



AfC Virtual School
'Together we can achieve!'

NEXT STEPS: getting into work or college

If you are looking to get back into college, find a job or apprenticeship or move on to university, Achieving for Children (AfC) Virtual School is here to help you. Writing an application form or going for an interview can feel like a challenge, but we are here to help.

If a lack of confidence or motivation is holding you back, we are here to support you. No two people are the same and we offer personalised support to everyone who is looking for a way to move on with their education, training or career and to reach their full potential.

This booklet also has some useful information about who to contact in difficult situations or when you are coping with a setback.

If you are trying to decide which course or career to choose, [Fast Tomato](#) is a great site to help you. It encourages you to identify your interests and skills and match you with jobs that require them. You will also find information about courses, apprenticeships and universities and subject choices as well as the grades you will need to aim for when you sit your exams. All students of AfC Virtual School have free access to Fast Tomato. To get your own personal login, please contact the designated teacher at your school or ask your carer or social worker to help you.

From September 2020, we are extending AfC Virtual School services and establishing a Virtual College approach. For more information and support please contact Michael Guard, Assistant Headteacher for Extended Schools.

E: michael.guard@achievingforchildren.org.uk

Traineeships and apprenticeships

Traineeships and apprenticeships prepare you for employment by providing work placements alongside study-based learning.

A traineeship might be a good option if you want to work, but still need to develop work based skills. They offer study based learning in a small group and an extended work placement. Traineeships can last up to six months.

You can find out more about traineeships by following this [link](#). An apprenticeship allows you to train and get paid at the same time. At least 20% of your time will be spent in off the job training. Apprenticeships are available in a wide range of sectors. If you are interested in an apprenticeship, we at AfC Virtual School will do our best to find you one that most appropriately fits your interests and supports your career aspirations.

Visit this [link](#) to check entry requirements.

As a care leaver, once you have completed six months of your apprenticeship, you can receive a £1,000 bursary. Some companies have signed up to the care leaver covenant which can alert you to apprenticeship vacancies, internships and work experience opportunities: www.mycovenant.org.uk/offers

From the 1 August 2020 apprenticeship frameworks will be replaced by the new apprenticeship standards. These are a mix of classroom based and practical teaching.

The [student apprenticeship guide](#) is a fantastic resource with information on everything about apprenticeships from choosing and finding an apprenticeship to advice about how to prepare for your first day of your apprenticeship.

Local apprenticeship providers

Way2Work

W: www.way2work.org.uk

Full time job opportunities and training in:

- business and administration
- customer service
- childcare
- ICT
- teaching, as a teaching assistant

Hawk Training

W: www.hawktraining.com

Apprenticeship vacancies include business and administration and warehousing

Weir Training

W: www.weirtraining.co.uk

Apprenticeship vacancies include hospitality and retail

MIT Skills

W: www.mitskills.com

MIT Skills are based in Brentford and West Byfleet and offer apprenticeships, programmes of study and traineeships in construction and motor mechanics.



Stepping stones to work or study

We have listed some courses below where you can work towards your English and maths GCSE (or functional skills) as well as getting support to help you to get into employment.

Steps into Employment

Kingston Adult College

Contact Kate Garratt

T: 020 8547 6700

Spear Programme

Based in Hammersmith, this is a free, six week course to help with CVs, interview skills and support with job applications.

W: www.resurgo.uk

Hitz Programme

The [Harlequin's Rugby Club's Hitz Programme](#) at the Stoop (need the link) is a fully funded education and sporting programme for 16 to 24 year olds where you can play sports: get fitter, improve your maths and English, gain nationally recognised qualifications, learn how to cook and eat healthily and improve your communication skills and confidence.

Positive Directions

This is a careers programme run by AfC, designed for young people in South West London. It will help you prepare for future training and employment, virtual mentoring and online support with maths and English.

Contact Sharon Pratt

E: sharon.pratt@achievingforchildren.org.uk

Ways into Work (Berkshire)

W: waysintowork/com/job-seekers

This programme gives support in CV writing and finding traineeships and apprenticeships. It is open to care-leavers aged 19+.

Working hours

There are special rules which apply to employment of 15 and 16 year olds and these are different in term and holiday times.

During term times, 15 to 16 year olds can only work a maximum of 12 hours a week. This includes a maximum of two hours on Sundays and school days and a maximum of eight hours on a Saturday.

During school holidays 15 to 16 year olds can only work a maximum of 35 hours a week. This includes a maximum of eight hours on weekdays and Saturdays and a maximum of two hours on a Sunday.



The minimum wage

This is currently £4.55 for under 18s, £6.45 for 18 to 20 year olds, £8.20 for 21 to 24 year olds and £8.72 if you are 25 and over.

Qualifications and pay

Qualifications can have a big effect on salary: usually the higher your qualifications, the more you are paid.

The Labour Force Survey (2020) lists the average gross weekly pay of full-time employees:

No qualifications	£408
GCSEs or equivalent	£541
A levels or equivalent	£570
Trade apprenticeships	£603
Higher education degree level	£788

If you want to earn well, you need to get the best qualifications that you can. It's worth considering an apprenticeship or college course to do this. You might earn less in the short term but more in the long term and for the rest of your life.

As well as gaining qualifications, having work experience will also give you an advantage in securing a career. At the moment, many employers are looking to offer virtual work experience placements to deliver meaningful and structured high quality work experiences.

Find out more at www.speakersforschools.org/experience.

Getting back into college

Further education colleges

Further education colleges offer a wide variety of courses for people aged 16+ to choose from. There are vocational courses such as specific industry courses such as hairdressing, carpentry and catering, but will also offer courses in vocational areas such as travel and tourism and art and design. Some colleges also have A Level and GCSE courses.

All colleges have a careers department that will be able to advise you about the subjects that you can take but if you feel unsure about what you want to choose, AfC Virtual School Careers adviser, Gill Higgins can help you with that.

E: gill.higgins@achievingforchildren.org.uk

Further education colleges can be very different from school and sixth form colleges. They are attended by people of all ages over the age of 16, although most students are between 16 and 19. They are often much larger than schools and you are usually expected to be responsible for your own time management. You won't need to wear a school uniform.

If you register for a full-time course, you will attend for 16 hours a week. This means that you can have a part-time job as well but if you need to resit English and maths qualifications you will need to be in college more often.

The first few weeks of college can be really busy and feel overwhelming. AfC Virtual School will support you while you are studying in college and advocate on your behalf. Colleges also have student support services who provide advice on all aspects of college life.

Colleges can also advise about applying for the 16-19 Education Bursary. Care leavers are a priority group and will receive approximately £1,200 every year, dependent on course attendance. Some colleges pay this bursary directly into student bank accounts, others provide vouchers.

More information on the 16-19 Education Bursary can be found at the [Young People's Learning Agency](#).

Before choosing to study at a further education college, you will have the opportunity to visit for an open day. These can be quite crowded, noisy events, but you can bring someone with you too to help you navigate what's on offer. If you attend an open day, try to find out about the courses you are interested in, the college facilities and other extracurricular activities. You will also have the chance to talk to current students about their experience of the college.

You might also want to find out about what former students have gone to do after leaving college, whether the course includes visits and trips abroad, whether the course includes work experience, what the sporting facilities are like and whether the college provides support for care-experienced students. Gill Higgins at AfC Virtual School will be able to help you prepare for an open day and you can contact her.

E: gill.higgins@achievingforchildren.org.uk

You might also see local colleges represented at careers fairs and this is another way to find out which college is right for you. Local colleges are represented at Achieving for Children's annual World of Work Roadshow that takes place every March.

Links to your local colleges

[West Thames College](#)

[Richmond upon Thames College](#)

[Kingston College](#)

[Brooklands College](#)

[Windsor Forest Colleges Group](#)

(Strodes, Langley and Windsor Colleges)

[The Henley College](#)

[Berkshire College of Agriculture](#)

You can also contact Gill Higgins, the careers adviser at AfC Virtual School for help in deciding which course to take.

E: gill.higgins@achievingforchildren.org.uk

T: 07864 612857. Gill can also help you with putting together your CV, writing application forms and with mock interviews.



Education health and care plans (EHCP)

If you have an EHCP, you will be supported by Achieving for Children's Preparation for Adulthood team, which is part of the SEND team. If you need any additional support when you attend further education or start a training placement will be discussed and reviewed with you by these teams. The EHCP can be maintained until you are 25.

If you are eligible for social care support from the Integrated Service for Children with Disabilities (ISCD) you may also have a social worker or a family support worker who will provide information about your next steps. You might also get help from an adult social care worker if needed.

You might also want to consider a supported internship to prepare you for getting a job. These internships are for students with an EHCP who will benefit from long term, structured work experience with a job coach. They provide more support than a traineeship or apprenticeship.

Follow the links below to find out more about supported internships on offer locally:

[Kingston College](#)

[West Thames College](#): Their supported internship programme is known as Project Search

[Kingston Adult Education](#)

[BCA college](#)

University scholarships and bursaries for care-leavers

Many universities offer scholarships and bursaries for care leavers. When applying for university through UCAS, tick the box on the form that asks if you've been in care and this should provide access to financial and practical support for you. The information that you are a care-leaver will be treated as confidential by the university.

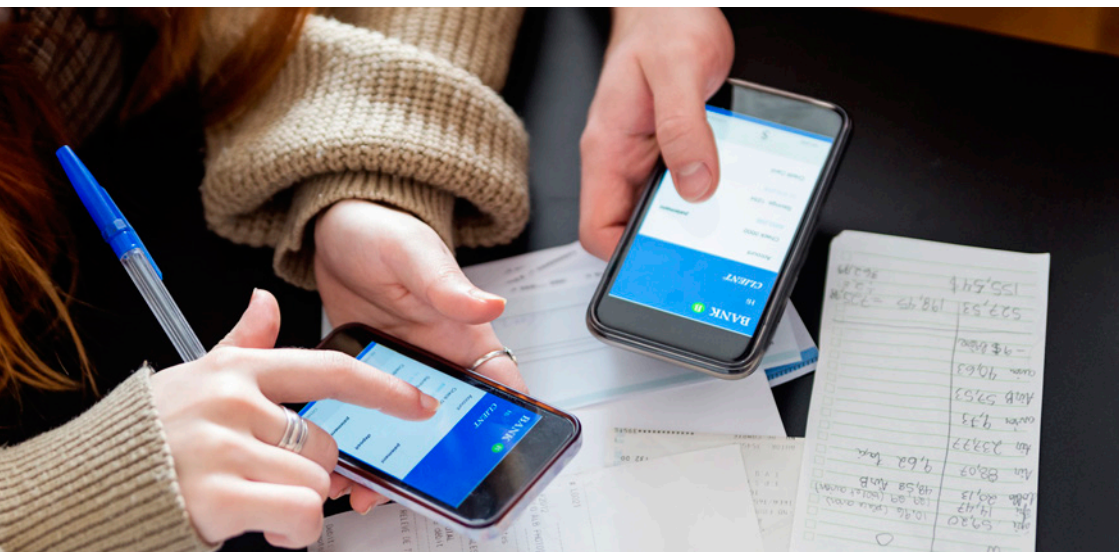
Other funding for care leavers

The Higher Education Bursary

This is a bursary paid by your local authority, entitling students to a payment of £2,000. For more details, search for 'The Higher Education Bursary' with the name of your local authority such as Richmond, Kingston or Windsor and Maidenhead.

The Unite Foundation Scholarship Scheme

This scheme in partnership with 27 universities, offers 90 care leavers free, year-round student accommodation with no bills for three years of study. Unite also offers work placements and mentoring schemes.



Organisations that can help you when life gets complicated

Money management

Follow the [link](#) for help and advice about looking after your money.

Mental health and wellbeing

AfC page of [useful links](#).

Pregnancy services, Kingston

W: [Getting it on](#)

W: [Mummas and beans](#)

Help with domestic violence

Creating a single point of access, the domestic violence hub offers confidential support and advice to victims and their families as well as a point of contact for professionals working with them. The domestic violence hub can arrange appointments with independent advocates, refer to support groups or signpost to other specialist services.

For Kingston:

T: 020 8547 6046

E: kingston.dvhub@victimsupport.org.uk

For domestic abuse in **Windsor and Maidenhead** use [this link](#).

Direct support from [Dash Charity](#)

T: 01753 549865

Homelessness

Kingston Churches Action on Homelessness (KCAH) aims to relieve the stress of homelessness and potentially homeless people by the provision of resources and services. [KCAH](#) is a registered charity set up by 55 churches in the Kingston borough, promoting public awareness of housing services and needs.

T: 020 8255 7400

E: info@kcah.org.uk

Windsor and Maidenhead borough is supporting homelessness with finding solutions for housing. [Link](#).

T: 01628 683803

Or if you are a rough sleeper already, contact [Street Link](#)

T: 0300 500 0914

Substance misuse

The Young People's Substance Misuse Service is for children and young people who have identified substance-related need. This could be young people who are using novel psychoactive substances, illicit substances or drinking alcohol. The service provides outreaching preventative and targeted work with young people in an educative way in partnership with schools and other agencies, as well as more intensive support and interventions for young people whose substance use is more complex and/or affecting their day-to-day relationships, emotional and physical health, and where they require a more intensive specialist approach.

If you live in Richmond or Kingston, contact Lynn Lock.

T: 020 8547 6920

E: smsreferrals@achievingforchildren.org.uk

National helplines

Young people's substance misuse service (YPSMS)

T: 07766 628970

E: youthservices@achievingforchildren.org.uk

This service is for under-18s who need help with their drug or alcohol use in the RBWM area. It also supports young people who have a family member with a drug or alcohol problem. We offer free and confidential information, advice and one-to-one support.

Action on Addiction

Helpline: 0300 330 0659

W: actiononaddiction.org.uk

Provides help and information to families and individuals who are worried about alcohol or drug misuse problems.

Frank

Helpline: 0300 123 6600

W: talktofrank.com

Offers free confidential drugs information and advice 24 hours a day.

Addaction

W: addaction.org.uk

Working solely in the field of drug and alcohol treatment, includes specialist services for young people and access to local projects.

Re-Solv

Helpline: 01785 810762

Text: 07496 959930

W: communityforrecovery.org

Re-Solv works to reduce the harms caused by volatile substance abuse (VSA) and the misuse of other legal substances across the UK.

DrugFAM

Helpline: 0300 888 3853

W: drugfam.co.uk

DrugFAM supports families affected by a loved one's use of drugs or alcohol.

Adfam National

W: adfam.org.uk

National charity working with families affected by drugs and alcohol and is a leading agency in substance related family work.

Release

Helpline: 020 7324 2989

W: release.org.uk

The drugs team provides help, advice, information, support and referral to people affected directly and indirectly by drug use.

Childline

Helpline: 0800 1111

W: childline.org.uk

ChildLine is a counselling service for children and young people. You can contact Childline about anything - no problem is too big or too small.

Amy Winehouse Foundation

W: amywinehousefoundation.org

The Amy Winehouse Foundation works to prevent the effects of drug and alcohol misuse on young people.

Dear Albert

[Dear Albert](#) is a social enterprise which specialises in peer mentoring and making recovery more visible by bringing together existing resources. Dear Albert welcomes, supports and inspires substance clients with SEND needs, such as mental health, emotional health, learning disabilities, behavioural difficulties and physical disabilities through the often challenging road to recovery.

Their free national helpline is staffed by specialist, qualified, BACP registered, drug and alcohol counsellors which is in operation seven days a week, 365 days a year to support clients and families in crisis with drugs and alcohol.

Contact Chris Simonite

T: 0800 8803 153

E: connect@dearalbert.co.uk



AfC Virtual School contact details

Suzanne Parrott: AfC Virtual School Headteacher

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Gill Higgins: Careers Advisor

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T: 020 8831 6037

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w: www.afcvirtuelschool.org.uk

Supporting the education of looked after and previously looked after children in Kingston, Richmond and Windsor and Maidenhead