

Impartial Careers Education: Statutory Guidance

The Education and Skills Act 2008 requires local authority maintained secondary schools, in discharging their statutory duty to provide careers education, to provide impartial information and advice which promotes the best interests of pupils and which does not seek to promote the interests of the school over other options. It also requires schools to have regard to guidance issued by the Secretary of State when complying with their careers education and guidance duties. Draft “core” statutory guidance is attached for consultation.

It has three components.

- an introductory section which sets out the context and rational for the guidance
- eight “Principles” of impartial careers education. (These include short outcome focussed statements that clarify the Principles and help schools to understand if they have been met)
- “key information” on 14-19 learning options that schools are expected to provide to all young people.

It is intended to issue additional supplementary guidance alongside the “core” guidance”. This “supplementary” guidance will be developed over the next few months and will include good practice guidance and classroom resources. It will be subject to regular review in the light of feedback from schools and other stakeholders. This approach allows us to provide concise core statutory guidance, which will retain its currency over a longer timeframe whilst ensuring that schools have access to the more detailed and fast changing information and support that they need to deliver the core guidance.

1. Introduction

Why is impartial careers education important?

Effective, impartial careers education underpinned by high quality personalised information, advice and guidance is a key pillar of the Government's plans to raise the age of participation in learning.

Impartial careers education provides young people with the knowledge and skills that they need to self-manage their learning and careers and to make informed choices that take account of their personal abilities, needs and preferences. It is motivating and it raises aspirations - by providing clear goals and by encouraging young people to participate in learning and to attain qualifications that reflect their potential.

"Careers education and guidance was deemed to be most effective when it was comprehensive and impartial... There appeared to be an association between schools in which ... effective careers education and guidance provision was in place and the schools in which young people seemed to be thinking through their choices more rationally, weighing up all the information they received.....

In contrast, young people in schools which did not appear to have such support strategies and careers education and guidance provision in place were more likely to have varied approaches to decision making, to change their minds about their decisions over time, and to have mindsets that reflected a "comfort seeking" or "defeatist" approach to decision making."¹

What is the background to this guidance?

Many schools provide high quality, impartial careers education. But research points to some schools promoting their own learning provision and not acting impartially when helping students make decisions about further learning and work.

"There is strong evidence that many schools provide slanted and partial evidence on post-16 options"²

"Schools, particularly those with sixth forms, often actively promote post-16 academic routes, compared to other forms of post-16 provision which were much less clearly promoted"³

"Evidence shows that teachers in 11-18 schools sometimes lacked impartiality by encouraging their students to stay at their school sixth forms."⁴

¹ "How do Young People Make Choices at 14 and 16?" Sarah Blenkinsop, Tamaris McCrone, Pauline Wade and Marian Morris. National Foundation for Educational Research. 2006.

² The Nuffield Review of 14-19 Education and Training. Briefing Paper 4. Susannah Wright. Available to download at www.nuffield14-19review.org.uk

³ The Influence of the School in the Decision to Participate in Learning Post-16. Nick Foskett, Martin Dyke and Felix Maringe. School of Education, University of Southampton. DfES Research Report RR538

⁴ How do Young People Make Choices at 14 and 16? Sarah Blenkinsop, Tamaris McCrone, Pauline Wade and Marian Morris. National Foundation for Educational Research. 2006.

This can be damaging for young people. It can lead to course switching and to drop out and to lost potential. We want all young people to have the best possible support so that they progress and achieve to the best of their abilities.

What should head teachers do?

Schools are responsible for structuring their workforce to meet the needs of their pupils and communities and they organise their delivery of careers education and their wider provision of information, advice and guidance (IAG) in many different ways. But the most effective schools take a “whole school” approach to providing young people with the help and support that they need. They also engage actively with parents/carers (who remain the single most important influence on young people’s learning and on their career choices) providing them with the information and advice that they need to help their children make well thought through decisions about learning and work.

This requires the active and committed leadership of school leaders and we expect all schools to assign responsibility for securing high quality, impartial careers provision to a member of the senior leadership team within the school. Ideally this person will also be responsible within the school for the Continuous Professional Development of staff with careers/IAG roles and for the development of effective partnership arrangements with local external IAG providers.

The head teacher also has overall responsibility for ensuring that **all** his/her staff (not only careers/IAG specialists) understand their statutory responsibilities in this area and that they receive the training and support that they need to undertake their duties effectively.

He/she should also ensure that effective arrangements are in place to evaluate the quality of careers education provision and that it is compliant with this guidance.

Further, supplementary guidance issued alongside this guidance and available at (*to be published later this year*) will provide support to head teachers to manage these responsibilities.

How will compliance with this guidance be monitored?

Schools should monitor their performance against the Principles and ensure that the “key information” is provided to pupils. DCSF will provide schools with data on learner progression post-16 to help inform this work.

The school Self Evaluation Form (SEF) template and the inspection evaluation schedule asks schools and inspectors respectively to evaluate:

- the quality and accessibility of information, advice and guidance provided to help pupils make the best choices regarding future courses or careers
- the extent to which pupils develop their knowledge and understanding of the world of work and develop skills and personal qualities which will serve them well in education, training, employment and their future lives.

Local authorities (in pursuance of their IAG responsibilities) and local 14-19 consortia (who have an interest in supporting and encouraging collaborative working in the context of the wider 14-19 reform programme) will also have an interest in ensuring that schools adhere to the Principles. The Department will be encouraging, as good practice, local authorities/consortia to establish local arrangements for monitoring compliance with the Principles and for securing continuous improvements in provision.

If there is evidence of a school not providing impartial Careers Education a complaint to the Secretary of State may result in the governing body of the school in question being issued with a direction to enforce their duties in this respect – sections 496 and 497 of the Education Act 1996 refer.

How do the “Principles” of impartial careers education link to the Quality Standards for Information, Advice and Guidance?

Many schools will be aware of the publication, in October 2007, of Quality Standards for Young People's Information, Advice and Guidance (IAG). These Quality Standards (which can be downloaded from <http://www.everychildmatters.gov.uk/>) define the Government's expectations of the IAG services that local authorities provide having assumed responsibility for Connexions in April 2008.

Although some of the Quality Standards can be applied to schools they do not provide a comprehensive, tailored statement of our expectations of the support that we expect schools to provide for their young people. The Principles of impartial careers education -which in style and approach are similar to the Quality Standards- provide for schools the clear statement of the Government's expectations that the quality standards provide for local authorities.

What help is available to schools to help them to implement this statutory guidance?

More detailed supplementary guidance can be drawn down from (*to be published later this year*). This supplementary guidance includes:

- guidance on effective practice that schools can use to inform their planning
- classroom resources that provide schools with up to date materials to help teachers provide the “key information” on 14-19 pathways defined by this statutory guidance
- information and support to help careers co-ordinators/leaders develop curricula that meets the requirements of the statutory guidance
- materials and advice to help schools evaluate the quality of their provision and to inform the completion of the School Evaluation Form. These will place particular emphasis on the views of pupils and their parents/carers.

What help is available to teachers (and non-teaching staff) to help them to provide information and advice on the full range of 14-19 learning options and on learning and work progression opportunities from their specialist subjects?

“14-19 Choices”, the new, on-line guide on qualifications for careers/IAG practitioners available at <http://www.cegnet.co.uk/14%2D19choices/> provides careers leaders (co-ordinators) in schools with up to date information on 14-19 learning options.

All staff in schools should also be familiar with their local on-line 14-19 prospectus which provides details of the 14-19 learning opportunities available to young people in their area. Increasingly local 14-19 prospectuses will also provide information about progression pathways and other information to support young people to make choices.

(<http://local.direct.gov.uk/LDGRedirect/index.jsp?LGSL=1145&LGIL=8>).

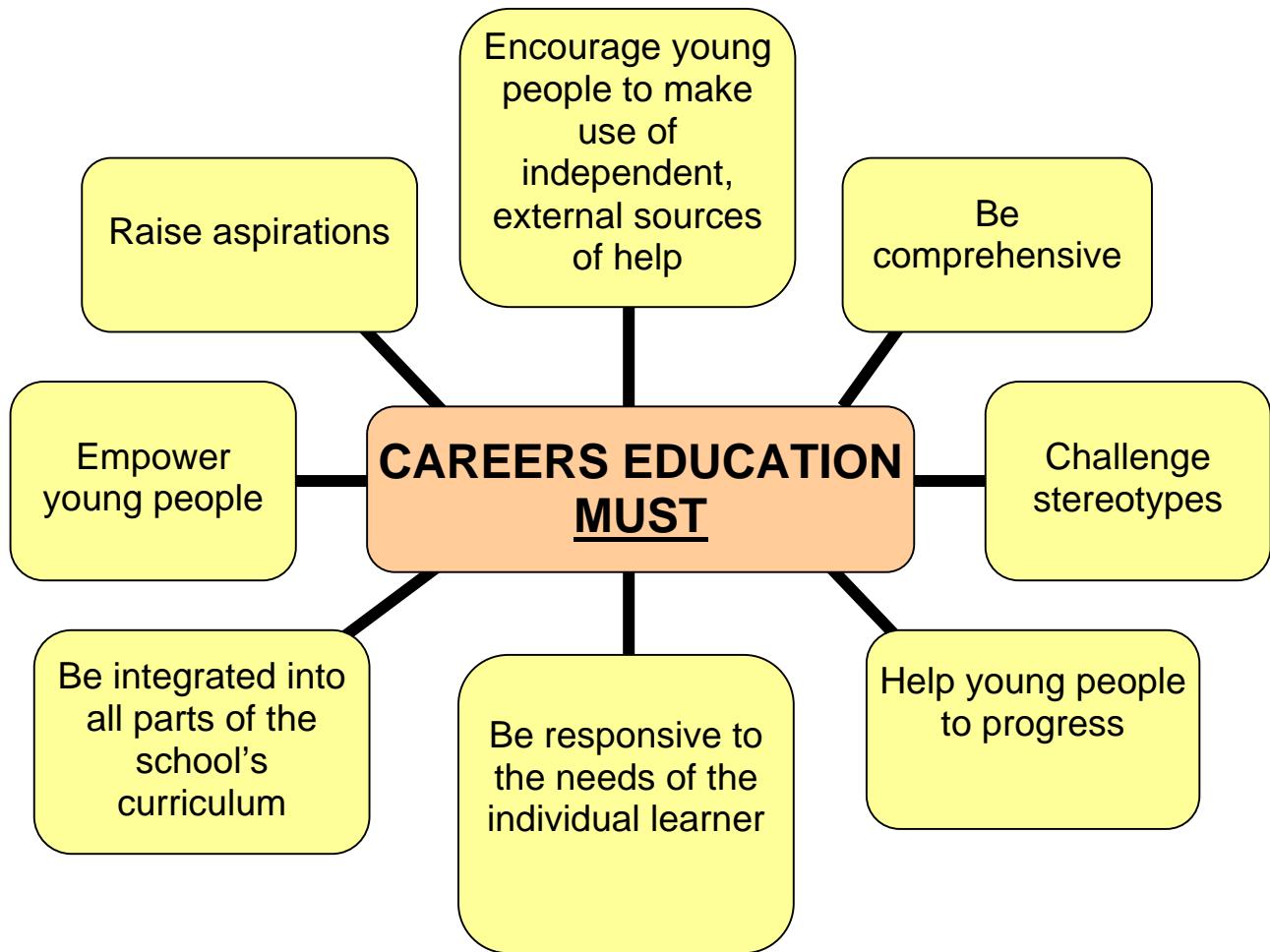
Information and support to help teachers embed information about learning and work on progression opportunities into their subject teaching is available at (*to be published later this year*).

Further information on particular pathways can be found at:

- *(on A Levels)*
http://www.direct.gov.uk/en/EducationAndLearning/QualificationsExplained/DG_10039018
http://www.qca.org.uk/qca_4127.aspx (student guide)
- *(on Apprenticeships)* www.apprenticeships.org.uk
- *(on Diplomas)* www.direct.gov.uk/diplomas
- *(on Employment with accredited training)*www.dcsf.gov.uk/14-19,
www.accreditedqualifications.org.uk – ‘search for QCF’
- *(on the Foundation Learning Tier)* http://www.qca.org.uk/qca_8153.aspx
- *(on Functional Skills)*
http://www.direct.gov.uk/en/EducationAndLearning/QualificationsExplained/DG_173874
http://www.qca.org.uk/qca_6062.aspx (student guide)
- *(on GCSEs)*
http://www.direct.gov.uk/en/EducationAndLearning/QualificationsExplained/DG_10039024
http://www.qca.org.uk/qca_6217.aspx (student guide)
- *(on Higher Education)* www.UCAS.ac.uk,
www.fdf.ac.uk
www.findfoundationdegree.co.uk,
www.Prospects.ac.uk

2. Principles of Impartial Careers Education

The Education and Skills Act 2008 requires schools, in the delivery of their statutory requirement to provide careers education, to ensure that information about learning options and careers is presented impartially and that advice promotes the best interests of pupils. It also requires schools to have regard to any statutory guidance about careers education issued by the DCSF. These Principles form part of that statutory guidance.



Good quality, impartial careers education, supported by personalised information and advice about learning and work

1. Empowers young people

Schools can be confident that this principle is met if young people;

- are able to identify their strengths and their learning/work preferences (1.1)
- are able to investigate and assess opportunities for learning and work on their own (1.2)
- understand the skills and qualifications that they need to pursue preferred pathways and can manage their own career development, reviewing and adapting their plans as they progress through learning and work pathways (1.3)
- show resilience in overcoming barriers to their goals and in responding to changing personal, social and economic circumstances (1.4)
- understand, and are enabled to claim, the financial support that they are eligible to receive to support their learning (1.5)
- are confident of their ability to make well thought through and informed decisions about learning and work (1.6)
- are able to discriminate in interpreting information, and can identify impartiality and bias (1.7)
- understand how their choices will impact on their future well-being (1.8)
- are empowered to influence the quality of information and advice services and careers education provision (1.9)

2. Is responsive to the needs of the individual learner

Schools can be confident that this principle is met if young people:

- are aware of their entitlement to impartial information, advice and guidance about learning and work (2.1)
- receive the information and advice that they need to support their decision making at times, and in formats, that reflect their needs (including special educational needs) (2.2)
- are referred promptly, or self refer, to specialist services, including specialist careers advice and guidance services, as appropriate (2.3)
- are supported by their parents/carers who have been enabled to provide appropriate help and advice (2.4)
- feed back that they have been helped to make informed choices (2.5).

3. Is comprehensive

Schools can be confident that this principle is met if young people:

- understand
 - the full range of learning opportunities open to them within the school and elsewhere, including apprenticeships (3.1a)
 - the progression opportunities afforded by each course/pathway, including to Higher Education (3.1b)

- the local, regional and national labour market and opportunities within it including pay rates in different sectors as applicable (3.1c)
 - how to access community, voluntary and other developmental opportunities (3.1d)
- make realistic and informed decisions in the light of this understanding (3.2)
- recognise barriers to learning and work (e.g. for disadvantaged groups) and understand how these can be overcome (3.3)

4. Encourages young people to make use of independent, external sources of help

Schools can be confident that this principle is met if young people:

- understand how to access information, advice and guidance on learning and work options from:
 - the Connexions service (4.1a)
 - Connexions Direct (4.1b)
 - the local 14-19 prospectus (4.1c)
 - the National Apprenticeships Service vacancy matching service (4.1d)
 - other information sources used locally (4.1e)
 - the transition support team (for young people with special educational needs and disabilities) (4.1f)
- are provided with easy access to these services (4.2)
- use Common Application Processes when applying for post 16 provision (4.3)
- are taking full advantage of these services when they need them (4.4)

5. Is integrated into all parts of the school's curriculum

Schools can be confident that this principle is met if young people:

- understand the relevance to their future lives of each part of the curriculum (5.1)
- understand the progression opportunities (in terms of learning and work) afforded by each part of the curriculum (5.2)
- are equipped with the knowledge, skills and attributes that they need to make the most of changing opportunities in learning and work and, after leaving school, are in employment, education or training (5.3)

4. Raises aspirations

Schools can be confident that this principle is met if young people:

- have been challenged (e.g. by experiential learning or “taster” sessions and though visits to employers, work based training providers, universities etc.) to review their ambitions and to re-appraise their goals (6.1)
- understand the benefits of further education (including apprenticeships) and higher education (6.2)
- are committed to further learning and personal development (6.3)

5. Challenges stereotypes

Schools can be confident that this principle is met if young people:

- are able to recognise and challenge stereotypical views of opportunities in learning and work (7.1)
- have been encouraged to consider learning and work options that are not traditionally associated with their gender, ethnicity, faith, learning or physical ability, cultural or socio-economic background (7.2)
- make and sustain successful transitions into non-traditional roles (7.3)

6. Helps young people to progress

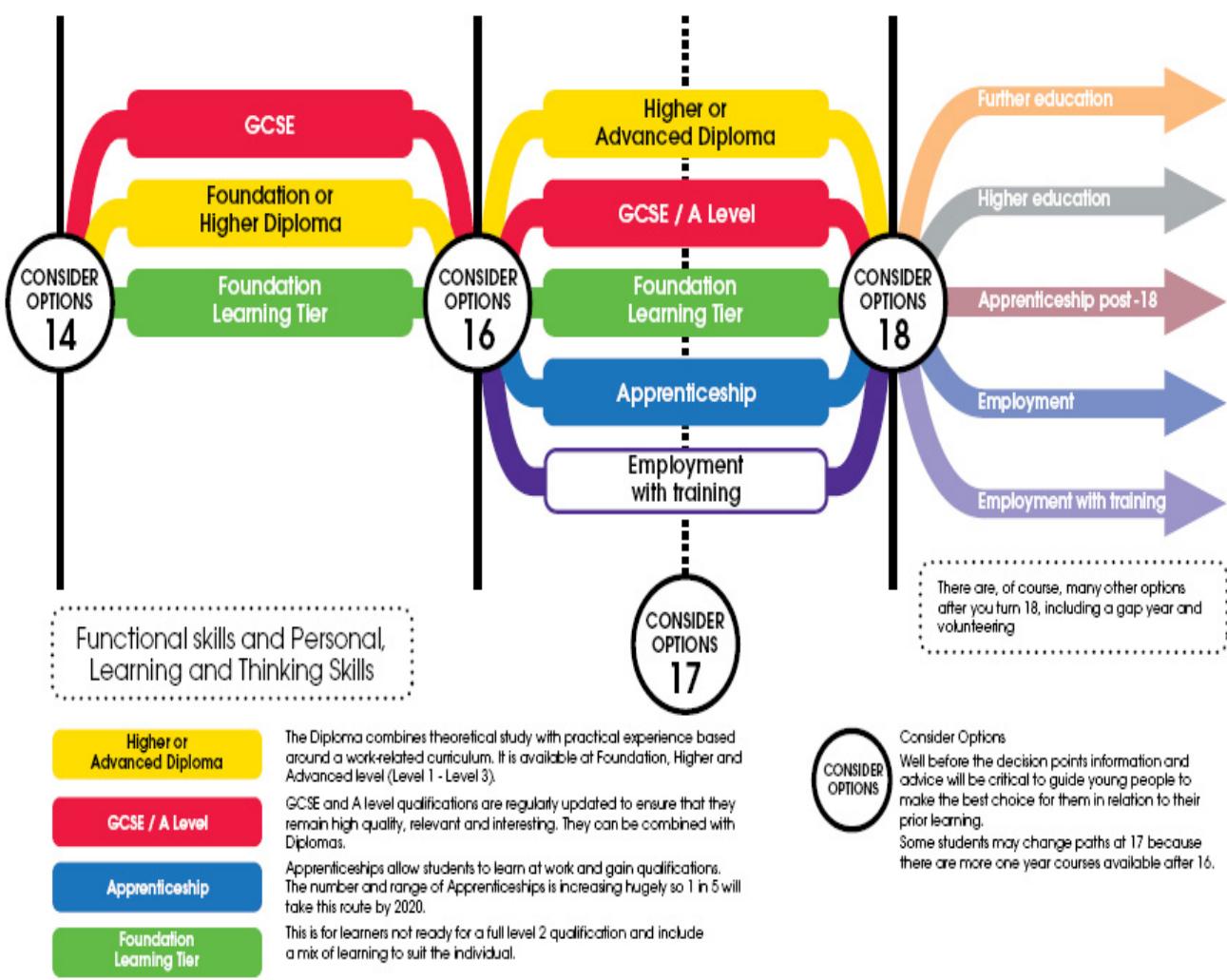
Schools can be confident that this principle is met if young people:

- can follow applications procedures and prepare for interviews (8.1)
- understand that they are guaranteed an offer of a place in learning after Year 11 and Year 12, and know how to access this offer (8.2)
- transfer smoothly to further learning and to work (8.3)
- understand and demonstrate the main qualities, attitudes and skills needed to enter, and succeed in, working life and independent living (8.4)
- remain in a chosen learning pathway and achieve the desired outcome (8.5)

3. Key Information

Careers Education helps young people to develop the knowledge, confidence and skills that they need to make well-informed, thought-through choices and plans that enable them to progress smoothly into further learning and work, now and in the future. The 14-19 pathways that schools need to provide to each young person on 14-19 learning pathways to inform their decision making at key transition points are set out below.

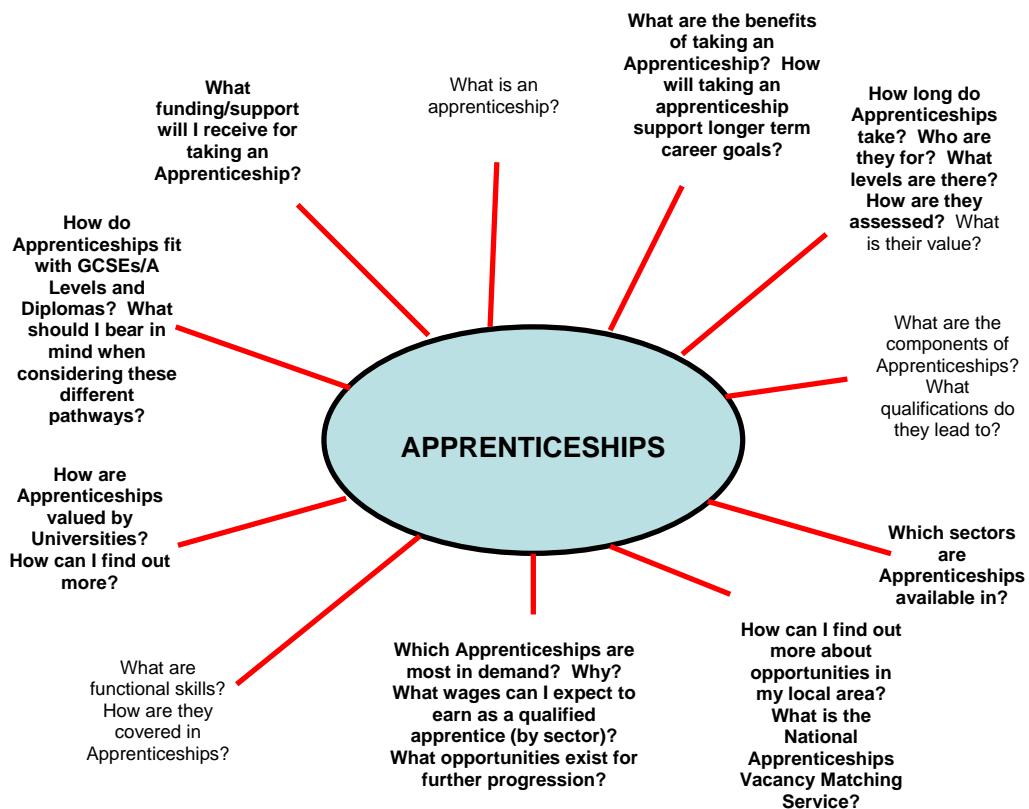
There are four learning routes: Diplomas; GCSE / A levels; Apprenticeships and Foundation Learning Tier. As we move towards 2013 and 2015 when all young people will be required to be undertaking learning or training up to the age of 18 and when the four learning routes are fully developed, we will expect learners in the Employment with Training route to be taking qualifications which sit within one of the four learning routes. This will help young people on the path towards completing further qualifications.



QUALIFICATIONS/PATHWAYS

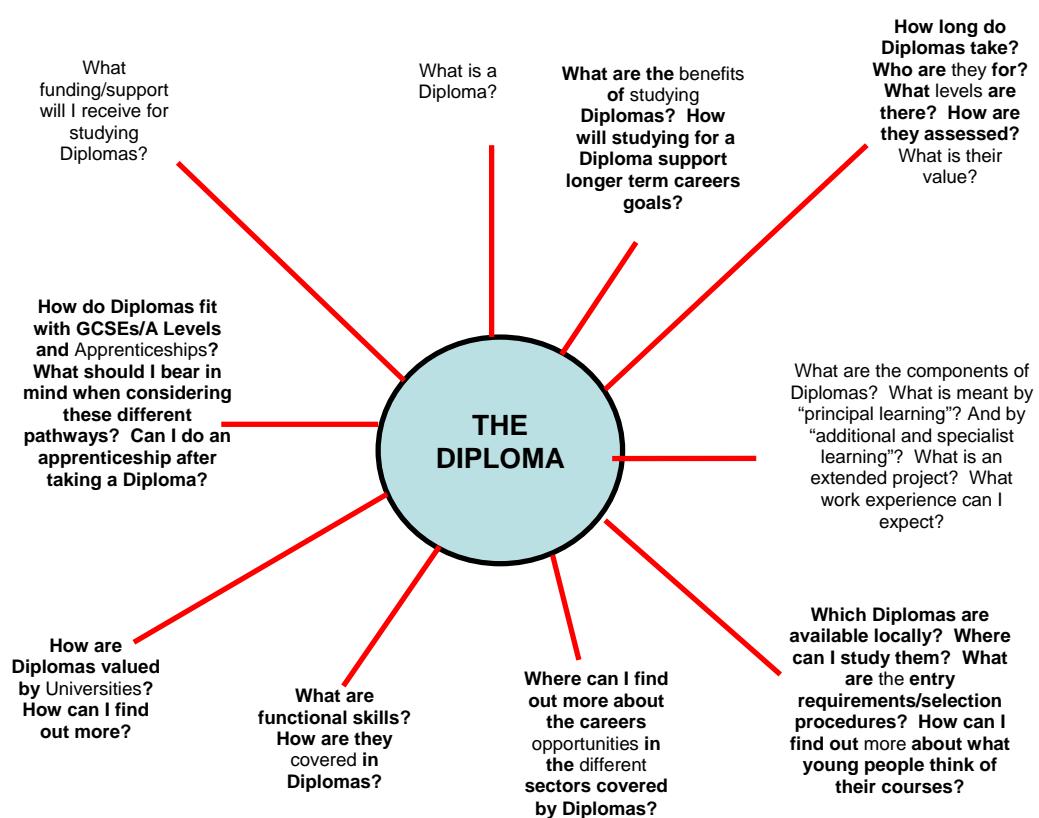
Apprenticeships

Young people need answers to the following questions....



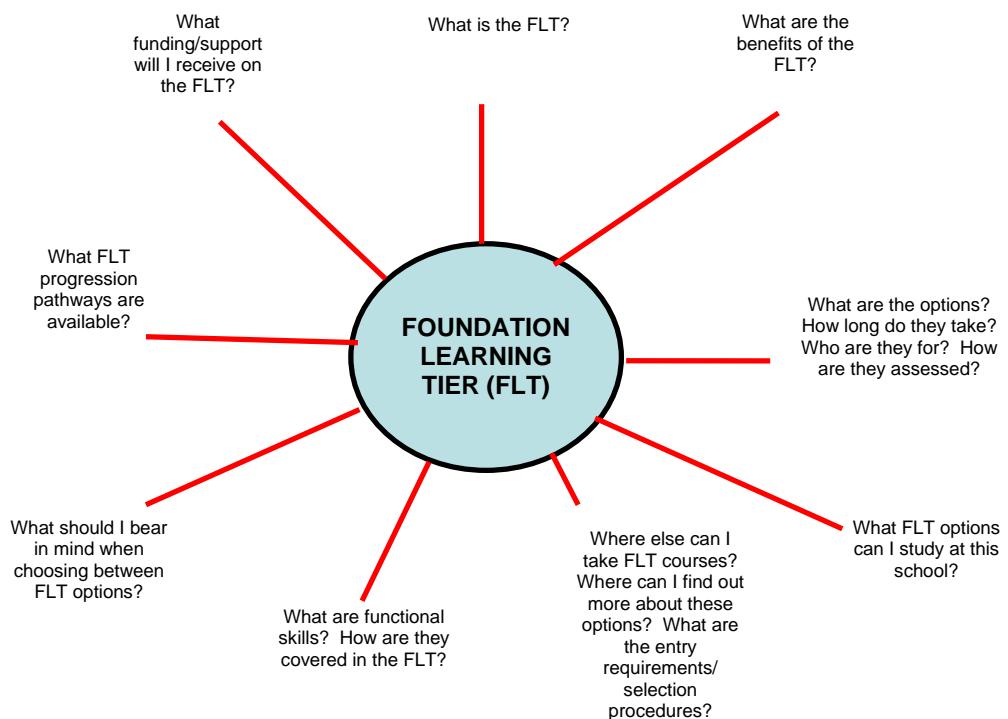
Diplomas

Young people need answers to the following questions....



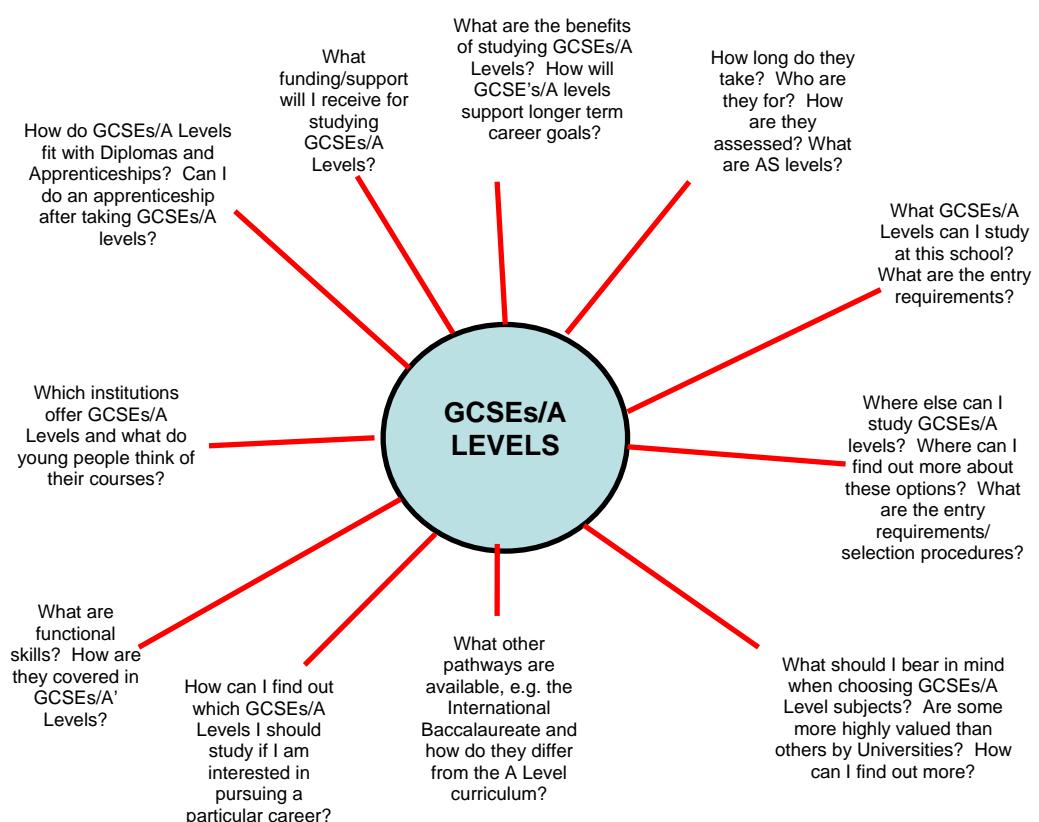
Foundation Learning Tier

Young people need answers to the following questions....



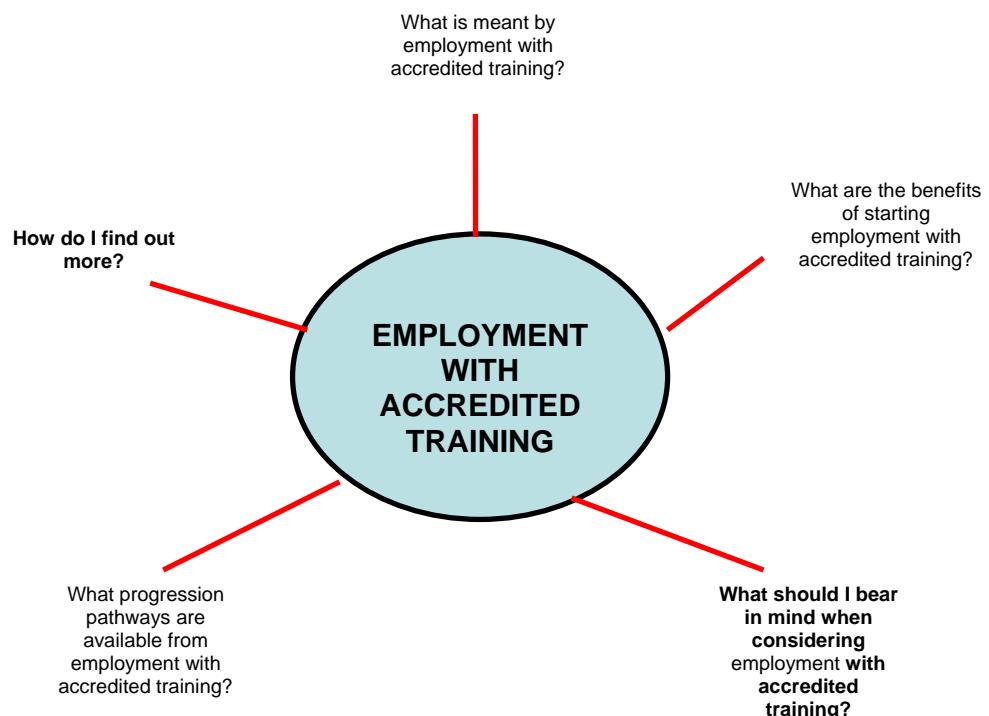
GCSEs/A levels

Young people need answers to the following questions....



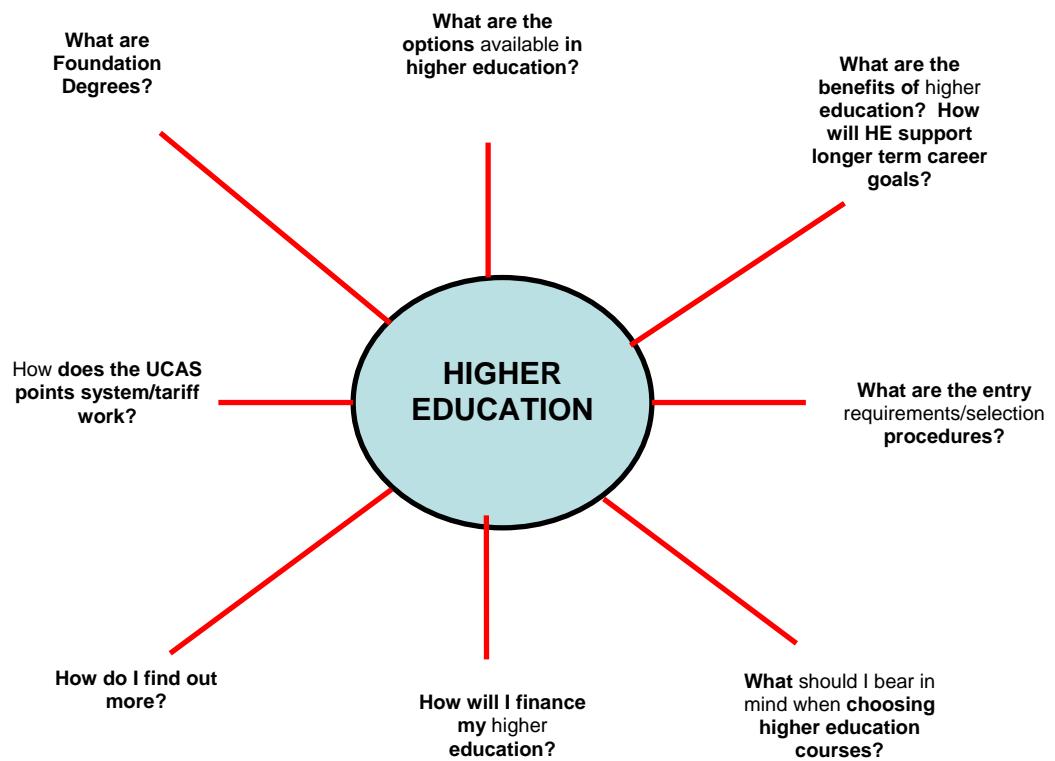
Employment with accredited training

Young people need answers to the following questions....



Higher Education

Young people need answers to the following questions....



Other Qualifications available until 2012

Young people need answers to the following questions....

