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# A GUIDE TO APPRENTICESHIPS

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*FOR CARE EXPERIENCED  
YOUNG PEOPLE/  
CARE LEAVERS*



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# UNDERSTANDING APPRENTICESHIPS

## What is an apprenticeship?

*An apprenticeship is a real job, with a real employer where the apprentice will typically work full-time (at least 30 hours per week) whilst also undertaking learning towards the apprenticeship.*

Apprentices are paid a salary and will have real responsibilities as part of their role, giving them the opportunity to earn money whilst gaining the qualifications, skills and behaviours needed for their chosen career.

### Key facts about apprenticeships:

- ✔ You are paid a salary
- ✔ You will have a contract of employment, paid holiday and sick leave – just like any other member of staff
- ✔ You learn from industry experts
- ✔ The equivalent of 6 hours per week of your paid time is spent undertaking off-the-job learning
- ✔ You do not pay for your training
- ✔ A bursary of £1,000 is available for care leavers aged 16-24 when they start their apprenticeship. This will increase to £3,000 from the 1st August 2023.

## How do apprenticeships work?

Apprentices will spend:

**The equivalent of 6 hours of their paid time:** gaining skills and qualifications often at a college, university or with an independent training provider.

**The remainder of their paid time:** working with colleagues to learn new skills and gain experience of the workplace.

All training will be delivered within your paid time. The employer will work with the training provider to fit the off-the-job training around your job commitments and the needs of the business.



Find out more about apprenticeships at:  
[www.amazingapprenticeships.com/apprenticeships](http://www.amazingapprenticeships.com/apprenticeships)



## Who can do an apprenticeship?

Apprenticeships are open to anyone over the age of 16, as long as you're eligible to work in the UK and are not in full-time education. There's no upper age limit and they're a great way to get your career started, or even to re-train in something new.

## Which apprenticeships are available?

There are thousands of apprenticeships available in over 170 different industries, and more are added every year. From aerospace engineering to zookeeping, you will be amazed at the variety and breadth of roles.

## Levels of apprenticeships

Each apprenticeship will also have a level attached to it. The four levels of apprenticeship are:

Name	Level	Equivalent educational level
Intermediate	2	5 GCSE passes at A* – C or 9 – 4
Advanced	3	2 A level passes/Level 3 Diploma/International Baccalaureate
Higher	4, 5, 6 & 7	Foundation degree or above
Degree	6 & 7	Bachelor's or master's degree

There are many apprenticeship levels from intermediate (equivalent to GCSEs) right up to master's level. You can now achieve a degree, and many professional qualifications, through an apprenticeship.

The level of apprenticeship you start at will depend on the kind of job that you are applying for and also your previous experience.

## How long will an apprenticeship take?

All apprenticeships last for a minimum of 12 months. Most apprenticeships take between 1 - 4 years to complete, however it will depend on the level and delivery model of the apprenticeship.



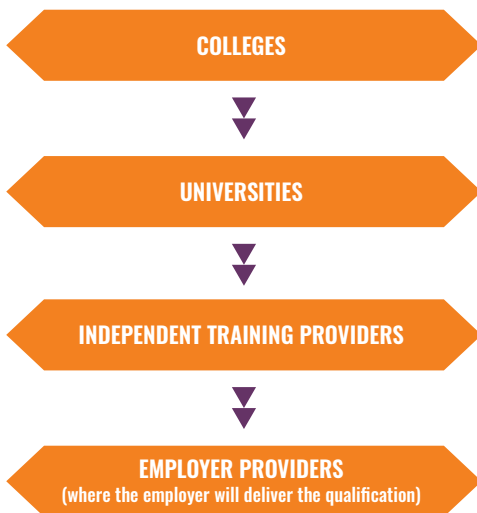
Find out more about apprenticeships at:  
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# WHAT ARE APPRENTICESHIPS?

## Who is the training provider?

There are lots of different organisations that are registered as training providers and these could include:



## What support can I get from the training provider?

The training provider's role is not only to provide the off-the-job training, they also have a key role in assessing your progress towards achieving your apprenticeship and ensuring that you feel supported.

They will work with you to help you to complete the apprenticeship and will be a crucial link between you and your employer.

If you require any additional learning support during your apprenticeship, your training provider will ensure that this is in place. They may undertake some additional assessments with you to help to understand the types of support that would be best suited to you, and will then put a plan of support in place which will be reviewed monthly.

Your training provider will be there to support you. They will maintain regular contact with you and ensure that you are on-track with your apprenticeship. You will have regular progress reviews with them and they will encourage you to share any concerns or questions that you might have, so that they can fully support you.

## Which employers offer apprenticeships?

Thousands of different employers offer apprenticeships, from well-known brands to smaller, local businesses. Around 50% of apprenticeships are started with larger organisations and 50% are with small employers. You can find out more about how to search for employers on page [10](#).

## What support will I receive from the employer?

The employer's role is to train and develop you to be competent in your role and to support you as they would any other employee. Employers will recognise that many apprentices will be entering work for the first time and so will work with you to make sure you feel comfortable and confident in the workplace.

Your employer will assign you a mentor. This individual will usually not be your line manager, but will be someone within the workplace who is there to help answer any questions that you may have, and will guide and support you.



Other support that your employer might put in place could include joining staff groups or networks and providing you with other opportunities to develop your skills.

### How will I be assessed?

All apprentices go through a process called End Point Assessment (EPA), which is taken at the end of the apprenticeship. This is designed for the apprentice to demonstrate that they have met the required competency standards of the apprenticeship and job role.

Each apprenticeship is different. The assessment could include a presentation, an interview, a practical observation, an online assessment or a combination of different methods.

Your training provider and employer will work with you to ensure that you are ready for the EPA before you are put forward to complete it.

### Will I receive additional support for EPA?

If you require additional support to complete your EPA, your training provider will be able to make appropriate arrangements for you. These could include:

- Extra time allowance
- A scribe
- A reader
- A personal support worker to attend
- British Sign Language (BSL) interpreter
- Assistive technology

...and many other flexibilities and permissions. You can read more about the arrangements on the Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education website.

<https://www.instituteforapprenticeships.org/quality/end-point-assessment-reasonable-adjustments-guidance/>



Read our quick explainer about the End Point Assessment here: [tinyurl.com/2pxhubk6](https://tinyurl.com/2pxhubk6)

**END POINT ASSESSMENT EXPLAINED**  
What happens at the end of an apprenticeship?

**End Point Assessment methods explained**  
This short film (4 minutes) has been created by the Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education to explain the different types of assessment methods. [Click here to view](#) or scan the QR code

**What is End Point Assessment?**  
End Point Assessment (also commonly referred to as EPA) is the final stage of the apprenticeship programme.

The purpose of EPA is to confirm that the apprentice has met all of the knowledge, skills and behaviour requirements set out in the apprenticeship standard.

**What is an apprenticeship standard?**  
Each apprenticeship has a standard. This is a short document setting out the main purpose of the apprenticeship, the job roles linked to the standard and the expected knowledge, skills and behaviours that the apprentice should have achieved. There are more than 600 different apprenticeship standards available. You can read more here: [instituteforapprenticeships.org/apprenticeship-standards/](https://www.instituteforapprenticeships.org/apprenticeship-standards/)

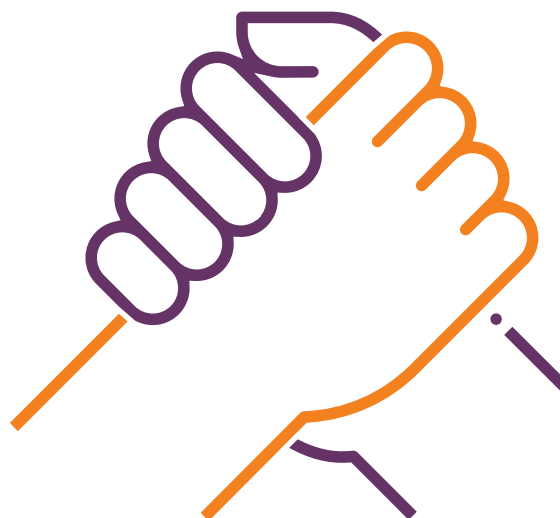
**How does EPA work?**  
To reach EPA, the apprentice will have completed a series of activities and tasks with their employer and training provider. They will then jointly agree that the apprentice is ready to move forward for their End Point Assessment. This stage is called 'the gateway'.

**What are the EPA requirements?**  
The process of EPA is different for each apprenticeship standard. It could include a range of different activities such as:

- Presentation of a portfolio
- Professional discussion
- Test
- Practical demonstration

The whole process of EPA is co-ordinated and conducted by a third-party organisation that is not connected to the employer or training provider. This organisation is called the End Point Assessment Organisation (EPAO).

Discover more about apprenticeships: [www.amazingapprenticeships.com](https://www.amazingapprenticeships.com)



# WHAT FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE IS AVAILABLE?

## What is the Care Leavers Bursary?

*If you are under 25 and have been in local authority care, your training provider can support you to access a £1,000\* bursary from the government when you start your apprenticeship.*

The bursary is intended to support you in your role and is in addition to your wage.

Your Personal Advisor (PA) will be able to support you with salary information, personal budgeting and financial assistance in advance of your decision making, so you can feel comfortable knowing what your options are.

Is there any other financial support available: Local authorities often have additional bursaries and grants that you may be able to access. They should also be able to support you with travel expenses, clothing before you attend an interview, or support in paying for any documentation needed e.g., a passport.

### How much will it cost?

Your apprenticeship training is fully funded, you will not have to pay any of the costs of your training or assessments. This cost will be covered by your employer and/or the government and you will never be required to pay it back.

### What is the Care Leaver's Bursary?

If you are under 25 and have been in local authority care, your training provider can also support you to access a £1,000 bursary from the government when you start your apprenticeship. This will increase to £3,000 for those starting an apprenticeship from the 1st August 2023.

All you need to do to access this bursary is give your training provider proof that you're eligible. Talk to your Personal Adviser and they can give you the evidence you need. This funding will be claimed from the government by your training provider, and then paid directly to you by your training provider. It is to support you in your role and is in addition to your wage. You are not required to pay it back.

### Is there any other financial support available?

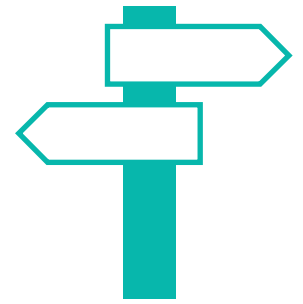
Local authorities often have additional bursaries and grants that you may be able to access. They should also be able to support you with travel expenses, with clothing before you attend interview or support in paying for any documentation needed e.g. a passport. Please speak to your PA so that you can fully understand what you may be entitled to.



*\*This will increase to £3,000 from the 1st August 2023*



# ACCESSING CAREERS ADVICE



## **When can you start an apprenticeship?**

*Apprenticeships are a great way to start a new career in a job role that you haven't worked in before. You can also use apprenticeships to upskill and gain qualifications in an existing role. Many individuals start apprenticeships later in life once they have tried out different job roles and have more experience - there is no upper age limit.*

The good news is that apprenticeships are suitable at any stage of your career. A careers adviser will be able to help you to explore your options and to consider which apprenticeships might be best suited to your interests.

### **How can I get careers advice?**

#### **Your school or college (if applicable)**

Secondary schools and colleges in England have a duty to provide their students with access to independent and impartial careers advice on apprenticeships. Speak to your teachers or careers leader to see how they can support you with advice and guidance.

If you have an Education, Health and Care (EHC) plan and you are at college, they will be able to support you up to the age of 25 with careers guidance.

#### **Your virtual school (if applicable)**

When you've experienced care, the local authority will work with you through their Virtual School to ensure that they are supporting you with your education, including careers support and guidance. You will be assigned a Personal Adviser (PA) to help you through your education and part of this is providing you with advice about your next steps. They will be able to help you to understand your options and help you apply for further education or an apprenticeship.

If you want to know more about apprenticeships, speak to your Personal Adviser. They can support you with your next steps and in accessing guidance around preparing and applying for apprenticeships.

#### **The National Careers Service**

Alternatively, you can speak to the National Careers Service who can help you to make decisions on the different learning, training and work options available to you.

You can speak with a careers adviser through webchat, email or the phone helpline. If you're aged 19 or over, you can also get a face-to-face meeting to discuss your options.



Call 0800 100 900  
to speak to a National Careers  
Service adviser or visit:  
[nationalcareers.service.gov.uk](https://nationalcareers.service.gov.uk)





# WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS OF DOING AN APPRENTICESHIP?

*There are many benefits of doing an apprenticeship, including earning a salary, gaining experience in the workplace and achieving qualifications that are valued by industry.*

## ▶▶ Gain relevant skills

Through an apprenticeship, you will learn the skills and knowledge that your employer feels are the most relevant to your job role, making you more competitive and employable for future jobs.

## ▶▶ Paid while you learn

You earn a salary and do not have any fees or debt for training and tuition. This gives apprentices financial independence.

## ▶▶ Gain professional accreditation

Some apprenticeships also allow individuals to gain professional accreditation. This is an industry-wide qualification or certificate which demonstrates that you have the experiences, as well as the qualifications, to do that job role. Some industries require this of an individual before they can practise their profession, such as for example an Accountant or Solicitor, and Apprenticeships provide that status immediately, compared to full-time education where they may have to seek further experience after their degree.

## ▶▶ Build your experience

You have transferable experience and skills, having worked on real projects and tasks in a business environment from day one. You are immediately immersed in your industry, learning industry-specific skills.

## ▶▶ Develop your support network

Your support network as an apprentice is vast, with your employer, colleagues, apprentice colleagues, training provider and many other networks providing both personal and professional support.

## ▶▶ Make new contacts

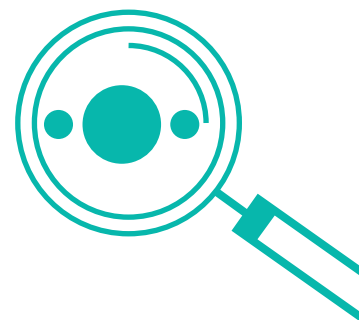
Not only are you learning from experts and professionals within your organisation, but you will have opportunities to meet other professionals in the industry. This can help you to develop wider connections and to form positive relationships with those that will support you in your career.

## ▶▶ Progress your career

Having so much practical experience, apprentices can often quickly progress through their organisation or industry, with many having moved on to manage their own teams of apprentices or becoming Directors of their organisation.



# FINDING AN APPRENTICESHIP



There are lots of different websites and places where you can look for the best apprenticeship opportunity for you.

## Find an apprenticeship

Find an apprenticeship is the government's central portal for apprenticeship jobs. This dedicated website allows you to search by your location and filter by the level of apprenticeship you want to look for. Registering for an account will make it easier to use the 'saved search' feature so that you can receive alerts when new jobs are added which meet your criteria. You will also be able to check on your applications and shortlist apprenticeships you would like to apply for.

Visit: <https://www.gov.uk/apply-apprenticeship>

## Care Leaver Covenant – Connects

The Care Leaver Covenant advertise different employment opportunities through their Connects platform. To sign up to Connects, you must be a care leaver currently aged between 16-25 and living in England. The platform keeps you up to date with relevant work, education and recreational opportunities as well as information about support you may be able to access.

Visit: <https://mycovenant.org.uk/for-care-leavers/connects/>

## Employer websites & social media

If you have a particular employer in mind that you would like to work with, it can be a good idea to look at the careers page on their website. Sometimes you will be able to sign up for alerts or a newsletter, whilst other employer sites may suggest that you follow them on social media. You can use their Facebook, Twitter and Instagram channels to stay up to date on when they release new jobs.

## Job sites

There are many job sites online that will list different vacancies. These are usually free of charge to sign up to, and some will request that you upload a copy of your CV when you create your account. Some of the biggest job sites that advertise apprenticeship vacancies include:

GetMyFirstJob	<a href="http://www.getmyfirstjob.co.uk">www.getmyfirstjob.co.uk</a>
NotGoingToUni	<a href="http://www.notgoingtouni.co.uk">www.notgoingtouni.co.uk</a>
UCAS Career Finder	<a href="https://careerfinder.ucas.com">https://careerfinder.ucas.com</a>

## Can I approach employers directly?

Yes, absolutely. Many individuals do take this proactive approach and will contact employers that they think they would be suited to and ask if they offer work experience or apprenticeships. This can be a really successful approach as sometimes employers might not have been considering an apprentice, but this could help to spark their interest.



# APPLYING FOR AN APPRENTICESHIP

Follow these steps to set up your account on Find an apprenticeship:



**STEP 1** Visit <https://www.gov.uk/apply-apprenticeship>

**STEP 2** Create an account (this is free of charge)

**STEP 3** Search for vacancies using the different options. For example, you can search by location, level and can also include Disability Confident if applicable.

## Can I apply for more than one vacancy?

Definitely! It's a good idea to apply for a few apprenticeships at a time. This increases your chances and means you're not waiting for a response from one employer.

## Why are the entry requirements so varied?

Each apprenticeship vacancy will specify the entry requirements and skills or qualities the employer is looking for. Entry requirements will often vary between different employers. Some employers might ask for GCSEs, others will ask for A levels and some will ask for no qualifications at all.

As well as entry requirements, employers will be looking for how you will fit in with the organisation and for your passion and interest in working in that job role. It is important to pay close attention to each employer's advice and guidance on applying for them, so that you can really stand out in the application process and ensure you meet their requirements.

## Is there anyone that can help me with my application?

The National Careers Service provides high quality, free and impartial careers advice, information and guidance. The service is available to anyone aged 13+ no matter what stage of the careers journey you're at. Wherever you are in your decision-making, you can call them on **0800 100 900** or [use webchat](#).

You're entitled to free help and advice from a Jobcentre Plus adviser if you're unemployed and looking for work. This could be through one of the new Youth Hubs that have been created, which are usually community-based venues where a range of support services can be accessed. Your Jobcentre Plus Adviser can help you to:

- look for a job vacancy most suited to your skills
- write a CV and covering letter
- complete application forms
- prepare for an interview

Your local authority or personal adviser should also be able to direct you to local services that will be able to support you with making applications and preparing for other stages of the recruitment process.



Call **0800 100 900** to speak to a National Careers Service adviser or visit: [nationalcareers.service.gov.uk](https://nationalcareers.service.gov.uk)



### How quickly should I hear back?

This will depend on the employer – some will get in touch really quickly and others may take longer. Take a look at the closing date for the application as this may help to give an indication. Although remember, some employers may extend their application dates if they feel that they would like to find more applicants.

### What if I don't hear back?

It's normal to feel nervous when you're applying for an apprenticeship or waiting to hear back from an employer.

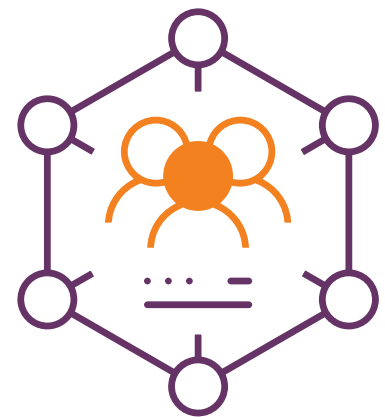
It usually takes a few applications to find the right apprenticeship. So if you don't hear back or get an interview, don't take it personally - it's normal and happens to everyone.

### How do I decide whether to tell people about my experience of care?

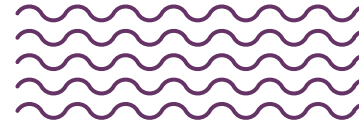
It is completely up to you if you want to tell people about your experience of care. You may feel concerned that you will be treated differently or that it may change how you are viewed. However, it's also important to remember that there are advantages to sharing your background with your employer too.

Your employer and training provider will be able to support you and make any adjustments to help you to fulfil your role and complete your apprenticeship. If eligible, they will also be able to support you to claim the Care Leaver's Bursary of £1,000 (rising to £3,000 from the 1st August 2023) ([see page 7](#)).

However, this doesn't mean that you will have to tell your co-workers if you're not comfortable with them knowing. You can ask your hiring manager not to disclose this to everyone else. Under the Data Protection Act your personal information should be kept private and confidential.



# MYTH BUSTING



## **I won't get any of my benefits if I'm in a paid apprenticeship.**

An Intermediate apprenticeship doesn't mean that you're not entitled to any benefits. It's important that you speak to a JCP Adviser or work coach about your individual circumstances, but if you receive a Disability Living Allowance (DLA) or Personal Independence Payment (PIP) then you will most likely keep receiving these through your apprenticeship. There might also be some other means-tested benefits available for you. Please speak to your Work Coach or your Personal Adviser about what you might be entitled to.

## **I didn't finish my GCSEs so I can't do an apprenticeship.**

You don't always need to have any prior qualifications to do an apprenticeship. Intermediate apprenticeships (level 2) is the equivalent of 5 GCSE passes when you've completed it, so you don't need to have completed your GCSEs at school to be able to do this. These intermediate qualifications will also support you to get functional skills in Maths and English.

## **Apprenticeships are just for manual jobs.**

There are over 600 different apprenticeships covering more than 1,700 job roles, so you have lots of options. Some of these apprenticeships are in jobs such as construction and hairdressing and they offer fantastic career progression and are very popular. There are also job roles that you can undertake in an office environment, working with animals, working in hospitals and even flying through the air! Every year the Government looks at lots of different jobs to see if they can make an apprenticeship for that kind of role so there are always new opportunities.

## **I won't have a job after I finish my apprenticeship.**

Around 90% of apprentices stay employed after they finish their apprenticeship. Some employers will offer a fixed term contract of employment that will cover you for the duration of your apprenticeship. Other employers will offer a permanent contract of employment, meaning that at the end of your apprenticeship, you may stay in the same role, be promoted to take on more responsibility or even progress to the next level of apprenticeship.

## **Apprenticeships won't help my career like higher education would.**

Not only do apprentices add extra benefit to a workplace, but an apprenticeship can also benefit your career. You're getting the same qualification as you would at college or University. Degree apprenticeships are a great way to get your degree without taking on any student loans as all training costs are paid for by your employer and/or the government.



# USEFUL RESOURCES

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## National Apprenticeship Service

<https://www.apprenticeships.gov.uk/>

This is the government apprenticeship service. You can find more information about apprenticeships as well as some helpful resources.

## Find an Apprenticeship

<https://www.gov.uk/apply-apprenticeship>

All available apprenticeships are displayed here. You can search by location and by apprenticeship level. You can also add keywords to narrow your search if you're interested in something specific.

## National Careers Service

<https://nationalcareers.service.gov.uk/>

The National Careers Service has careers advisers on hand to give you personalised advice. Anyone aged 13+ can access their service, either by phone, email, or webchat. There are also great resources about different careers and a skills assessment quiz if you're not sure what type of job you might be interested in.

## UCAS

<https://www.ucas.com/understanding-apprenticeships>

UCAS isn't just for people going to university. They support employers to deliver apprenticeships, especially at higher and degree level. There's also some great information for people who are interested in knowing more about apprenticeships. You can sign up for job alerts, so you never miss an opportunity.

## Youth Employment UK

<https://www.youthemployment.org.uk/>

Youth Employment UK is an independent organisation that wants to tackle problems that cause youth unemployment. Their Skills and Careers Hub has resources available for young people aged 14-24 and they provide advice and guidance about your future career options.

## National Youth Advocacy Service

<https://youngpeople.nyas.net/>

NYAS is an advocacy service set up to give a voice to young people. They give advice about your rights and you can access some support through their service.

## Amazing Apprenticeships

<https://amazingapprenticeships.com/>

Amazing Apprenticeships is a leading organisation in the education sector, founded to tackle misconceptions about apprenticeships and promote the benefits. We work with schools and colleges, as well as employers, to help them understand why apprenticeships are an amazing option! We also have some great resources for young people and some case studies from actual apprentices talking about their experiences.



## ACAS

<https://www.acas.org.uk/>

ACAS provides impartial advice about your rights in the workplace as an employee. They also offer a workplace resolution service. If you have any problems at work and you want some advice about your rights, get in touch.

## Remploy Access to Work

<https://www.remploy.co.uk/mentalhealth>

Remploy offers a confidential service for any employee who feels that their mental health wellbeing is affecting their work. It's available for anyone in employment – including apprentices.

## Turn2Us

<https://www.turn2us.org.uk/>

Turn2Us is a charity to support anyone who is worried about their financial situation. There is a benefits calculator which will tell you what you are entitled to, as well as an advice helpline and a grants search so you can see if there's any extra financial support you might be able to get.

## Disability Rights UK

<https://www.disabilityrightsuk.org/>

This is a leading UK charity to help support people living with a disability. They work with the government and other disability organisations to offer advice and other resources to people with disabilities. If you also have any additional needs, you can contact them about extra support you can access.

## Leaving Care

<https://www.gov.uk/leaving-foster-or-local-authority-care>

This is a government page that tells you all about your rights as you prepare to leave care, so you can make sure your local authority is offering you what you need.

## Care Leaver Civil Service Internship

<https://www.civil-service-careers.gov.uk/>

The UK Government also has a Care Leaver Internship which offers ringfenced opportunities for care leavers to work in the civil service. This is a 12-month programme which opens for applications at the start of September. You can keep an eye on when applications open by searching on the Civil Service careers website. Try searching around the end of August for more information about what opportunities will be available and when applications open.

## Care Leaver Covenant

<https://mycovenant.org.uk/>

Set up in response to the Government's 'Keep on Caring' promise for care experienced young people, this is a national inclusion programme aimed to deliver support for you to live independently. Organisations commit to making better outcomes. This website has advice and resources, and you can also look for exclusive opportunities that have been ringfenced for care experienced young people.

## Become Charity

<https://www.becomecharity.org.uk/>

Become is a charity for young people who are care experienced. Their goal is to improve the lives and outcomes of children who experience care. You can get to know your rights and get some advice. They also have some resources to help you think about your next steps, whether that's work or further education.





**Amazing**  
Apprenticeships

