

Leaving school and deciding what to do at 16+

Enquire factsheet 16

It's important that all young people, particularly those with additional support needs, get the help they need to:

- decide what to do when they leave school
- move from school to other opportunities.

How can education authorities help with planning for leaving school?

Education authorities must consider the needs of each young person with additional support needs, taking the level of action that is appropriate for them. Education authorities can decide which agencies, if any, to approach to request information from as they may be involved with your child when they leave school:

- local authorities (councils)
- National Health Service (NHS) boards
- Careers Scotland
- further education colleges
- institutions of higher education.

The education authority asks for this information so that its staff can:

- think about whether the young person's current level of support is appropriate
- make sure there is a good match between this support and the support provided for the young person when they leave school.

When should this happen?

The education authority should have completed gathering this information at least 12 months before your child is expected to leave school.

What will happen?

It is good practice for the education authority to make clear to you and your child:

- what is going to happen
- when it is going to happen
- who is responsible.

In some cases, the authority will appoint a key worker. This is a professional who has regular contact with your child and who can act as a single point of contact for you and all other professionals.

Enquire is the Scottish advice service for additional support for learning. We provide independent and impartial advice to parents and carers, to practitioners in education, social work and health services, and to children and young people themselves.

This factsheet has been awarded the Clear English Standard.



How does the education authority take my views into account?

The authority should:

- ask for your and your child's views, and take these into account, throughout the planning
- involve the people working to support your child.

Good communication between you and all the supporting agencies is vital.

How do I make sure my child is involved?

It is vital to involve your child in deciding what they will do when they reach school-leaving age (16). Some young people will need help to decide what they want to do and to express their views. The types of support will depend on your child's needs. For example, your child may:

- benefit from practical experience (such as a placement) to help them understand their options
- need several short discussions rather than one longer meeting
- need a supporter or advocate to help them join in with discussions; they have a right to ask for this.

The duty to take account of a child or young person's views, and their right to take specific actions, apply only if they can understand the situation, with help. Usually, the adults who know a child or young person work together to decide whether they can understand a particular issue or question. **The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child** states that a child who is 'capable of forming his or her own views' has the right to express those views.

The Additional Support for Learning Act states that a child or young person 'lacks capacity' to do something if they are 'incapable of doing it because of mental illness, developmental disorder or learning disability or of inability to communicate because of a physical disability'. A child or young person doesn't lack capacity due to their communication difficulty if the difficulty can be overcome by a mechanical aid, or help from another person such as an interpreter.

What happens when my child has a Co-ordinated Support Plan (CSP)?

If your child has a CSP, then the education authority will usually seek the information they need from the agencies listed on page 1. The CSP will include the name of the person responsible for co-ordinating your child's support. This person should take the lead in ensuring that all relevant agencies plan together for your child leaving school. Your child's CSP should be reviewed at least once a year; the review should be used to help plan for the transition from school. See **Factsheet 15: Co-ordinated Support Plans** for more information.

What happens next?

The education authority must pass on the following information to any relevant agencies no later than 6 months before your child is expected to leave school:

- the date your child is expected to leave school
- any services the local authority may provide when your child leaves school (for example social work services or housing)
- any other information the education authority thinks will help the agencies in providing their services.

The education authority can provide this information only with:

- the young person's consent (over 16s)
- your consent, if they are younger or lack capacity.

What if my child wants to stay at school?

Every child of school age (up to 16 years) has a legal right to a school education. There is no explicit right to school education after the age of 16, but young people do have the right to remain in school if the education authority is already educating them.

If a young person with additional support needs stays on in school, the education authority has many duties that still apply to their education after the age of 16.

The authority must:

- provide adequately and efficiently for the young person's additional support needs
- regularly review the additional support needs, and how adequate the support is
- take account of the additional support needs in all it arranges
- direct education towards developing the young person's personality, talents, and mental and physical abilities to their full potential
- take account of the young person's views when making decisions that 'significantly affect' them
- provide education, as far as possible, in line with your wishes.

Can my child choose which school they want to attend?

A young person has the right to make a 'placing request' to a school of their choice. If this succeeds, the education authority must place them there.

If you think your child is unable to do this, you can make the request for them. A school cannot refuse a placing request on the grounds that the young person is 16 or over. You or your child could appeal against a refusal. See **Factsheet 4: Placing Requests** for more information.

What is the local authority's duty to looked-after children?

Under separate regulations, local authorities (councils) must provide advice, guidance and help to children and young people who are looked after or were looked after before they reached school leaving age. Education and social work staff should work closely to ensure that young people achieve their full potential while in education. Local authorities are also encouraged to work closely with Careers Scotland to support young people in choosing education and training.

The local authority's duties for social work

The Children (Scotland) Act 1995 considers young people aged 16 or 17 with a disability to be 'in need'. Local authorities have a duty to provide services for these young people, such as social work assessment and support, or provision for additional support needs in education.

If a young person aged 18 or over needs community care services, the local authority's social work department should assess their needs and provide services.

In all planning for young people leaving school:

- the relevant people from the social work and education departments should already be involved
- a plan should be in place for the transition between education and adult life.

Contact your local social work department for more information.

What about further and higher education?

Your education authority may provide adequate and efficient further education for young people over 16. This may be in schools or in other places, such as colleges. Under the Disability Discrimination Act, further and higher education institutions must not discriminate unlawfully against young people with a disability.

What support is available at college or university?

Many different forms of support are available at college. Every college should have a member of staff who advises students who need additional support. Contact individual colleges:

- for information about the support they offer
- to plan any support for your child before they start college.

What support is available for starting work?

Your child may decide they would prefer to start work after leaving school. Your child's school, Careers Scotland or local volunteer centres may be able to arrange placements or volunteering experience to help your child move into work.

A number of agencies may be able to offer you and your child specialist advice about training and employment opportunities:

- Jobcentre Plus provides a range of services, including the Job Introduction Scheme and an Access to Work scheme to help anyone who is having difficulty finding a job because they have a disability.
- Careers Scotland provides information on careers and learning for adults and young people in Scotland.
- Adult day centres are run by social work departments and voluntary organisations. These centres offer short and long-term support and training in independent living and work. A social worker would usually refer your child and day-centre users are usually over 19. Contact your local social work department for further information.
- The Scottish Union of Supported Employment aims to work with and support employers to provide paid work for disabled, disadvantaged and disengaged people. They have local contact points throughout Scotland.

Contact details for all these organisations are at the end of this factsheet.

What funding is available?

As part of planning for your child to leave school, the education authority should ensure that you and your child know who to speak to about financial support.

Your child may be eligible for welfare benefits such as Disability Living Allowance (DLA) or Employment Support Allowance (ESA). They may also be entitled to Disabled Students' Allowance and Additional Support Needs for Learning Allowance. For more information contact Skill Scotland. Contact details are at the end of the factsheet.

The Student Awards Agency for Scotland (SAAS) can give you more information on this and other funding, including loans and paying course fees. See their website (details at the end of the factsheet) or find out more from your child's school. Your child may also be able to get funding or other help from a voluntary organisation relevant to their specific needs.

Some young people may also be entitled to direct payments. These are cash payments to people assessed as needing social work services; they are given instead of services, so young people have greater control over their lives by deciding how their care is delivered. Payments can be made to disabled people aged 16 or over, or to people with parental responsibility for disabled children (up to 18 years). For more information contact UPDATE. Contact details are at the end of the factsheet.

Other resources

Make the move – guiding you towards adult life

Interactive CD from Enable to help young people understand what happens and what choices they have when leaving school.

Telephone: 0141 226 4541

Website: www.enable.org.uk

More information

Careers Scotland

Careers Scotland provides information for adults and young people on career planning in Scotland.

Telephone: 0845 8502 502

Fax: 0141 228 2851

Website: www.careers-scotland.org.uk

Citizens Advice Bureaux

Citizens Advice Bureaux provide free, confidential and independent advice on a range of issues, including benefits. You can get advice face to face in a bureau, by telephone or sometimes by email.

Website: www.citizensadvice.org.uk
(to find your nearest bureau)

Enquire

You can download our factsheet for children and young people, **Getting Ready to Leave School**, from our website (click on 'Downloads'). There is plenty of other information on this website and links to other useful organisations.

Helpline: 0845 123 2303

Website: www.enquire.org.uk

Email: info@enquire.org.uk

Address: Princes House
5 Shandwick Place
Edinburgh EH2 4RG

Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC)

The EHRC champions equality and human rights for all, working to eliminate discrimination, reduce inequality, protect human rights and to build good relations, ensuring that everyone has a fair chance to participate in society.

Helpline: 0845 604 5510

Email: scotland@equalityhumanrights.com

Website: www.equalityhumanrights.com

Family Fund Trust

The Family Fund Trust provides information and grants to families with severely disabled or seriously ill children, based on families' views and needs. Its guide **After 16 – What's New: Choices and Challenges for Young Disabled People** is available from its website. As this information covers the whole of the UK, some may not apply to Scotland.

Telephone: 0845 130 4542

Website: www.after16.org.uk

Jobcentre Plus

Website: www.jobcentre.gov.uk
(for more information about your local Jobcentre Plus)

Scottish Union of Supported Employment

Telephone: 0131 539 4967

Website: www.suse.org.uk

Skill Scotland (National Bureau for Students with Disabilities)

This organisation promotes opportunities for young people and adults with any disability in post-16 education, training and employment. It provides useful guides, including **Scotland: Opportunities at 16**; and information on things like transitions (such as from school to work), funding and applications.

Helpline: 0800 328 5050

Textphone: 0800 068 2422

Email: admin@skillscotland.org.uk

Website: www.skill.org.uk

The Student Awards Agency for Scotland (SAAS)

Telephone: 0845 111 1711

Website:

www.student-support-saas.gov.uk

UPDATE (Scotland's National Disability Information Service)

Telephone: 0131 558 5200

Fax: 0131 558 5201

Email: info@update.org.uk

Website: www.update.org.uk

Address: 27 Beaverhall Road,
Edinburgh EH7 4JE

For further information contact:

Enquire, Children in Scotland, Princes House,
5 Shandwick Place, Edinburgh EH2 4RG

Helpline: 0845 123 2303 Office: 0131 222 2425 Fax: 0131 228 9852
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