

Don't let your school days be the end of a learning career

As GCSE results are issued what opportunities are there for young people to realise their potential

Date of issue	19 August 2008
Publication number	176
Embargo until	19 August 2008

The message to young people in Bedfordshire and Luton is don't let school days be the end of your learning career. It will affect your earning potential and long-term job prospects.

As young people receive their exam results they will be making decisions that will determine their future and many will be unsure of what to do next. Whether they have achieved the results they hoped for or are disappointed with their grades there is a wealth of options and support to help them.

Whichever route a young person chooses it's important that they continue to learn and gain qualifications. It's the best way to ensure a successful future in terms of career progression, salary and job security.

By 2010 very few jobs will be open to those without the minimum set of qualifications. Those with five good GCSE's (A* to C) or an equivalent Level 2 qualification earn on average 9% more than those without and employers are more likely to invest in young people's future development and career.

Today everyone needs a minimum set of qualifications to get on in life. Without them a young person's options are limited and they could miss out on up to £4,000 a year in future earnings.

Suzie Webb, Area Director for the Learning and Skills Council (LSC) Bedfordshire and Luton said: "Young people often see GCSEs as the end of their education but we know that those who stay in learning after 16 are more likely to do better in their future employment. And ultimately earn more and be more successful than their peers who drop out of learning or go into a job without training.

“There are so many ways to help young people reach their potential and achieve a minimum set of qualifications. A young person can train whilst working or study full time at college or school. An Apprenticeship gives the option of earning while learning and completing one will provide a Level 2 qualification and an Advanced Apprenticeship Level 3. In Bedfordshire and Luton, 978 young people started an Apprenticeship in 2006/07. And, Apprenticeships are a viable progression route and can help a young person get to University.”

Money is no barrier – an education maintenance allowance (EMA) can earn an individual up to £30 per week for doing a Level 2 qualification. Young people are being urged not to let immediate financial pressures put them off further education, training or retaking their GCSEs by applying for an EMA. More than 6,400 learners in the county are claiming EMA.

Entry to Employment (E2E) helps those who need further support in their development to enter the world of work and progress in their learning. It is individually designed and includes vocational knowledge and skills, career awareness and employability skills as well as opportunities for work placements and tasters. E2E is a positive option for 265 young people in Bedfordshire and Luton who seek and will benefit from work-based learning opportunities.

Whatever their GCSE results, there are choices for everyone, and the LSC Bedfordshire and Luton wants to encourage as many young people as possible to stay in learning and make the most of the opportunities available for their future.

Advice and support is on hand through Connexions Personal Advisers who can help young people unsure about what their future holds, and help those who have done better than expected but need guidance on what to do next. Young people can phone or call in and see a personal adviser who will be available in schools, colleges, and Connexions centres. Not only can they talk to someone about staying in education, finding a job or starting an Apprenticeship they can get information about financial support for continuing in full time education and help with life issues. Young people in Bedfordshire and Luton can log onto their local Connexions at www.connexionsluton.org.uk and www.connexionsbedfordshire.org.uk to find out more.

-End –

For media enquiries please contact Sarah Leith Russell – Regional LSC Press Officer on 01234 420076 or e-mail on sarah.leith.russell@lsc.gov.uk OR call Tribe PR on 01603 417722 or e-mail on lsc@tribepr.com.

Note to Editors

Learning and Skills Council (LSC)

The LSC exists to make England better skilled and more competitive. We are responsible for ensuring the availability of high-quality education and training for everyone. We have a single goal: to improve the skills of England's young people and adults to world class standards. Our vision is that young people and adults in England have knowledge and skills matching the best in the world and are part of a truly competitive workforce. We work nationally, regionally and locally to deliver this ambition on behalf of learners and employers.

Visit www.lsc.gov.uk/inourhands or call 0800 011 3030.

Connexions

Connexions is for young people aged 13-19, living in England and wanting advice on getting to where they want to be in life. It also provides support up to the age of 25 for young people who have learning difficulties or disabilities (or both).

Connexions is a modern public service and young people are actively involved in its design and delivery. The service is managed locally by a Local Connexions Service which brings together all the key youth support services.

For Connexions in Bedfordshire and Luton log onto: www.connexionsluton.org.uk and www.connexionsbedfordshire.org.uk

Education Maintenance Allowance (EMA)

All 16-year-olds in England from a household with an annual income of up to £30,810 who stay on at college or school are eligible for the EMA. The scheme allows payments of £10, £20 or £30 a week in return for a commitment to study. Additional benefits of up to £500 over two years are also available for meeting certain targets.

For advice and information on how to apply for the EMA call 080 810 16219 or visit the web-site <http://www.direct.gov.uk/ema> for application packs. For people with speech and hearing difficulties who use textphone, please call 0800 056 5344.

APPRENTICESHIPS

- There are currently 250,000 apprentices working in over 130,000 organisations in England alone. They can choose from over 200 career paths in 80 different sectors of industry and commerce.
- Anyone aged 16 and above is eligible to complete an Apprenticeship. Apprenticeships provide individuals with a mixture of on and off-the-job training whilst being paid. For employers, Apprenticeships offer the opportunity to improve their businesses bottom line through the tailored, relevant training of highly motivated individuals. www.apprenticeships.org.uk
- There are two levels of Apprenticeships:
 - 'Apprenticeships', equivalent to GCSE level, incorporate a National Vocational Qualification to Level 2; key skills and in some cases a technical certificate
 - 'Advanced Apprenticeships', equivalent to A-Levels, incorporate a National Vocational Qualification to Level 3, key skills and a technical certificate
- Apprenticeship Directory: you can download a PDF of the directory at: <http://www.lsc.gov.uk/regions/EastofEngland/whatwedo/WBLEoE.htm>

Entry to Employment (E2E)

E2E is an individually designed programme within an overarching framework, which will respond flexibly to meet learner's needs and will offer a range of provision including the following key elements:

Basic skills.

- Key skills.
- NVQ Level 1 or Level 2 units.
- Personal development opportunities such as inter-personal relations.
- Vocational knowledge and skills.
- Career awareness and management skills.
- Employability skills including problem solving, effective thinking, team working.
- Work placements/tasters.
- Citizenship knowledge and awareness.

E2E is further designed to facilitate the opportunity of progression. It provides a positive learning experience through recognising the extent of support and the kind of environment that young people will need to make the successful transition into their next stage of development.

Progression may be to an Apprenticeship, to other employment-based opportunities or to further vocational learning. E2E will be a positive option for young people who seek, and who will benefit from, work-based learning opportunities.

The number of learners on the E2E programme in Bedfordshire and Luton is 265.

PROSPECTUSES

Area Prospectuses – log onto www.learnnow.org.uk for area prospectuses that provide information to all 14-19 learners, guidance, professional and parents and guardians.