

The Big Wide World

Thurrock Council Aftercare Team's Guide to independence

Education Employment and Training

Education and training are important for your future. Having qualifications opens opportunities for future jobs and careers, and a good education can help your earning potential. If you haven't had a good start with your education, it's never too late to start or continue learning.

This section looks at the different options available to you and the extra support you're entitled to receive as a care leaver. Your options for education after you turn 16 years-old ('post-16') are:

- staying on at your school, if it has a 6th form
- studying at a 6th form college or further education college
- entering into an apprenticeship to earn as you gain a qualification
- undertaking a traineeship to learn through work

You may also have ambitions to attend university and study for a degree, or maybe later in life gain a degree qualification through your employer or apprenticeship.

We work with Inspire Thurrock Careers to make sure that you have a careers guidance interview before you leave school year 11. A careers guidance interview will help you make a plan for your future career or ideal job.

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Inspire Thurrock Careers

Inspire Thurrock Careers has personal advisers who are dedicated to supporting Looked After Children and Care Leavers in education, employment and training (EET). These advisers will provide you with individual tailored support to find college courses, apprenticeships, jobs and traineeships in the areas that interest you. They will help you with applications, and also assist interview skills and techniques.

At the Inspire Youth Hub provides a friendly, comfortable environment where you can take advantage of:

- computers with internet access
- music studio
- careers advice
- youth service
- art clubs
- music clubs
- Duke of Edinburgh's Awards
- Prince's Trust opportunities
- English and maths tuition
- Thurrock On-Track employability programme
- GAPs study programme offered by TCHC Group Limited

Inspire Thurrock Careers also runs a drop in service for any Thurrock Looked After Child or Care Leaver, available on Tuesdays to Fridays, 9am to 5pm.

Contact or visit Inspire Thurrock Careers:

- thurrockcareers@thurrock.gov.uk
- 01375 413 735
- Inspire Youth Hub, 24- 28 Orsett Road, Grays, RM175EB

Thurrock Opportunities website

Thurrock Opportunities is a website where you can search for jobs, apprenticeships and courses within Thurrock and surrounding areas. It is also home to Thurrock's virtual careers fair, where you can research opportunities such as local colleges, universities, employers and training providers.

The website is run by Thurrock Council to highlight the opportunities available for all young people within Thurrock.

Financial assistance for education

Any young person who chooses to study further following their GCSEs is entitled to claim money from central government.

Universal Credit

If you're engaged in a full-time college course, you can claim Universal Credit after you reach 18 years of age. Universal Credit can be paid every 4 weeks, or every 2 weeks upon request, as long as you are in education up to the age of 21. Go to [GOV.UK: Universal Credit](https://www.gov.uk/universal-credit).

Bursaries and Aftercare Team top-ups

Bursaries are paid by your college or training provider. An application has to be completed. The amount paid by each college or training provider may vary.

Bursary payments made by colleges may be weekly, monthly or quarterly and are usually linked to your attendance being above 96%. A bursary can use to pay for things like:

- uniform, books and other equipment for your course
- transport and lunch on days you study or train

In addition to the above, the Aftercare Team will assess your support needs and may offer a top-up to cover the cost of your travel to and from your college, training provider, or your employer before you get your first payment of your wages. This money is dependent on your attendance.

Financial assistance when going to university

If you decide to go to University, the Aftercare Team can help you get Student Finance from Student Finance England. You can apply at [GOV.UK: apply online for student finance](https://www.gov.uk/apply-online-for-student-finance).

When applying to universities, it is recommended that you tell them you are a Care Leaver. This will usually open up many more opportunities for you. Some even waive tuition fees.

To contact Student Finance England, phone 0300 100 0607.

You will receive a higher education bursary of **£2,000** from the Aftercare Team and, as a Care Leaver, you may receive an additional bursary or further help from the university. We will also pay for your accommodation during holiday periods – **£125** for 22 weeks each year – up until you finish university.

When some of our care leavers have gone from school to college and on to university, we have supported them all the way through.

Some universities make an additional financial offer to Care Leavers. The amount will vary across different courses and universities. For details, go to the [Propel](#) website, or ask one of the Inspire Thurrock Careers personal advisers.

Employment

When you gain employment or are ready to look for employment, we will support you to:

- make a CV
- fill-in application forms

If you want to work, you'll need to make sure you earn enough (income) to cover your rent, bills and food (outgoings).

When you are employed you should also have the opportunity to complete further training and education with your employer. If your employer doesn't offer this, you could consider adult courses at further education colleges.

An employer has the responsibility to pay into a pension fund with you. A pension will provide an income for you at the age when you retire. If you wish, you can opt out of this and make your own arrangements for saving money for your future.

Apprenticeships

Apprenticeships are an opportunity for you to earn while you learn. Apprenticeships are available for many different types of work, such as hairdressing, retail, mechanics, ICT and finance.

Apprentices gain a weekly wage while studying towards a formal qualification at the workplace or with a local training provider, such as 6th form colleges. The qualification you gain is identical to the qualifications offered by colleges.

Many apprenticeships within the UK are advertised on [GOV.UK: find an apprenticeship](#). Some larger UK employers – such as Tesco, Barclays and DP World – advertise through their own websites.

There also degree level apprenticeships that are offered in partnership with universities. You can apply for these through UCAS at [UCAS: apprenticeships](#).

Self-employment

A self-employed person works for themselves rather than for an employer who pays them a salary or wage. Self-employed people earn their money through trade or business directly. For information about self-employment, go to [GOV.UK: working for yourself](#).

Traineeships

Traineeships are work placements provided by employers and training providers. They provide you with experience of working along with formal training that will benefit you when applying for future jobs. These placements are not usually paid, but employers and training providers will usually provide travel and expenses costs for you.

Traineeships can be provided in many area. These include retail, logistics, construction and ICT. Locally, the Prince's Trust runs 'get into', programmes. LifeSkills also provides traineeships.

Thurrock On-Track

Thurrock On-Track is programme of short courses to help you get back into employment. The programme is provided by Inspire Thurrock Careers and funded by the European Social Fund.

If you're aged between 16 and 29 years-old, either living in Thurrock or a Care Leaver of Thurrock Council, you will be eligible for one-to-one support and any training courses provided by On-Track. Ask Inspire Thurrock Careers for full information.

Kickstart

Kickstart is a government scheme that provides funding for the creation of 6 months' paid work placements for 16 to 24 year-olds on Universal Credit and at risk of long-term unemployment.

Employers are funded to pay the salaries and National Insurance contributions for each young person's placement, up to 25 hours per week. Working with internal and external partners, each young person will receive tailored training and support to enable a successful experience and smooth transition into employment at the end of the 6 months.

Thurrock Council is a local employer providing Kickstart jobs. To apply for a Kickstart job, speak to your Job Centre Plus adviser.

Care to Learn – support for young parents

The Care to Learn scheme can help with childcare costs while you study. You must be aged below 20 years-old at the start of your course.

The scheme is available for publicly-funded courses in England, including courses in school 6th forms, 6th form colleges, and further education colleges.

To apply for Care to Learn support, go to [GOV.UK: Care to Learn](#).

Internships

Internships are periods of work experience offered by organisations. They usually last for a fixed limited period of time. Typically they are undertaken by students and graduates looking to gain relevant skills and experience in a particular field.