is a kind of hub, there's a, on the, on our website there is a page which is about joining a Careers Hub on the Careers and Enterprise Company website. But if, so you can go through that route or you can go through a direct contact to my team and then we'll help match you up.

Helen Twomey:

Brilliant. Thank you. And we will put a link to that to the website and to that into the mailing afterwards. This is an interesting one because we know that things have changed around this, but what would you recommend for someone who isn't ready for an apprenticeship yet?

Nicola Hall:

So I think that depends I think that depends on a case-by-case basis. It's a difficult question to answer. But I think there are a number of different opportunities that a young person could explore on a route to thinking about an apprenticeship overall. And that doesn't necessarily mean choose an alternative qualification pathway in order to take you to being ready for an apprenticeship. There are a number of pre-apprenticeship programmes that are available for young people. They will be variable depending on different areas, but also thinking hard about work experience opportunities in organisations or sectors that are potentially linked to an area that you may consider for an apprenticeship. If you are thinking about an apprenticeship as an option, you could consider an internship, a shorter internship with an organisation which would give you some exposure to what working within an apprenticeship could look like. And similarly, if you are a young person with SEND, it may well be possible for you to undertake a supported internship within your area or a supported pathway to an apprenticeship to enable you to build readiness on your journey. That's definitely something that your Careers Hub linked to your local authority would be able to support with and enable you to know what choices are available within your locality.

Helen Twomey:

Thank you. There's a few questions that I'm going to answer sort of offline because we are running out of time, but a couple more now. If the students... oh it's an interesting one, if a student's only doing two A-levels, what are the options available to them in terms of apprenticeships?

Nicola Hall:

Sorry, say that again, if they're doing 2 A-levels?

Helen Twomey:

If they're only doing two A-levels, does that impact what the options available to them in terms of apprenticeships? So does that impact them being able to access sort of, a higher?

Nicola Hall:

Well, no, it doesn't impact access. It may be a consideration in choice and it may be a consideration in level. So for instance, if you were to undertake a college course when you're making your choices about your options for post-16, your college provider will give you some advice and guidance about whether it's appropriate for you to study a level two programme or a level three programme or a foundation programme to give you access to the right level of qualification. And I think that similarly, the same kind of advice can be accessed for you from apprenticeship providers overall. Organisations, large organisations, will publish their entry criteria on their website. So, for instance, if we think about you know, some organisations, significant apprenticeship providers at level 3 may publish entry criteria in a similar way to the publication of entry criteria to a higher education institution. But of course other organisations will be much more flexible than that and they are equally as interested in about hearing about your experience, your wider enrichment, your personality and your skills when it comes to applying for an apprenticeship. Because what most employers tell us actually is that they're looking for young people that are the right fit for them and their organisation and that is not necessarily predefined in the same way that it might be for applying for a higher education programme at a university or other type of institution.

So I think that this is where the wider support that I've talked about today, the different options that are available to access support from the ASK programme and from Amazing Apprenticeships and from your careers leaders. This is where it's really important to start researching and really drilling down the information about the type of apprenticeship you might want to pursue. And then it's possible to then start to think about, you know, what are the qualification criteria. And in some cases in many cases employers have got layers of entry to apprenticeship offers and there is highly likely to be one that is appropriate for you and your qualification outcomes.

Helen Twomey:

Brilliant. Thank you, Nicola. We've got loads of questions still, but I'm going to encourage people to contact us to answer those because I don't want to, want to keep you too long. So thank you so much for all those questions.

In the mailing you'll get after the webinar, there'll be a contact email address for me and I will answer those questions there. If you're happy to get in touch with any questions that we weren't able to answer today, then that would be amazing because I feel like, yeah, there's still a lot to get through. So just to quickly tell you about the future webinars, so we've got the next three on here for you. So 'Understanding Apprenticeships'. So if you have some really specific apprenticeship questions today, that would be a good place to go if you're, if you'd rather do that and contact us directly and 'Getting application ready', we know that that is a very, can be a really challenging time, especially, you know, for those applying and those supporting them and also 'Using the levels of apprenticeships to progress your career'. So some understanding around that. You don't have to go in at a specific level and that's it, you're stuck on that level. There's lots of, there's lots of people out there and I've met plenty of apprentices myself who are doing one apprenticeship and then moving on to another one to sort of help them progress. So they're really interesting. I love hearing from those apprentices.

You can register for all of those now on the link that's on the screen and the QR code is there as well, which you'll get the slides, so you can scan that if you need to. A couple of other things we wanted to share with you is that Choices... Now lots of you will be familiar with the Parent and Carers' Pack, which has been around for a few years. It had a bit of a revamp, which is very exciting. And so we've renamed it Choices and we're calling it the ultimate parent and carer guide to apprenticeships and technical education. And you can find that on the Careers and Enterprise Company website and you can also register to receive it each month. So if you are a Careers Leader or someone working in any sort of capacity like that, then we'd love you to sign up, but we'd also love you to share it with your parent and carer community to get them to sign up as well. So the link is there. The link is also on the end of the last page of the magazine. So, yeah, it'd be brilliant if you can encourage your parent community, parent and carer community to sign up as well.

The very ever popular Higher and Degree listing launches again on the 15th of October. We know that that is something that schools and colleges really, really love having. So just to flag to you that that is launching. If you're not signed up to our newsletter and things like that, then you can do that on the Choices magazine form as well, actually, or just visit the Amazing Apprenticeships website and then we'll keep you posted when that's coming. But there's a whole landing page for it on our website, so you can find that there.

Nicola, I feel conscious of keeping you over your time and everybody else so thank you so much. I feel like we could have done about three hours there and still not got through all the questions. But thank you so much for your time and I think we need to get you back, actually, if that's okay, at some point soon. Thank you.

Nicola Hall:

Thank you. It's a pleasure.

Helen Twomey:

Thank you so much. Thank you, everybody for attending today and like I say, look out for the mailing, which will have a contact email address for those questions we didn't get to. So really, apologies for that. Thank you so much, everyone. Bye.