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www.connexionssy.org.uk
www.ypzone.co.uk
www.connexions-direct.com

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Parents' and Carers' Guide

2007

Supporting Teenagers with their Options



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If you have any difficulty reading this, please contact us and we will help you.

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যোগাযোগ করুন এবং আমরা আপনাকে সাহায্য করব।

Haddii ay kugu adkaato akhriska qoraaladan,
fadlan nala soo xidhiidh waanan kaa caawin doonaa.

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If you would like this publication in an alternative format please contact us – check back cover for details.

Credits

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Looking to the future

How parents/carers can help

Your teenager will soon be making decisions about their future education, learning and career plans.

As a parent/carer, your input and influence is crucial in helping them make well informed and appropriate choices. In order to help you, this booklet has been produced to guide you through the routes open to them and the options available.

It provides practical information on:

- How the Connexions Service supports young people.
- Advice on choosing subjects in Years 10 and 11.
- Planning for the future in and after Year 11.
- What young people do in South Yorkshire after Year 11.
- Options after Years 12 and 13.
- Further education and work based learning.
- Higher education.
- Funding support.
- The local labour market.

You can help your teenager by:

- Attending parents/carers evenings.
- Contacting a Personal Adviser at your teenager's place of study.
- Contacting Connexions Direct (see page 4 for details) or local contacts.

We do hope you find the information useful. If you have any further questions we will be glad to help. You can contact us by telephone, e-mail or visit our websites. Details of our main Connexions Centres, providing resources and information, are given on the back cover.

Note

For ease of reading and because this booklet is written for parents and carers across South Yorkshire, we have used the term Local Education Authority (or LEA) throughout. In Sheffield however, these services are now provided by the Children and Young People's Directorate (CYPD). In Doncaster they are provided by Education Standards and Rotherham is known as Children and Young People's Services. Barnsley has retained the name LEA.

Making Connexions

The Connexions Service aims to offer each young person aged 13 to 19 years of age the practical help and advice they need to get the best start in life.

Personal Advisers work alongside learning mentors and teachers in schools and colleges to offer a wide range of information, advice and guidance to make sure that your teenager gets the support needed to help them progress. Any information gathered is always treated confidentially and sensitively. From Year 9, students needing more individual help can be seen on a one-to-one basis. Issues explored during the session include personal experiences and achievements, interests and hobbies, career aims and hopes for the future. If appropriate, young people will be offered support to complete their own career plan.

This support could be related to careers advice and guidance or to help your teenager develop skills through activities like sport, performing arts and volunteering. Support is also there to help with any other problems that are getting in the way of them achieving their goals.

Personal Advisers also work closely within communities. This means that the support they offer is also available from local youth and community centres. If your teenager is not in learning, for whatever reason, Personal Advisers are still there to support them.

Personal Advisers offer up-to-date information and advice about all the different careers, qualifications and courses available to help young people make decisions about their next steps. Any advice is impartial and aims to help young people choose the option that suits them best. There are also several computer programs that can suggest job ideas; of these the Kudos and Careerscape programs are widely available.

For more information about all the options talk to your Personal Adviser, call into your Connexions Centre (see back cover for details) or check these websites:

www.yppzone.co.uk

www.connexions-direct.com

www.connexionssy.org.uk

Connexions Direct is a national service offering quick access to information and advice. You can get information from the website or speak to a Connexions Direct Adviser by telephone, web chat, email or text message. This service is available 7 days a week 8.00am to 2.00am.

Telephone: 080 800 13 2 19

Text on: 07766 4 13 2 19

For local information see the back cover.

For more information about the Connexions Service go to:

www.connexions.gov.uk



Choices in Year 9

In Year 9 your teenager will be making choices about what to study in Years 10 and 11. This is also the point when schools start encouraging students to think about their future plans. Your teenager may develop an Individual Learning Plan (ILP) which explains their learning and career goals. Some may also record their achievements plus discussions with staff in a Progress File. You will find details of subject options in the booklet **Look Ahead.***

Many Year 9 students now choose to study some vocational (work related) courses alongside more familiar subjects. These vocational subjects relate to a work area (e.g. Health and Social Care) and lead to recognised qualifications, including GCSEs in vocational subjects, NVQ and BTEC. They may be more practical and assessed by coursework rather than by exam. Depending on other subjects studied and the grades achieved they can lead to a wide range of courses, qualifications and jobs after Year 11.

Some schools may also be piloting the new Diplomas (Specialised Diplomas) – see page 23. Your teenager's school will tell you if these are available.

There may be other programmes available that involve spending time at an approved training centre on a programme covering vocational (work) skills. Schools may also offer ASDAN Awards, which can help students develop their skills and prepare for adult life. Your teenager's school would discuss this kind of programme with you.

Young Apprenticeships are also being run as pilots in some schools and can include up to two days a week in the workplace, leading to recognised vocational qualifications. Your teenager's school will tell you if they are available.

* Your teenager's school will be able to advise you on what kinds of courses are available.

A balanced choice

Students need to think about how these choices might affect their career plans. It's important to choose a broad range of subjects as this will help to keep future options open. There are also a small number of careers which require specific subjects. Your teenager's Personal Adviser or careers teacher can advise on this.

You can help your teenager by encouraging them to:

- Choose subjects they enjoy and are good at.
- Consider the choices carefully, rather than choosing a subject because it seems an easy option or because their friends are taking it.
- Find out more about the subjects – especially if they haven't studied them before.
- Think about how they like to learn – e.g. by doing things or by writing information down.
- Use careers/Connexions information in schools and Connexions Centres.
- Check out how a course is assessed e.g. by coursework or exam.
- Choose a balanced range of subjects.
- Think about their interests.

In Year 10 (or early in Year 11) your teenager can take part in a short period of work experience. This should help them understand the world of work and may help them to test out a career interest.

For more information use:

Look Ahead! – The careers guide for young people in Year 9

Choices, choices... Your essential guide to Y9 vocational options www.voced.co.uk/y9

Barnsley 14-16 Collaborative Provision from 2007, A Guide To Courses Available At 14+ www.barnsley1419.info

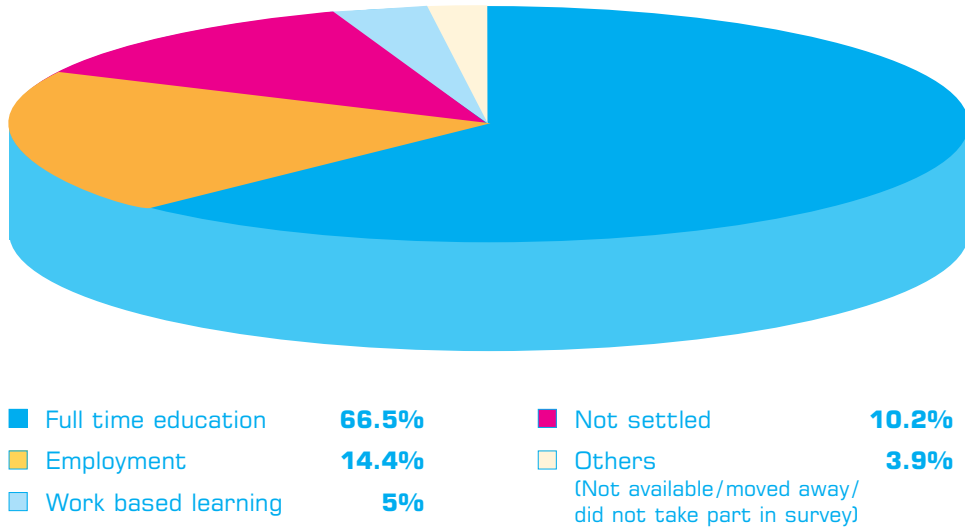
www.logon2careersbarnsley.co.uk

Options after Year 11

What opportunities are there locally for young people?

When you're looking at options it can be helpful to know what young people have done previously. Here's what Year 11 students living in the South Yorkshire area went on to do in 2005.

Destinations of Year 11 school leavers in South Yorkshire, 2005



Source: **Moving On 2005**, Nord Anglia Lifetime Development and Sheffield Futures.

Some key points

- About two out of three young people chose full time further education (college/sixth form).
- Almost one in five entered employment or work based learning.
- Around one in ten were not settled at the time of the survey.

What courses did they choose?

- Nearly half of those students who chose further education started 'traditional' A levels.
- However a sizeable number – around one in seven of this group – chose more vocational courses at advanced level, such as A levels in applied subjects, BTEC National and NVQ 3. (See pages 22–25 for more information about these courses.)
- What's more, further education isn't just for those with high grades – more than one in three of this group went into courses which don't require GCSE grades A*-C.

What do you mean by work based learning?

It means that a young person carries on learning and gaining qualifications in the workplace, see pages 22-25 for more information.

Note: The above figures have been rounded up or down slightly – for more details please see the **Moving On 2005** booklet.



What sort of jobs or work based learning did they do?

These are the types of employment or work based learning entered in the greatest numbers by young people in South Yorkshire:

- 1. Skilled construction** (around one in six of this group).
- 2. Sales** (one in ten of this group).
- 3. Clerical/secretarial** (around one in thirteen of this group).
- 4. Labouring and other unskilled work** (around one in fourteen of this group).
- 5. Hairdressing and related work** (around one in fourteen of this group).

There are concerns about the number (approximately one in seven of this group) who go into jobs with no training, although this number has decreased from the previous year.

See **Learning pays!** on page 10.

What does 'not settled' mean?

This refers to those young people who weren't in work, further education or work based learning at the time of the survey (which takes place in November each year). Some young people don't find a place straight away, while others may drop out of their job, course or training programme. Personal Advisers from the Connexions Service continue to support these young people.

What this means for your teenager?

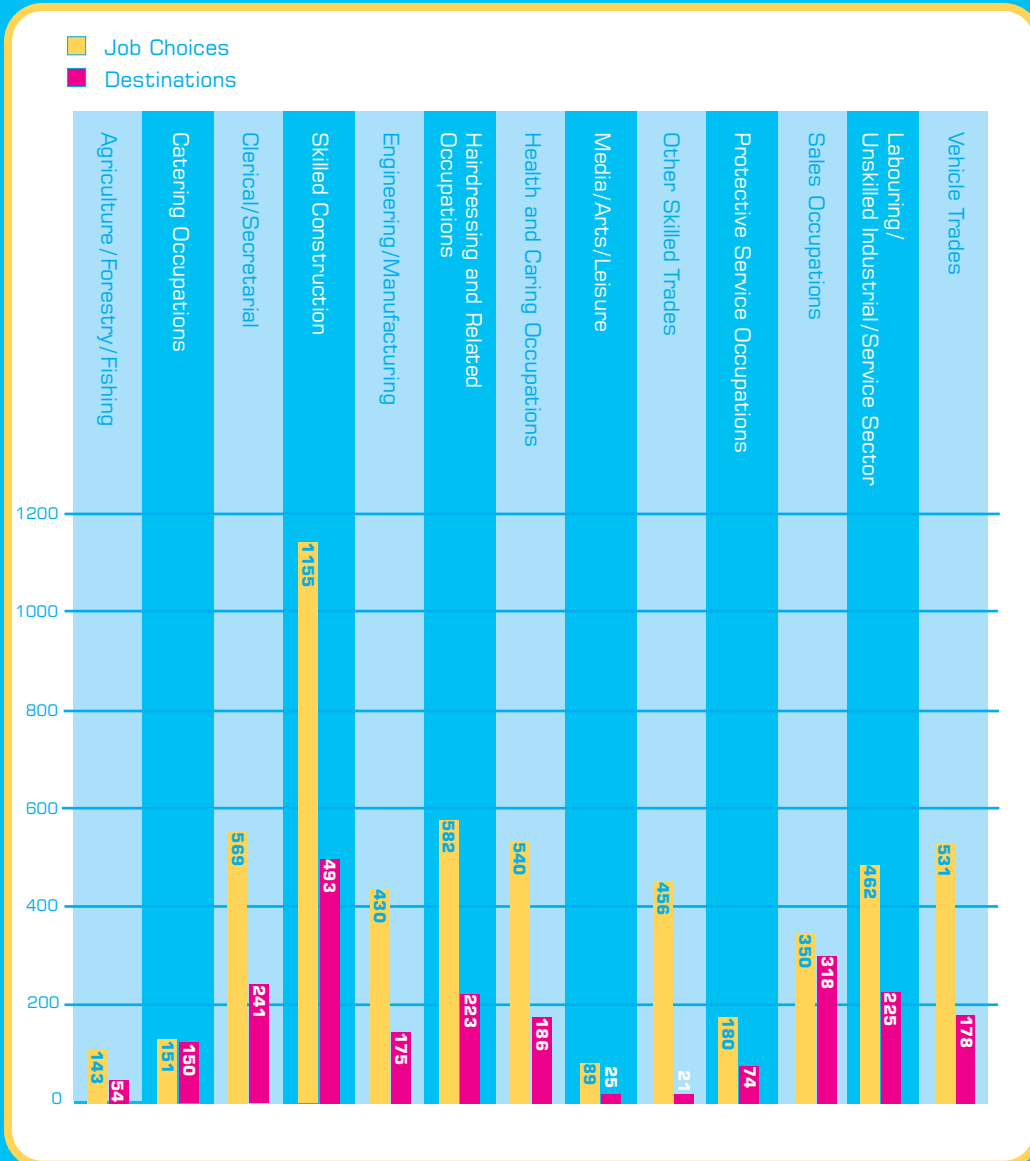
It's important to be flexible. Not everyone achieves their first choice of work or training. The chart opposite shows how a young person's choice of work can be very different from what they actually go on to do. In other words, if your teenager is interested in a popular area of work, they need to:

- Think about how they can improve their chances.
- Have a back up plan e.g. apply for a full time course as well as work based learning.

Note: The above figures have been rounded up or down slightly – for more details please see the **Moving On 2005** booklet.



The differences between job choices and actual destinations of Year 11 school leavers in South Yorkshire – 2005

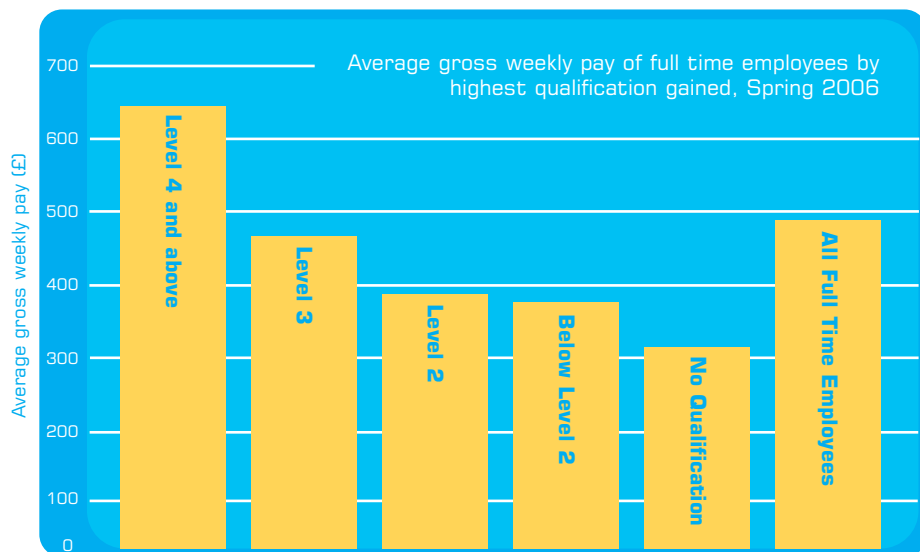


Source: **Moving On 2005**, Nord Anglia Lifetime Development and Sheffield Futures.

Learning pays!

It's very important that your teenager goes into some form of learning or training. Skills and qualifications really do matter nowadays. A young person may be tempted by a job without training because, to begin with, it may pay more. In the long term however, there is a definite link between qualifications and earnings – as this chart shows.

The government has proposed that by 2013 it should be compulsory for all young people to stay in learning or training until they are aged 18.



Source: DfES analysis of the Labour Force Survey, Spring 2006. Data next updated: March 2007



Qualifications matter

It's becoming harder to find any kind of work unless you have qualifications – see **The world of work** on pages 28-30.

Get to know the local jobs market

See **The world of work** on pages 28-30 to find out where local jobs might be in the future.

Whatever route your teenager chooses after leaving school, the most important thing is to carry on learning and gaining qualifications.

Local further education and work based learning opportunities are listed in the Options 2007 booklet issued to young people in Year 11.

Making a choice at Year 11

College? ... sixth form? ... or work based learning?

Full time education and work based learning both involve continuing to learn and gain qualifications after Year 11, so it's important to find out about both options.

Full time education (college or sixth form)

No matter what grades your teenager achieves, there are further education courses available to them.

If they achieve 4/5 GCSE grades A*-C, they can consider advanced level courses. There is a wide choice available, including traditional A level studies, vocational courses, or a combination of both.

If their grades are lower, they could start on a foundation or intermediate course, then move on to a higher level programme if they do well. There are also courses which can support young people with special needs.

See pages 22-25 for more information about qualifications.

Work based learning

Not everyone is suited to full time study. If your teenager would prefer to learn while they are working, then work based learning may be the answer.

There are programmes at several levels:

Apprenticeships/Advanced Apprenticeships

These are based in a workplace. Young people are either employed or on a work placement while they study for:

- NVQ qualifications at either level 2 (Apprenticeship) or level 3 (Advanced Apprenticeship).
- Key Skills qualifications.
- Technical Certificates linked to the area of work involved.

Advanced Apprenticeships can also lead to certain higher education courses such as Foundation Degree or HNC/HND.

Entry requirements for Apprenticeships are flexible. Advanced Apprenticeships often ask for GCSE grades A*-C (although this can vary). It can be possible to move up from an Apprenticeship to an Advanced Apprenticeship.

Entry to Employment (e2e)

If your teenager isn't ready for work then Entry to Employment (e2e) may be a starting point.

It's a flexible programme, designed to tackle whatever barriers might be preventing them getting into work, learning or training. Young people can also work towards qualifications at NVQ level 1. Attendance on e2e can vary between 16 and 40 hours a week; this will depend on the young person's ability to learn and on what they want to do in the future.

Time off for study or training

If your teenager is aged 16 or 17, goes into employment, and has not already got qualifications at NVQ level 2 (GCSEs grades A*-C or equivalent) they are entitled to paid time off to study or train for a qualification to level 2.

More information is available from Personal Advisers in schools and Connexions Centres or on www.dfes.gov.uk/tfst

Training Pays

Pilots are taking place nationally for the above. In South Yorkshire Training Pays can provide an opportunity for a young person to access training if the job they have does not include this. There is a financial reward for them and the company they work for if they comply and sign up for the scheme.

How you can help your teenager:

Encourage them to:

- Look at all the options.
- Think about which style of learning will suit them best.
- Apply early (often before the end of January) for the option(s) of their choice.
- Apply for at least one back up plan.

How to find out more

For information about opportunities in your area use:

The **Options 2007** booklet – given to Year 11 young people in the Autumn term. It lists full time courses and work based learning opportunities in South Yorkshire and explains how to apply.

www.lscdirections.co.uk – the Learning and Skills Council's website which lists the training providers in South Yorkshire.

www.connexionsinsheffield.org.uk
www.ypzone.co.uk

Talk to training providers and college/sixth form staff at local

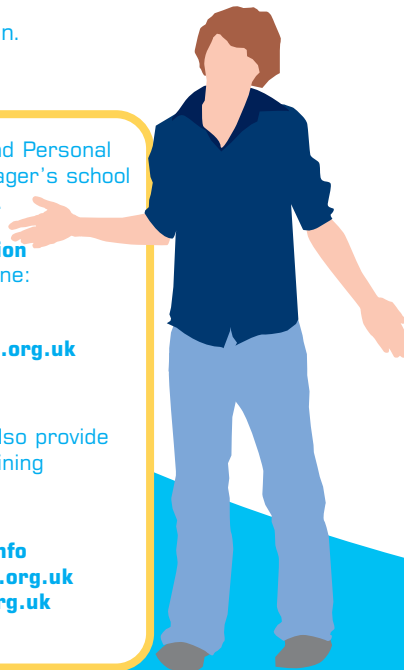
careers exhibitions and Personal Advisers at your teenager's school or Connexions Centre.

For general information
Apprenticeships helpline:
08000 150 600

www.apprenticeships.org.uk
www.qca.org.uk
www.lsc.gov.uk

These websites can also provide information about training and courses:

www.ypzone.co.uk
www.barnsley1419.info
www.applyrotherham.org.uk
www.applysheffield.org.uk



What help is there in Year 11?

There is a range of help available to your teenager in Year 11, especially during the Autumn term. This is when careers fairs (such as the Routes 16 exhibition which takes place in Sheffield), option evenings and college/sixth form open evenings generally take place. These events are to help young people and parents/carers find out about all the options; they are also an opportunity to meet staff from colleges, sixth forms and training providers.

Personal Advisers visit schools and meet with young people, both individually and in groups, to give information, advice and guidance.

Your teenager should also have received a booklet, **Options 2007**, which covers the local opportunities open to them. You will probably find it helpful to look through this. You can also find details about local opportunities on these websites:

www.barnsley1419.info
www.applyrotherham.org.uk
www.applysheffield.org.uk

There is additional support for young people with special needs (e.g. learning difficulties, a disability or long term medical condition). Personal Advisers in schools can talk to you about the options available. They can also call on staff who can advise on matters such as specialist further education, supported employment and work related learning. There is also a booklet for families called **Making Choices**.

Last year in Barnsley, Doncaster and Rotherham in conjunction with the Aim Higher project events took place for parents/carers. The Aim Higher project encourages young people from all walks of life to go into higher education.

The events proved successful in terms of helping parents/carers understand the choices young people face in relation to education and training. In particular they emphasised the need for young people to aim higher in terms of the things they would like to achieve.

Similar events will take place in 2007. More details will be available later from Nord Anglia Lifetime Development.

If your teenager's future is still uncertain after finishing Year 11, the Connexions Service will continue to support them until they are settled. For example, we can send out regular vacancy details and Personal Advisers are still on hand to give information and guidance, especially at key times such as when GCSE results are published.

You can help your teenager by encouraging them to:

- Use all the help on hand e.g. from Personal Advisers, booklets, careers fairs, open evenings.
- Think about all the options before making a decision.

We strongly recommend that young people start applying for further education and work based learning before the end of January of Year 11. Therefore if your teenager has not made any applications by the time you read this, please encourage them to seek help from their Personal Adviser as soon as possible.

For more information about Routes 16 please telephone Sheffield Futures on **0114 2012812**.

Money for further education

If your teenager stays in full time education:

Child Benefit can be payable up to the age of 20 provided the course of education or training began before the young person reached 19 years of age. Tuition fees do not generally apply until they are 19.

In addition, the following help may be available:

Education Maintenance Allowance (EMA)

If your teenager stays in full time further education after Year 11, at college, school, an LSC funded Entry to Employment (e2e) Programme, or a Programme Led Apprenticeship and your household income is £30,810 or less, they may be able to claim Education Maintenance Allowance. This is worth between £10 and £30 a week term time depending on your income.

There are also bonuses for meeting goals agreed between your teenager and their school, college or training provider.

The main rules are that your teenager should be in full time study (at least 12 hours of guided learning a week). They also have to sign a Learning Agreement with the school, college or training provider.

- EMA can be paid for two or sometimes three years (depending on how long the young person needs to complete their studies).
- EMA doesn't affect any other benefits that you may be claiming.

In certain circumstances if your teenager wants to do a third year of study and they live in a pilot area for the Education Maintenance Allowance they may need to enquire about a Flexible Learning Certificate at their local Connexions office.

Although three years is the maximum length of time for claiming EMA, there are circumstances where a young person who has had to take a break from education, may be able to claim their third year of EMA support in the fourth year after completing Year 11.

For more information about EMA ring the free national helpline on **0808 10 16 2 19** or check www.direct.gov.uk/ema

Learner Support Funds/School Access Scheme

These are designed to help towards the costs of starting or following a course. These costs could include books and equipment, extras like visits/field trips and also emergencies that might affect living, learning and personal expenses. Whether a student can claim depends on their family circumstances – the support is for students in greatest need.

For more details contact your Local Education Authority (LEA), individual colleges or sixth forms.

Help with transport costs

Your LEA may help with the cost of your teenager travelling to and from school or college. In some circumstances the LEA may provide free transport. Each LEA has a policy on transport support. To find out what help is available in your area, check www.dfes.gov.uk/16-19transport

In some circumstances there may be help available if your teenager wishes to attend a course that is too far away from home for daily travel.

For details check www.dfes.gov.uk/financialhelp or the DfES booklet on the Further Education Residential Support Programme, which is available at Connexions Centres.

Funding for childcare

The Care to Learn fund can help to pay childcare and certain additional costs for parents under 20 who:

- Start a course of learning or training in a school, college or as a trainee with a work based learning provider that receives some public funding.
- Are caring for their own child(ren) - fathers are also eligible if they are the main carer.
- Live in England.
- Use a registered childcare provider.

For more details, your teenager should speak to their Personal Adviser or ring the Care to Learn helpline on **0845 600 2809** or check their website at www.dfes.gov.uk/caretolearn

Income Support

Young people who are estranged from their parents/carers and in full time further education can claim Income Support.

Changes to this information may occur.

Your teenager's Personal Adviser will have details, or check www.dfes.gov.uk/financialhelp



Money for employment and work based learning

If an Apprenticeship or Advanced Apprenticeship is employed status this means a young person has a job with a company although their training may be organised by a training provider. These opportunities pay a wage which should be at least £80 a week.

Programme Led Apprenticeships mean that a young person is in training that could eventually lead them into an employed status Apprenticeship. These opportunities attract a range of benefits including Child Benefit, plus depending on circumstances, Education Maintenance Allowance (EMA).

For more details check:
www.apprenticeships.org.uk or
www.lscdirections.co.uk

Entry to Employment (e2e)

For young people who are not yet ready for work, e2e is a programme for 16-18 year olds that can help them get the skills and experience they need. Young people on this programme may be entitled to Education Maintenance Allowance.

For more details about EMA check www.direct.gov.uk/ema or call the helpline on **0808 10 16 2 19**

Help with childcare costs

There is help from the Care to Learn fund. See page 15.

Employment

Wages vary between employers. The National Minimum Wage for 16-17 year olds is currently £3.30 per hour. However this doesn't apply to Apprenticeships or other work based training.

For more details check
www.dti.gov.uk

If your teenager earns less than £84 a week they cannot build up entitlement to claim future benefits e.g. sick pay. They will not start contributing to National Insurance until they earn £97.00 or more per week.

These rates usually change in April or October. Check the new rates on www.hmrc.gov.uk

Registering for work and claiming benefits

If your teenager leaves school and doesn't get a job straight away they should register at their Connexions Centre after the official school leaving date – Friday 29th June 2007. Their Personal Adviser will explain what they should do before they leave school.

Remember!

The rules about allowances, benefits and wages can change. Always check information is up-to-date. The following websites are useful:
www.dfes.gov.uk/financialhelp
www.direct.gov.uk

Child Benefit and Child Benefit Extension Period

After your teenager finishes Year 11, you can still receive Child Benefit. This will continue until the Monday following 31st August or until they start work or employed status work based learning (whichever comes sooner). It may also be possible to claim Child Benefit Extension for a specified length of time (normally for 20 weeks from the official school leaving date. Personal Advisers will have more details). There are different rules if your teenager stays in full time education – see pages 14-15. If they leave a course of further education, you can normally claim Child Benefit Extension for 20 weeks from the day they left the course.

Bridging Allowance

If your teenager has been in work or training, after their entitlement to Extended Child Benefit has ended, they may be able to claim a weekly Bridging Allowance of £15.00 for a specified period. This can be paid for a maximum of 8 weeks in any 12 month period. Your teenager would need to visit their Connexions Centre in order to start making a claim.

Job Seekers Allowance

At 16/17 an unemployed young person cannot normally claim Job Seekers Allowance (JSA). However, in certain circumstances described as 'Hardship' a young person can receive JSA for a short period of time. 'Hardship' usually applies if the young person is no longer able to live at home, or if their parents/carers are on a low income. To start making a claim they need to visit their Connexions Centre.

Income Support

Income Support is a benefit for young people aged 16+ who are unable to work because they are, for example, sick or a lone parent.

They can also claim if they are in full time further education and estranged from their parents/carers.

Disability

If your teenager has a disability you may be able to receive benefits to help pay for the costs of being at work and everyday living.

For confidential information on the benefits available to disabled people and their carers, phone the Benefit Enquiry Line on **0800 88 22 00**.

For specific information on benefits contact your local Department for Work and Pensions or Jobcentre Plus office:

www.dwp.gov.uk or
www.jobcentreplus.gov.uk

Barnsley Jobcentre Plus:
01226 263000
Doncaster Jobcentre Plus:
01302 503503
Rotherham Jobcentre Plus:
01709 343000

(see also below)

For new claims for Jobseekers Allowance, Income Support and Incapacity Benefit for the Mexborough and Rotherham area: **0845 600 2556**



Options after Years 12 and 13*

What happens with examinations and coursework in Year 12?

Year 12 courses have varied arrangements for coursework and assessments. Some teenagers study entirely academic or entirely vocational courses; others choose a mixture. It's important to clarify with school/college the arrangements for each course.

What are my teenager's options at the end of Year 12?

This depends very much on what they are studying. Most AS students would expect to progress to A2 after Year 12, subject to satisfactory results. Check with the school or college what results are needed for this to happen.

Some courses available in Year 12 last for one year and can lead onto more advanced courses.

Some young people choose training/employment opportunities, similar to those taken up by Year 11 students (see pages 11-12).

What about options after Year 13?

The major option after advanced level study is higher education. There is a wide range of courses and subjects (e.g. Degrees, HNDs, Foundation Degrees – see pages 22-25).

A number of students go into work or training after Year 13 and increasing numbers take a 'gap year' before higher education.

My teenager is thinking about higher education – is there anything they need to be doing in Year 12?

Yes! Year 12 is an extremely important time for research.

They can obtain factual information about individual universities through various books and websites (see next page).

However, they also need to look into the location, accommodation and facilities at each university or college. This is why it's important to visit university and college open days, usually in the Summer term of Year 12. They can also obtain details from websites, prospectuses, schools, colleges, www.opendays.com, and admissions tutors. Additionally there is an annual higher education fair in July, normally at Sheffield Arena.

Applications should generally be made by January, or (in some cases October) of Year 13. However, for many courses it's advisable to apply well before the closing date.

What happens about money for higher education?

This is dealt with on pages 20-21.

My teenager wants to get a job after Year 13. What might be available?

There are some 'advanced level' jobs (e.g. in business or finance), however, there are fewer opportunities at this level nowadays. Bear in mind too that these employers may also ask for the same high grades as some university courses.

Many of those who get jobs after Year 13 start off in jobs that don't specifically ask for advanced level qualifications. Advanced Apprenticeships (see pages 11-12) can also still be available.

It may be worth your teenager also exploring work related higher education courses, such as Foundation Degrees (see page 25).

What if my teenager does not wish to study now but wants to in the future?

Many young people now take a gap year. Generally, admissions tutors look on this positively, provided that the time is used constructively. However, it is essential to check with individual admissions tutors.

Part time study may be an option. Application and financial arrangements are different and can vary from one place to another, so check with individual universities or colleges.

Foundation Degrees are a way of combining academic study and work based learning. (See page 25.)

Remember that higher education is also open to adults.

Where can we get more information?

The **18+ What Next?** booklet, which your teenager should receive in Year 12, covers options in more detail. These websites and books are also a useful starting point:

Big Guide – The Official Universities and Colleges Guide (UCAS)

Choosing your Degree Course and University

Decisions at 17/18+

Degree Course Offers

The Careers Directory

www.connexions-direct.com/jobs4u

www.aimhigher.ac.uk

www.ucas.com



* The phrases "Year 12" and "Year 13" refer to time spent in full time education after Year 11, whether in a sixth form or college.

Money for higher education

There are two main costs associated with going to university: tuition costs (fees) and general living costs.

Tuition fees

Universities and colleges can charge up to £3,070 a year for tuition.

However, this does not have to be paid until after leaving the course.

Instead your teenager can take out a tuition fee loan to cover the cost.

Student Loans for Maintenance

To help with general living costs, students can take out a Maintenance Loan of up to £4,510 a year (more if studying in London). Part of this is means tested.

Repayments

Your teenager would start repaying their tuition fees and Maintenance Loan once they have left their course and are earning more than £15,000 a year. They currently pay 9% of any income over £15,000. For example, someone earning £18,000 would repay approximately £22.50 a month (DfES figures).

Any balances will generally be written off 25 years after finishing a course.

Maintenance Grant/Special Support Grant

If your household income is less than £38,331, your teenager should receive a Maintenance Grant of between £50 and £2,765. **This doesn't have to be repaid.** If the Maintenance Grant is £1,230 or more then the Maintenance Loan is reduced accordingly.

In certain circumstances your teenager may be entitled to a Special Support Grant.

Bursaries

If your teenager receives the full Maintenance Grant and the university/college charges fees of more than £2,765 then that institution must provide a minimum bursary to cover the difference. For example, if they charge the full £3,070, the bursary must be at least £305. **This doesn't have to be repaid.**

Some universities or colleges are offering considerably more than this. The arrangements vary from one institution to another so it really pays to shop around.

Courses attracting other help

There are different arrangements for certain courses, including nursing and health care professions, social work, teaching (postgraduate training) and some dance and drama courses.

There is more information in the **18+ What Next?** booklet and on www.dfes.gov.uk/studentssupport

Other support

Certain groups of students, such as those with disabilities or care responsibilities, may be entitled to extra financial help. See **Useful publications, websites and telephone numbers** below.

Scholarships are available for certain courses; you can search for these through www.scholarship-search.org.uk. Some companies offer sponsorships.

Access to Learning Funds can sometimes help students who run into money problems during a course.

After applying for a course, contact student support at your LEA.

Useful publications, websites and telephone numbers

18+ What Next? booklet (in schools, colleges and at Connexions Centres).

Financial Support for Higher Education Students

Everything you wanted to know about sponsorships, placements and graduate opportunities

Bridging the Gap – funding for disabled students

Also use www.skill.org.uk or ring **0800 328 50 50**

www.aimhigher.ac.uk

www.direct.gov.uk/studentfinance

www.ucas.com

Student Loans Company: **0800 40 50 10**

Minicom: **0800 085 3950**

www.slco.uk



Note: The figures quoted here are for 2007/08. Financial information can change. Check for up-to-date information and figures on the websites listed above and on www.dfes.gov.uk/studentssupport

What qualifications are there?

A number of qualifications are currently under review. We have outlined some of the major plans for change but, to find out more, visit www.dfes.gov.uk/14-19

GCSEs

These are studied up to Year 11 in schools and can also be available after this at some colleges and sixth forms. The subjects studied can affect future career choice, as can the grades achieved. GCSEs are usually two year courses; however, schools may also offer GCSE short courses covering fewer topics and equivalent to half a GCSE.

Assessment methods have recently been reviewed; in the future less coursework will be allowed.

GCSEs in vocational subjects (Applied GCSEs)

These currently cover the following work areas:

Applied Art and Design

Engineering

Applied Business

Health and Social Care

Applied Information and Communication Technology

Leisure and Tourism

Applied Science

Manufacturing

Applied Agriculture, Land and Environment

Some new subjects are also being piloted including: Applied French; Applied Media; Applied PE; Applied Performing Arts; Construction and the Built Environment; Hospitality and Catering.

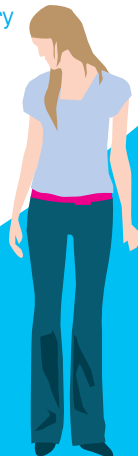
GCSEs in vocational subjects are mainly double awards, worth two GCSEs.

They are made up of three units, only one of which is generally assessed externally (with the other two units assessed within school or college). This is currently under review.

They give your teenager the chance to leave their options open while they gain knowledge and understanding in a particular work area. This may include a period of work experience. Students also learn skills such as communication, researching and teamwork.

GCSEs in vocational subjects can be taken alongside other GCSE subjects, but also fit in well with the other vocational qualifications such as BTEC and NVQ. Although they allow progression onto further courses and qualifications after Year 11, the level of progression and final career destination will depend on having other qualifications at the right level.

If your teenager prefers coursework to exams and enjoys a practical approach, GCSEs in vocational subjects may be an appropriate choice. However, not all schools will offer every subject option.



Diplomas (Specialised Diplomas)

These new qualifications will be offered from 2008. Diplomas will be available from levels 1 to 3. To begin with, they will cover five work areas: Construction and the Built Environment; Creative and Media; Engineering; ICT; Society, Health and Development. For more information check www.qca.org.uk

Entry Level qualifications

These may be normally offered either if a student would find other qualifications difficult, or in cases where it isn't possible to achieve the full qualification while at school or college. They may be available in academic (e.g. English, Science) or in work related subjects or they can help develop skills such as communication or using numbers. They can later lead on to qualifications such as GCSE, NVQ or BTEC.

Other qualifications and programmes

Schools and colleges may offer programmes, such as ASDAN Awards, which can help students develop their skills and prepare for adult life.

There are several other recognised qualifications awarded by organisations such as OCR and City and Guilds. Schools/colleges will tell you if these are available.

AS/A levels

An AS level is the first half of an A level and is studied over the course of a year. It is a qualification in its own right. An A2 is the second half of an A level and takes another year to complete. You can stop at AS level or go on to complete the full A level. Normally three or four AS levels are taken in the first year and then two or three A2s are

continued into the second year. New AS level subjects can be taken along with A2s in the second year.

AS/A levels traditionally lead to higher education and choice of subject is important. For example, studying Medicine usually requires Chemistry, and often Biology; Engineering generally needs Maths and/or Physics. Therefore, if your teenager is considering university, subject choice needs careful thought and research before starting an A level course.

AS/A levels can also lead to jobs (see page 19).

Certain A levels (sometimes called A levels in applied subjects) enable students to develop skills, knowledge and understanding in the vocational area they are studying. They prepare them for both the world of work and progression to higher education.

They have an AS/A2 structure and are made up of units; depending on how many are studied, the student could achieve:

- **One AS level**
- **One AS Double Award**
- **One A level**
- **One A level Double Award**

The phrase 'applied subject' is used where there is a clash with existing A level titles. For example, your teenager may have a choice between Business and Applied Business A levels. These titles may sound similar but there may be important differences in content, teaching and assessment. Because these qualifications are related to work, students need to have decided that the subject studied broadly matches their career choice.

Changes to AS/A level

There are proposals to make A levels more challenging for the most able students. These include introducing A* grades plus an Extended Project (see below). Changes are likely to be introduced from September 2008.

Advanced Extension Awards (AEAs)

AEAs are advanced level qualifications for the most able students, generally those who are expected to achieve top A level grades. They help universities decide between the most able candidates, particularly in popular subjects.

The Extended Project (new from September 2008)

The Extended Project will be a piece of work requiring a high level of planning, research, preparation and independent working. It is intended to form part of all the new Diplomas at level 3 and be an option on A level courses. It should be available from September 2008.

GNVQs

These will be phased out by 2007. For further information please check the QCA website listed on page 25.

BTEC

These are offered in specific work related subjects, for example, Graphic Design, Electrical and Electronic Engineering. These courses usually last one or two years depending on level. They can prepare students for higher education, work or work based learning. BTEC First qualifications are broadly equivalent to NVQ level 2. BTEC Nationals are level 3 qualifications.

For more information please check the Edexcel website on page 25.

NVQs

These are work related, competence based qualifications, generally studied whilst in employment or work based learning. They are made up of units, which you work towards at your own pace. Assessment is usually based on evidence in a portfolio rather than by written test.

They are available at levels 1 to 5. Dependent on level they can lead into work, training, further or higher education.

HNDs/HNCs

HNDs are usually two year higher education courses (three years if they include a year in industry called a sandwich year). This would make them a three year qualification. They usually require lower entry grades than a degree and, on completion, can lead either into employment or the second year of a related degree. They can also be studied part time, leading to HNC.

Foundation Degrees

Foundation Degrees are usually taken over two years full time or part time over three to four years.

Roughly equivalent to the first two years of an honours degree, they are work related. Entry requirements are set by the institution. They are designed to allow progression to a degree course.

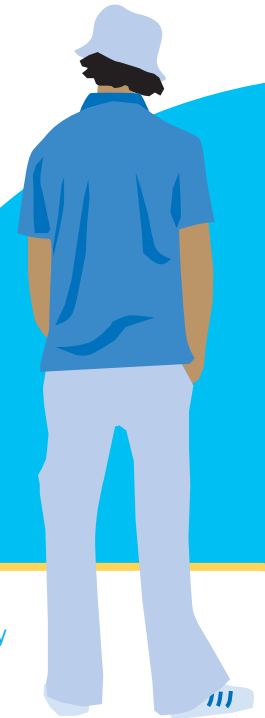
Degrees

Degrees normally take three years (longer for some subjects, e.g. Medicine). A few 'fast track' degrees can be taken in two years. Many degrees also include an additional year in industry or sandwich year.

A degree is now needed for an increasing number of careers. For some professions this may need to be in a specific subject. However many degree level jobs are not concerned about the subject studied.

Diplomas in Higher Education (DipHEs)

These are equivalent to the first two years of a degree and frequently lead to a degree course. They can be full or part time, academic or vocational. Entry requirements are the same as for a degree.



The Steps to Success chart on page 26 gives more details of entry requirements, entry levels and progression routes.

For more information on qualifications:

www.dfes.gov.uk/qualifications

The qualification's section of the DfES website.

www.qca.org.uk

The Qualifications and Curriculum Authority website.

www.edexcel.org.uk

The Edexcel website, covering BTEC qualifications.

www.ucas.com

The Universities and Colleges Admissions Service website.

www.foundationdegree.org.uk

The Foundation Degree website.

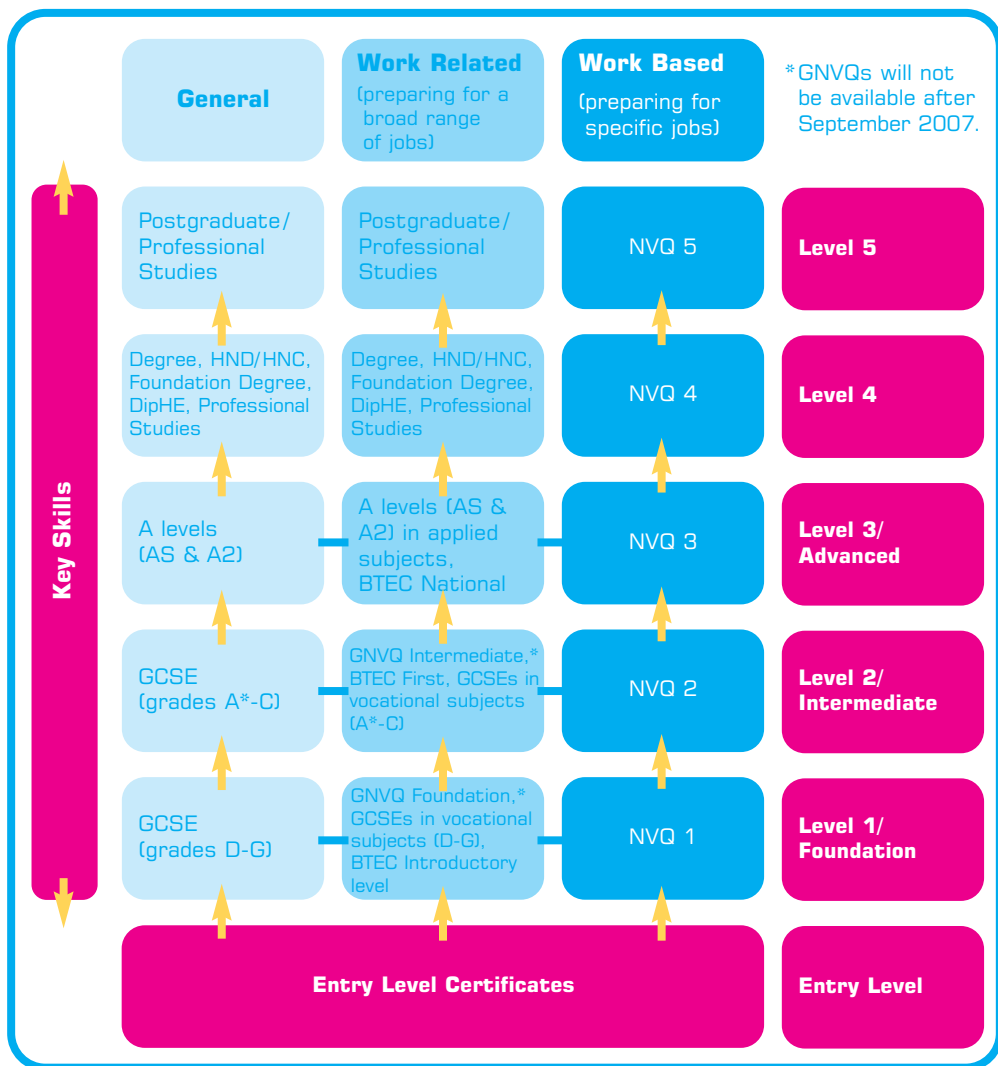
www.dfes.gov.uk/14-19

Information on learning for 14-19 year olds.

Steps to Success

This chart shows the main ways of staying in learning after Year 11 and may help you to compare the different routes and qualifications available.

The choice will depend on the type of work your teenager wants to do and on what employers, universities/colleges want. There is often more than one route into a job or university course so your teenager will need to think about which style of learning suits them best. A mix of qualifications and subjects can sometimes be taken.



Skills

Skills matter

Qualifications are important but they aren't the only thing that counts. Having the right skills is crucial too, both in the workplace and in education.

Key Skills

Young people can now take Key Skills alongside other qualifications, while they are working, training or in full time education. Key Skills are needed more and more in the workplace.

Employers need people who are:

- Able to use a computer.
- Good team workers.
- Able to relate well with customers.
- Flexible in their job functions.
- Able to organise their work activities.
- Decision makers and problem solvers.
- Able to communicate effectively using both words and numbers.

There are six Key Skills units.

The three 'main' skills are:

- **Communication** – speaking and listening, reading and writing.
- **Application of number** – interpreting information to do with numbers, doing calculations and presenting your findings.
- **Information and Communication Technology** – using a computer to find, explore, develop and present information.

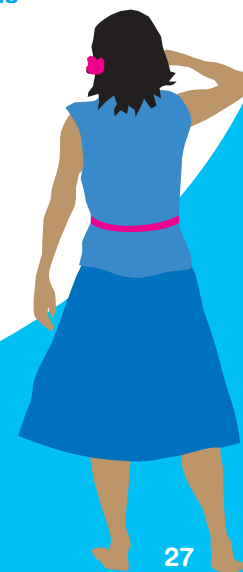
The further three Key Skills are:

- **Working with others** – how you work with others when planning and carrying out activities to get things done and achieve shared goals.
- **Improving own learning and performance** – how you manage your learning, career and personal development.
- **Problem solving** – recognising problems and doing something about them.

Many higher education courses also ask for skills in addition to qualifications. They are listed on Course Entry Profiles on the UCAS website. Key Skills qualifications can help gain entry to certain courses as they attract UCAS Tariff points. Other universities take Key Skills into account when they are making decisions about applicants.

Check Entry Profiles and the Tariff on the UCAS website at www.ucas.com

For more information on Key Skills use www.dfes.gov.uk/keyskills



The world of work

Having an understanding of the world of work can help your teenager plan their career and make realistic choices.



Changes in the job market

A number of factors may affect the job market over the next few years.

1. South Yorkshire has an ageing workforce. It's estimated that by 2010 nearly 85,000 jobs could be created due to workers retiring or looking for other jobs (a trend known as 'replacement demand'). This figure may continue to rise. Even industries that are not growing will probably need to recruit.
2. By 2010 there will be around 10,000 fewer Year 11 students than in 2006.
3. Overall there is likely to be a shortfall of up to 10,000 workers by 2010.
4. Between 1993 and 2003 the number of jobs requiring no qualifications fell by half.
5. Over half the new jobs coming into South Yorkshire by 2010 will require a qualification at NVQ level 2 or 3.

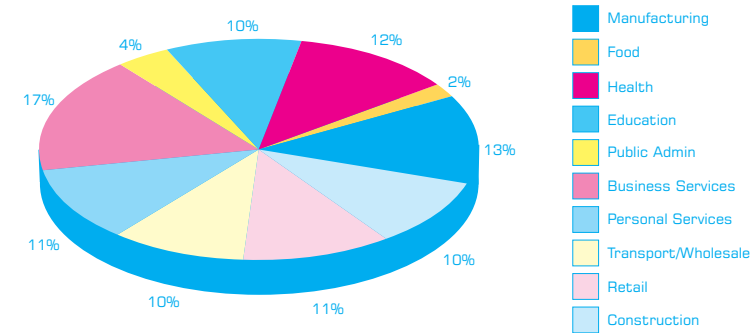
Some of the changes represent promising news for young people, provided that they have the right qualifications and skills.

Where do people work in South Yorkshire?

These industries currently employ the largest numbers of people in the region:

- **Business Services** - Employs around 17% of the local workforce, includes management, financial services, human resources, customer care, marketing, ICT, administration, general clerical.
- **Manufacturing** - Not as large as it used to be but still the second biggest employer in the region, employing around 13% of the workforce.
- **Health** - Not just doctors and nurses but also scientists, therapists, technicians, administrators and managers, domestic staff; employs around 12% of the local workforce.
- **Personal Services** - Employs around 11% of the workforce in areas such as catering, hospitality and tourism.
- **Retail** - Not only sales work but also buying, management, customer services, finance, marketing and administration. Employs around 11% of the workforce.

South Yorkshire Industrial Structure 2005



Source: **Moving On 2005**, Nord Anglia Lifetime Development and Sheffield Futures.

Local growth industries

These industries have either grown significantly since the year 2000 or are forecast for major growth over the next five to ten years:

- **Education**
- **Personal Services**
- **Business Services**
- **Health and Social Care**
- **Retail**
- **Transport and Logistics**
- **Construction**

There are also some relatively new industries that are forecast to grow in South Yorkshire. These include:

- **High Technology Manufacturing** – Using new and advanced technologies to produce high quality goods.
- **Biosciences and Biotechnology** – Includes developing new drugs and medicines, pollution control, genetic research.

• **Digital Industries** – Creative careers that use new technology, e.g. advertising, architecture, arts and crafts, design, fashion, film, video/ DVD and photography, computer games.

Environment and Energy – Using technology to develop energy from alternative, renewable sources, e.g. sun, wind, waves or tides.

You can find out more from the booklet **Moving On 2005**.

Bear in mind that:

- Some growth industries are currently small and may still be competitive, with employers looking for trained staff and/or high level skills and qualifications.
- Even industries that are not forecast to grow (e.g. manufacturing) will probably need to recruit due to replacement demand – see **Changes in the job market** on page 28.



Learning matters

One of the keys to getting on is learning. It can lead to:

- A better chance of getting a job. Qualifications are now more important in the jobs market and there are fewer unskilled jobs. Young people are also likely to change career several times in the future.
- A much better chance of staying in that job – your teenager will need to keep learning to keep their skills up-to-date and to stay employable.
- A much better chance of earning more money in the future. As a rule, higher qualifications can lead to higher pay (see also page 10).
- A more interesting job and greater job satisfaction.

Learning really does pay!

Find out more from the Learning Pays website: www.learningpays.org

In the future the way we work will continue to change, for example, more people may work part time and more people may be self employed.

Through school your teenager will be involved in **Enterprise Education**. This will include helping them to be creative, make ideas happen and 'manage' the risks they may have to face in our changing world. It will also give them a better understanding of business, economy and finance. Check with your teenager's school who can tell you more about this.

For more information check:

It's a Fact! – The truth about jobs in South Yorkshire Moving On 2005

The series of **Aim Higher leaflets** for parents and carers.

All of the above are available on:

www.ypzone.co.uk and at **Connexions Centres**.

Further information

We hope that you have found this guide useful.

The Connexions Service actively encourages the involvement of parents, carers and families. We would welcome your comments on this guide and any suggestions you may have for future issues. Details of how to contact us are on the back cover. If you have any comments about this publication you can also e-mail: parentsguide@nald-ne.co.uk The Connexions Service and Personal Advisers are there for you to discuss any of the issues raised in this booklet.

While this publication mainly covers issues relating to work and learning, we realise that there are many other factors affecting your teenager's life. Personal Advisers are there to share your concerns and offer support and advice. They also have access to local sources of help and information.

The websites below address many of these issues:

www.ypzone.co.uk

www.connexions-direct.com

www.connexionsinsheffield.org.uk

www.connexionssy.org.uk

For general help and advice on most issues there is practical help and support available from:

Parentline Plus

Free helpline: **0808 800 2222**

Email: parentsupport@parentlineplus.org.uk

Website: www.parentlineplus.org.uk

Text phone: **0800 783 6783**

www.parentscentre.gov.uk

Below are things you can do which will help your teenager.

Look out for these booklets aimed at young people:

Look Ahead! - (Year 9)

Choices,choices ... - (Year 9)

Options - (Year 11)

18+ What Next? - (Year 12)

Making Choices - (special needs in Year 11)

Check out the new online prospectuses at:

www.barnsley1419.info

www.applyrotherham.org.uk

www.applysheffield.org.uk

Check out the government's

Every Child Matters agenda at:

www.everychildmatters.gov.uk

