

# Education, Employment & Training

## Virtual School

### Swindon Virtual School

Swindon Virtual School is not a teaching tool or online learning environment. We do not replace the school or educational provision for children in care. We are a statutory service which exists to support and challenge all those involved in the education of children in care to improve the outcomes you achieve.

We work with children and young people aged 3-18 and use the **Personal Educational Plan** as a vehicle for raising standards.

We support all young people who have previously been in care with information, guidance and advice regarding education, employment and training opportunities through our main web site

[www.swindon.gov.uk/virtualschool](http://www.swindon.gov.uk/virtualschool) or through direct contact on 01793 464335.

*We are here to support you.*



## Who we are

Sonja Joseph	Headteacher Swindon Virtual School
Gemma Meiklejohn	Lead Consultant Virtual School
Richard Haupt	Education Advisor

## Choosing a destination after Year 11

Deciding which college, 6th form or training pathway you will follow after completing Year 11 is a big decision and it will be important to consider a few options before making your final choice. Your key professionals (designated teacher and social worker) will provide advice and guidance around destination planning as part of your Year 11 'PEP meetings' and as part of your Pathway Plan where you will set out goals for your future. For some young people, the change from Year 11 to further education can be challenging; especially if you are also moving home at the same time or at a later stage. Your social worker and the Virtual School will work closely with you to make sure any changes affecting your education happen as smoothly as possible.

## What is expected?

The government expects that all young people are in full time education, training or employment until 18, by which point you will have started on a long term pathway towards your goals for the world of work. It will be important to ensure you are 'job ready' by having an up to date CV, National Insurance Number and bank account.

## Options

Apprenticeships can be a great way to enter the workforce, providing on the job training at many levels and allowing you to earn as you train. However, lots of young people enter the workforce starting with casual work that can fit around their studies and this is a great way to earn extra money while you are studying. The Virtual School can provide additional advice and guidance about careers planning; further education options, CV's and job interviews as part of your transition to 'Leaving Care'.

## Money to Study

All young people aged 16-18 who are 'Looked After' and study full time are entitled to a bursary, which will be paid to you by your college, 6th form or training centre. Please click on the link below for more information about the bursary. If you to continue to study at college from age 19, then there is advice available about Student Finance options to meet the costs of some courses which are no longer offered free after 19. All colleges and 6th forms have a Designated Person who supports young people in care, and care leavers and they will be able to advice you about support available.

 Weblink: [www.gov.uk/guidance/advice-for-young-people-16-to-19-bursary-fund-guide](http://www.gov.uk/guidance/advice-for-young-people-16-to-19-bursary-fund-guide)

## Support to Study from the Virtual School

The Virtual School will work with you and professionals to discuss your support needs, and how best we can work together to support you through your further education journey once you have left school. You will still have termly PEP meetings to ensure you are supported and should any changes happen, we can plan with professionals to support you in the best way possible. The Virtual School will also track your attendance and progress so that if there are any difficulties, we can offer you support. Support may include guidance about your options, advocating for you at college or 6th form. We can also point you in the right directions for careers guidance and advice about job hunting, or step-by-step planning for university if that is your goal.

 Should you need to contact the virtual school our details are:  
01793 464335. Website: [www.swindon.gov.uk/virtualschool](http://www.swindon.gov.uk/virtualschool)

# University

## Support with your application

A searchable website **Propel** provides full information about each educational institution's provision for care leavers, as well as inspirational stories from care-experienced students.

Your Personal Adviser will:

- support you with your applications and ensure that you receive your full entitlements and
- record your financial arrangements and vacation accommodation clearly in your Pathway Plan.

## Help with the cost of going to University

If you are a relevant or former relevant care leaver and you enter a higher education or University degree course, then the Care Leavers Team will provide you with the following support:

- A bursary of £2000 per academic year
- Help and support with vacation accommodation up to £3000
- Liaise with nominated support worker at the University to ensure all necessary support is accessed.

 Information regarding the financial support available to care leavers can be found via The Student Finance website which can be accessed through [www.direct.gov.uk](http://www.direct.gov.uk) This has lots of information as well as being the place to apply. There are downloadable guides that are very good and are easy to understand.

## University and College hardship funds

If you are a parent with a dependent child you may be able to apply for additional help for childcare costs. The website and guides will let you know what you can apply for.

Universities and Colleges also have hardship funds and you could be entitled to extra money from your University/College. Contact should be made with the Student Services Department at the education establishment to find out if you are eligible for these funds. If you are experiencing financial hardship because you have been in care, have a disability or are students with children then you could receive additional financial support.

Whether you would be eligible for support, is the decision of the University/College. They can give money as either a grant or a loan and in a lump sum or in instalments. You would need to apply to the Student Services Dept. If you have a disability, you can claim additional allowances. These are to cover such things as special equipment or a helper. These are known as Disabled Student Allowances (DSAs) and an assessment has to be undertaken before any money is awarded. These allowances are grants not loans.

 In addition to the above, many Universities provide additional bursaries to care leavers. More information about bursary payments can be found at: [www.gov.uk/extra-money-pay-university](http://www.gov.uk/extra-money-pay-university)

# Special Education Needs and/or Disability (SEND)

**The process of preparing for adulthood will be different for every young person depending on their aspirations and personal circumstances.**

The post-16 education and training landscape is very diverse. It encompasses school sixth forms (both mainstream and special schools), sixth form colleges, general further education (FE) colleges, 16-19 academies, special post-16 institutions, and vocational learning and training providers in the private or voluntary sector. The range of available study programmes is broad and includes AS/A-levels, vocational qualifications at all levels, apprenticeships, traineeships, supported internships and bespoke packages of learning.

Deciding which college, 6th form or training pathway to follow after completing Year 11 is a big decision and it will be important to consider a few options before making a final choice. If you have an assessed special educational need (SEN) and/or a disability, there will be additional things to consider when making the final choice about education or training.

If you have SEN and or a learning difficulty or disability which calls for special educational provision to be made for you, then special educational provision is support which is additional or different to support usually available to young people of the same age in mainstream colleges.

Post-16 institutions often use the term learning difficulties and disabilities (LDD). In education and training, SEN is defined as within the following four areas:

1. **Cognition and learning**
2. **Social, emotional and mental health**
3. **Communication and interaction**
4. **Physical / Sensory**



## SEND Support

If you have a learning difficulty or disability that calls for special educational provision, the college or post-16 institute must use its best endeavours to put appropriate support in place to help you learn. You should be supported to participate in discussions about your hopes, wishes, needs and the support that you think will help you best. Support should be aimed at promoting your independence and enabling you to make good progress towards employment and/or higher education, independent living, good health and participating in the community.

Colleges or post-16 institutes should take a cyclical approach to assessing need, planning and providing support, and reviewing and evaluating that support so that it can be adjusted where necessary. They should involve you and, particularly for those aged 16 to 18, your legal guardians/parents/carers, closely at all stages of the cycle; planning support around your needs. This process should coincide with other meetings arranged such as your Pupil Education Plan (PEP).

All colleges or post-16 institutes have duties under the Equality Act 2010 towards individual disabled young people. They must make reasonable adjustments, including the provision of auxiliary aids and services for disabled children, to prevent them being put at a substantial disadvantage.

## What if I have an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP)

The majority of young people with SEN or disabilities will have their needs met within local mainstream schools or colleges. However, some young people may require an EHCP in order to make available special educational provision to meet the special educational needs of the young person, to secure the best possible outcomes for them across education, health and social care and, as they get older, prepare them for adulthood.

If you have an EHC Plan, you will have a Local Authority SEN Senior Officer allocated to you who is responsible for maintaining the EHC Plan and ensuring your special educational needs provision you have been assessed for, is made available so that you can access education.

In reviewing your EHCP, local authorities should ensure good advanced planning involving you and your Personal Adviser.



Further information about this can be found on the SEND Local Offer available at [www.mycaremysupport.co.uk](http://www.mycaremysupport.co.uk)

# Apprenticeships

Did you know that SBC offer additional support for any care leavers wanting to apply for an apprenticeship? We give the care leavers team advanced notice of any vacancies so that they can work with care leavers on suitable opportunities. If a care leaver decides to apply, they will be guaranteed an interview and can access some support from our learning & development team around interview skills. Finally the government now offers up to £1,000 if a care leaver starts an apprenticeship to help with the costs of getting into work. For more information on apprenticeships nationally, check out the **Get in Go Far website** and discuss with the leaving care team how SBC can support you. Information on the £1000 grant to care leavers is available on:- <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/new-support-for-young-care-leavers-starting-an-apprenticeship>

## Care Leaver Apprenticeship Pathway

To provide additional support for our care leavers to apply for apprenticeships at Swindon Borough Council, People Development have devised a care leaver pathway, working with the care leaver team and the Corporate Parenting Board.

The actions and responsible owners for this are outlined here:

Action	Owner
Apprenticeship vacancy is identified within Swindon Borough Council	People Development
Vacancy information is shared with the Care Leaver team	People Development
Information on vacancies is cascaded to social worker / personal assistant / support worker	Care Leaver team
Social worker / personal assistant / support worker informs vacancy manager, prior to the deadline, that a care leaver is applying	Care Leaver team
Manager with the vacancy MUST ensure that the care leaver is offered an interview (pathway approved by CMT)	Manager (as advised by PD)
Care leaver attends interview (any preparation or support from care leaver team, if required)	Care Leaver / Care Leaver team
<b>Outcome (either):</b>	
<b>Successful</b> Care leaver commences apprenticeship (addition pastoral support from care leaver team, as required)	Care Leaver / Care Leaver team
<b>Unsuccessful</b> Care leaver to be signposted to employability support programme. Extra support from Care Leaver team	People Development Care Leaver team

# Building Bridges

## About Us

A three year programme funded by the Big Lottery Fund and the European Social Fund. The Building Bridges programme supports people across Swindon and Wiltshire who are facing significant challenges in being able to develop their skills, access education or move towards the world of work.

## What we do

The Building Bridges programme supports people across Swindon and Wiltshire who are facing significant challenges in being able to develop their skills, access education or move towards the world of work.

## What we charge

Free programme

## What we offer

Work experience and work taster sessions - CV development workshops - Job searching - Interview preparation - In-work support - Volunteering opportunities - Psychologist-led counselling services - Specialist employment support for people with an Autistic Spectrum condition

## Eligibility/Suitability

In order to take part, you must meet all of the following criteria:

- Not working
- Have the legal right to work in the United Kingdom
- Live in Swindon or Wiltshire
- Be aged 15 or over
- Not in Prison
- Not on a zero hours contract
- For further details, see the flyer below

## Apprenticeships

An apprenticeship gives you hands-on experience, a salary and the opportunity to gain qualifications while you work - even a degree. There are over 280 types of apprenticeship for over 1,500 job roles – anything from engineering to boat-building, or veterinary nursing to accountancy.



## Is an apprenticeship a good fit for you?

Find out what option is best and check your eligibility on [www.getingofar.gov.uk/](http://www.getingofar.gov.uk/) Find an apprenticeship and look for vacancies in your area on [www.gov.uk/apply](http://www.gov.uk/apply)  
Check out the apprentice guides below

- ✓ St Joseph's Catholic College
- ✓ Swindon Academy
- ✓ The Commonweal School
- ✓ The Ridgeway School and Sixth Form College
- ✓ UTC Swindon
- ✓ Wiltshire College

## Full Time Education

If you are aged 16 to 19 and intend to study full-time, then you will be applying for a study programme. The right study programme for you will depend on your achievements so far and your career goals.  
Your programme will either be built around your A level choices (the academic route) or the applied or technical qualifications you are interested in (the vocational route).  
Both programmes should include work experience and the study of English and Maths if you do not already have a GCSE grade A\*-C in these subjects.

## Full-time, academic study programmes

Swindon young people study A levels at many institutions. All of the following institutions often have 50 or more Swindon residents studying with them:

- ✓ Cirencester College
- ✓ Lydiard Park Academy
- ✓ New College
- ✓ Royal Wootton Bassett Academy

## Full-time, vocational study programmes

A vocational study programme will prepare you for employment. It will give you the technical knowledge and practical skills valued by industry. There are a huge range of vocational study programmes to suit all interests and abilities – if you are not sure where to start, perhaps you should visit the careers advice page first.  
Young people in Swindon study vocational programmes at many institutions. These institutions range in size and their offers are very different, often built around the needs of an individual student.

## Adult Learning Programmes

Adult Community learning courses are provided by Swindon Borough Council for the over 19 year olds, free of charge to the unemployed or those earning a low wage.  
You can find details of planned courses here:  
[www.webenrol.com/swindon](http://www.webenrol.com/swindon)  
Alternatively you can call 01793 466482



## Careers Advice

The **National Careers Service** website provides information, advice and guidance across England to people of all ages, to help them make decisions on learning, training and work opportunities. Their page for 13 to 19 year olds is a great starting point, helping you think about the options open to you now and how they might link to a future career.

They can help you with:

- CV's
- Skills health check reports
- Action plans
- Course searches

**Tel: 0800 100 900 (8 am – 10 pm, 7 days a week)**

**Text: 07766 413219**

There are many other websites you might explore. Swindon Schools advise their students to look at the following:

- Career Pilot
- Plotr

## Enterprise Adviser Network

The Swindon & Wiltshire Enterprise Adviser Network launched in November 2015 is the local arm of the national Enterprise Adviser Network working to create powerful, lasting connections between local businesses and the schools and colleges in our LEP area. The Network invites inspiring Enterprise Advisers (EAs) volunteers drawn from businesses who work directly with the school's leadership team to develop effective employer engagement plans.

They will co-ordinate efforts with other local businesses to equip young people with the skills they need to excel in education and life.

Each EA is allocated one school or college and will be supported by a full-time Enterprise Coordinator. The Network has a coalition of local organisations working across Swindon and Wiltshire supporting schools and colleges to navigate what is often a fragmented environment.

- As part of the National Careers & Enterprise Company Programme, this initiative aims to:
- Connect schools and colleges with employers and providers
- To make it possible for employers, large and small, to help all young people in the local area to have access to high impact encounters with the world of work
- Creating lasting connections between business volunteers and schools and colleges to develop careers plans and connections
- Complement and enhance existing activities, building upon strong provider partnerships and developing a new and innovative approach that results in young people getting the careers and enterprise support they need

- Support the delivery of high impact careers and enterprise programmes in schools and colleges that are impartial and available for all young people to access, across the SWLEP area
- Prepare and inspire young people for their future.
- Businesses part of the Enterprise Network have seen these benefits:
- Easy access to a diverse, entry-level talent pool for your recruitment pipeline
- Skills-based employee engagement proposition for developing future leaders
- Access to an evidence base that focuses on 'what works' in school engagement to improve ROI
- National networks with education and industry stakeholders
- Direct influence in addressing the skills gap in your organisation
- Opportunity to showcase business locally, regionally & nationally
- Employees who are Enterprise Advisers have seen these benefits:
- A skills-based leadership development opportunity
- An opportunity to access and develop local business networks
- A chance to support their local school or college and wider community

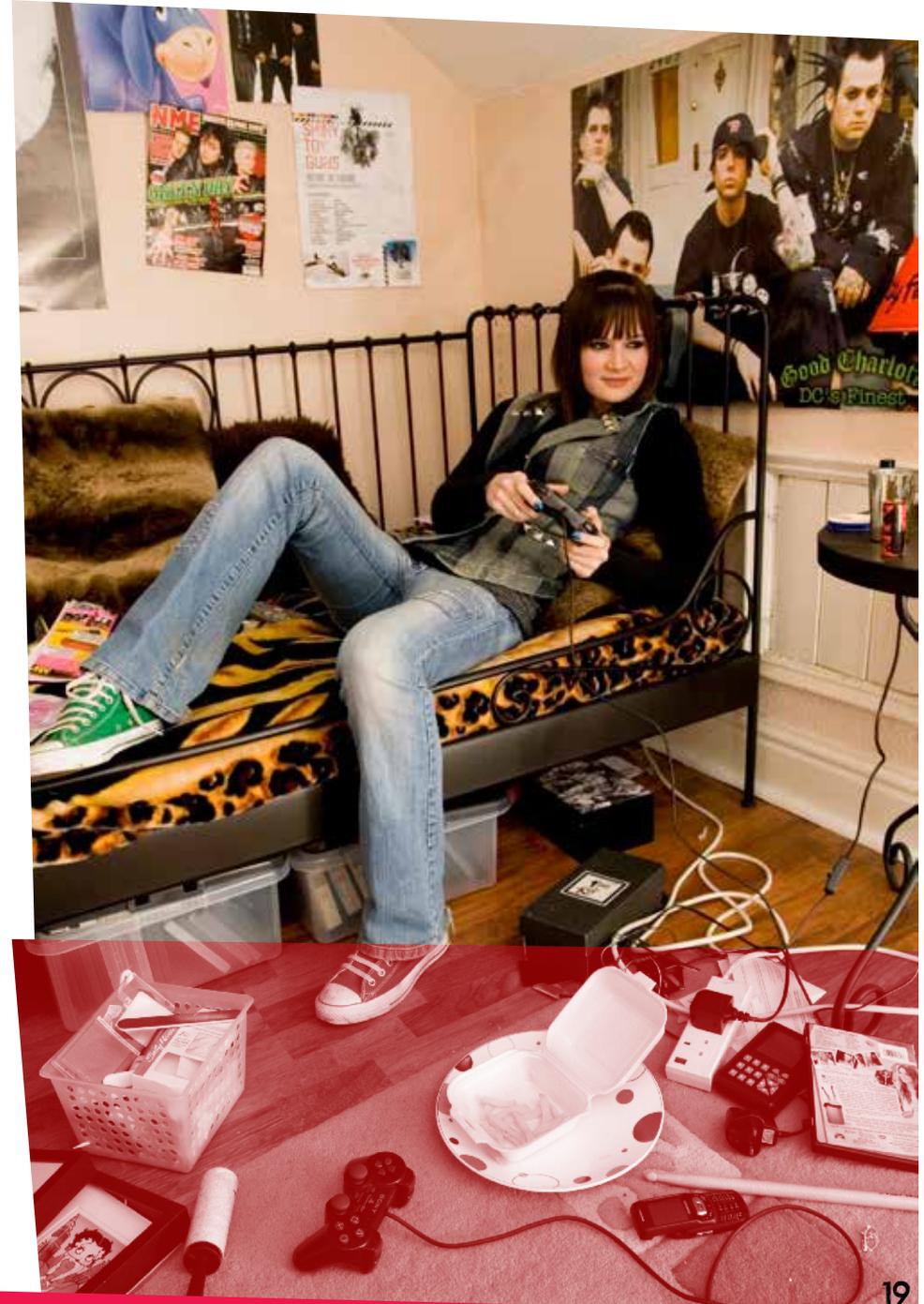


#### Contact

**Shona Taylor**

**Tel: 07467 440995**

**Email: [STaylor9@swindon.gov.uk](mailto:STaylor9@swindon.gov.uk)**



# Directory



## Volunteering Swindon Circles

Swindon Circles matches volunteers with lonely and social isolated people who are unable to access activity and social networks by providing social contact and friendship within the home. The service is not designed to replace care services, but add value through companionship.

### Eligibility:

Resident in the Borough of Swindon or registered with a GP within the NHS Swindon CCG boundary.

Clients should be considered as socially isolated or lonely (less than 5 hours or less a week of social contact).

We cannot accept referrals for people that are: Alcohol dependant, their behaviour is unpredictable or violent or their stage of dementia prohibits reciprocal conversations.

Volunteer Befrienders must be aged 16 or over

### Volunteering

The team have many volunteering opportunities and offer a flexible and inclusive approach. We are committed to making sure our volunteers feel part of the team, are clear on their role and are continuously supported through training and supervision.

### Eligibility:

We welcome volunteers; whatever your skills and experience.

Volunteers are required to provide 2 references and undergo a DBS check before they can begin work.

Some of our volunteering opportunities are restricted to those aged 16 or over



**Swindon Circles**

**Contact:**

**Cathy Caulfield**

**Swindon Circles Project Manager**

**Organisation's website:**

**[www.swindoncircles.org.uk](http://www.swindoncircles.org.uk)**

