



Department  
for Education

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# **Careers guidance and inspiration in schools**

**Statutory guidance for governing bodies,  
school leaders and school staff**

**April 2014**

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## Summary

### About this guidance

1. This is statutory guidance from the Department for Education. This means that recipients must have regard to it when carrying out duties relating to advice and guidance<sup>1</sup>. If they decide to depart from it, they will need to have clear reasons for doing so. The statutory guidance outlines why schools (and local authorities that maintain pupil referral units) must secure independent careers guidance for young people, what they must do to comply with their legal responsibilities in this area and the role of the governing body and head teacher in shaping the guidance and support offered by the school. It relates to the [Inspiration Vision Statement](#) published by the government in September 2013, which sets out government policy in this area.
2. We use the term 'must' when the person in question is required to do something in law and 'should' when we are setting out a requirement in the statutory guidance to which they should have regard.
3. Recipients should read this statutory guidance alongside the non-statutory departmental advice on [careers guidance and inspiration in schools](#)<sup>2</sup>, which provides case studies and suggestions, based on good practice, for ensuring that all pupils have access to high quality advice and guidance.

### Review date

4. The statutory guidance replaces the previous versions issued in March 2012 and March 2013. This guidance will be reviewed on an annual basis: but it will only be revised if it is no longer considered fit for purpose.

### What legislation does this guidance refer to?

5. Section 42A and section 45A of the Education Act 1997.

### Who is this guidance for?

6. This guidance is for:
  - Governing bodies, school leaders and school staff in maintained schools<sup>3</sup> and local authorities that maintain pupil referral units

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<sup>1</sup> For the purposes of this statutory guidance, 'advice and guidance' refers to a coherent programme of activities that inform, inspire and motivate young people, preparing them for work and helping them to understand where different education and training choices could take them in the future.

<sup>2</sup> Non-statutory departmental advice '[Careers guidance: advice for schools](#)'

<sup>3</sup> For the purposes of this statutory guidance, references to 'maintained school' or 'school' means a community, foundation or voluntary school, community or foundation special school (other than one established in a hospital) that provide secondary education. It also includes pupil referral units. References to a 'governing body' include a local authority that maintains a pupil referral unit.

- Academies and free schools (including alternative provision academies and free schools)<sup>4</sup>.

## Key Points

7. The duty on schools, to secure independent careers guidance for all year 8-13 pupils, is intended to expand advice and guidance for young people so they are inspired and motivated to fulfil their potential. Schools should help every pupil develop high aspirations and consider a broad and ambitious range of careers. Inspiring every pupil through more real-life contacts with the world of work can help them understand where different choices can take them in the future.
8. The government commissioned Ofsted to conduct a thematic review to assess progress during the first year of operation of the duty to secure independent careers guidance. [Ofsted's report 'Going in the right direction?'](#) showed that while some schools have responded well to the new duty, the majority of schools need to do more to set high expectations for all pupils and provide high quality advice and guidance that motivates them to succeed.
9. In response to Ofsted's report the Minister of State for Skills and Enterprise, Matthew Hancock, published an Inspiration Vision Statement, describing how employers, schools and others will work together to inspire young people about the world of work, opening their eyes to the range of learning and career opportunities that are open to them.
10. Ofsted has been giving careers guidance a higher priority in school inspections since September 2013, taking into account how well the school delivers advice and guidance to all pupils in judging its leadership and management. This statutory guidance has been revised to ensure that all schools are clear about what is expected of them in meeting their duty.
11. Schools have a critical role to play in preparing young people for the next stage of their education or training and beyond. Expectations should be set high, including for the most vulnerable and those with special educational needs and disabilities, so that every pupil is stretched and acquires the attributes that employers value. This will help every young person to realise their potential and so increase economic competitiveness and support social mobility.
12. Schools must work with local authorities to support more vulnerable young people including those with special educational needs, and those who are disengaged or at risk of disengaging.

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<sup>4</sup> Many academies and free schools are subject to the duties relating to careers guidance through their Funding Agreements, including those which opened from September 2012 onwards and those which have moved to the updated funding agreement. Academies without the requirement are encouraged to follow this guidance in any case as a statement of good practice.

13. Schools can measure the effectiveness of their careers and inspiration activity by considering both the attainment and the destinations of their pupils. Success will be reflected in higher numbers progressing to apprenticeships, universities – including selective universities, traineeships, and other positive destinations such as employment or a further education college. This will help to close the gap in destinations between young people from disadvantaged backgrounds and others.
14. Schools can use the Destination Measures data, published by the Department for Education, to assess how successfully their pupils make the transition into the next stage of education or training, or into employment.

## Statutory Duty

15. The statutory duty requires governing bodies to ensure that all registered pupils at the school are provided with independent careers guidance from year 8 (12-13 year olds) to year 13 (17-18 year olds).

16. The governing body must ensure that the independent<sup>5</sup> careers guidance provided:

- Is presented in an impartial<sup>6</sup> manner
- Includes information on the range of education or training options, including apprenticeships and other vocational pathways
- Is guidance that the person giving it considers will promote the best interests of the pupils to whom it is given.

## What must the governing body do?

17. Strong school leadership is crucial to raising the aspirations of all pupils, encouraging them to overcome barriers to success and to do what it takes to fulfil their potential. The governing body should provide clear advice to the head teacher on which he/she can base a strategy for advice and guidance, which is appropriately resourced and meets the school's legal requirements. The governing body's advice should take account of the following points:

- Schools should provide sustained contacts with employers, mentors and coaches who can inspire pupils with a sense of what they can achieve and help them understand how to make this a reality.
- Schools should have a strategy for the advice and guidance they provide to young people. The strategy should be embedded within a clear framework linked to outcomes for pupils rather than an ad-hoc set of activities<sup>7</sup>. This should reflect the school's ethos and meet the needs of all pupils.
- Schools should provide access to a range of activities that inspire young people, including employer talks, careers fairs, motivational speakers, college and university visits, coaches and mentors. Schools should also consider the needs of pupils who require more sustained or intensive support before they are ready to make career decisions. High quality mentoring can be an important part of delivering against the duty.

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<sup>5</sup> Independent is defined as external to the school. External sources of careers guidance and inspiration could include employer visits, mentoring, website, telephone and helpline access. Taken together, these external sources could include information on the range of education and training options, including apprenticeships.

<sup>6</sup> Impartial is defined as showing no bias or favouritism towards a particular education or work option.

<sup>7</sup> The non-statutory departmental advice on careers guidance and inspiration in schools sets out some common features of inspirational, high quality advice and guidance.

- Online tools can offer imaginative and engaging ways to encourage young people to think about the opportunities available to them. However schools should note that website access is not sufficient in itself to meet the statutory duty.
- Schools can retain in-house arrangements for providing advice and guidance to pupils, but these in themselves are insufficient to meet the duty. In-house support for pupils must be combined with advice and guidance from independent and external sources to meet the school's legal requirements.
- Schools should consciously work to prevent all forms of stereotyping in the advice and guidance they provide, to ensure that boys and girls from all backgrounds and diversity groups consider the widest possible range of careers, including those that are often portrayed as primarily for one or other of the sexes.

## Responsibilities of Schools

18. Good advice and guidance is distinctive to the needs of individual pupils so the school's overall strategy should be shaped accordingly. Schools are expected to work in partnership with local employers and other education and training providers like colleges, universities and apprenticeship providers. This will ensure that young people can benefit from direct, motivating and exciting experience of the world of work to inform decisions about future education and training options.
19. In particular schools should make clear to pupils that if they do not achieve a grade C or better in GCSE maths or English by the end of key stage 4 they will be required to carry on studying these – at school, college or as an apprentice – as no institution will receive public funding to teach them up to the age of 19 unless they continue to work towards achieving Level 2 in maths and English. This is because of the vital importance and powerful labour market value of a good GCSE in maths and English.
20. Schools should also ensure that, as early as possible, pupils understand that a wide range of career choices require good knowledge of maths and the sciences. Schools should ensure that pupils are exposed to a diverse selection of professionals from varying occupations which require STEM subjects, and emphasise in particular the opportunities created for girls and boys who choose science subjects at school and college. Schools should be aware of the need to do this for girls, in particular, who are statistically much more likely than boys to risk limiting their careers by dropping STEM subjects at an early age.
21. Schools should offer pupils the opportunity to develop entrepreneurial skills for self-employment – and make it clear to them that working for themselves is a viable option (in fact it will be necessary for many). Pupils should receive the advice and support necessary to build and develop their own jobs, and have a clear understanding of potential barriers – whether real or perceived.

22. Schools should ensure that high attaining pupils are supported to make an informed choice about whether to aim for university, including the very best universities and courses, or an apprenticeship as an equally high calibre and demanding route into employment and higher education. Universities in the UK take students from all backgrounds and locations, based on their ability and potential. Apprenticeships, including higher level apprenticeships, are available in a wide range of industries and locations across the UK.
23. Schools should ensure that all students are aware of out of school opportunities that could help them with their career aspirations, such as the [National Citizen Service](#) and other voluntary and community activities.

## Inspiring young people

24. Modern careers guidance is as much about inspiration and aspiration as it is about advice. Sustained and varied contacts with employer networks, FE colleges, higher education institutions, mentors, coaches, alumni or other high achieving individuals can motivate pupils to think beyond their immediate experiences, encouraging them to consider a broader and more ambitious range of future education and career options.
25. Schools should create a learning environment which allows and encourages pupils to tackle real life challenges which require them to manage risk and to develop their decision making, team building and problem solving skills. Schools should have high expectations of all pupils. Facilitating access to a range of inspirational role models can instil resilience, goal setting, hard work and social confidence in pupils, encouraging them to overcome barriers to success. This approach can particularly benefit pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds who may get less support from family and social networks. Work experience<sup>8</sup> plays an important role for post-16 pupils.
26. More contact with real employers, enthusiastic and passionate about their own careers, not only inspires pupils but also challenges pre-conceived ideas about jobs. Having the opportunity to talk to people in those jobs and visit workplaces helps to build knowledge and understanding of the full range of careers available in a particular sector. This can help to broaden horizons, challenging stereotypical thinking about the kind of careers to which individuals might aspire.

## Building strong connections with employers

27. There is currently a mismatch between the careers that young people want to pursue and the opportunities available. Choices made at school should be based on a clear view of the current labour market and how opportunities may change in the future.

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<sup>8</sup> The Department for Education has published [non-statutory advice to help schools deliver work experience](#)

28. Employers can demonstrate the opportunities available and advise on how to access them. They can explain the skills needed, and where pupils should be prepared for a level of competition in gaining access to courses or employment. [Evidence from the Education and Employers Taskforce](#) shows that access to a network of employers is associated with better outcomes for young people. Employers can pass on the benefits of their experience to both pupils and teachers, helping to link curriculum subjects to employment and providing an overview of the different routes into careers.
29. Every school should engage fully with their local employer and professional community to ensure real-world connections with employers lie at the heart of the careers strategy. Different interventions will work for different schools and pupils, but it could mean in practice:
- Mentoring and coaching
  - Speakers from the world of work in schools
  - An insight from Jobcentre Plus, or the National Careers Service into the labour market and the needs of employers
  - Workplace visits and work experience placements
  - Work 'taster' events such as games and competitions
  - Careers fairs and career networking events
  - Access to open days at further and higher education institutions
  - Access to creative online resources and labour market intelligence
  - Help with basic career management skills like CV writing, CV building, job searches and job interviews.
30. A number of organisations are working to change the culture of education business relationships, making it easier for employers and educators to work together to benefit pupils. Business in the Community's Business Class programme provides a framework for developing long term relationships between schools and businesses. Mosaic offers a package of mentoring support, using positive role models to improve students' confidence and employability. Schools can sign up to Career Academies UK, who provide structured programmes giving 16-19 year olds access to the world of work. Inspiring the Future has a national network of volunteers from different professions, jobs and sectors available to visit schools to share their knowledge and experience with pupils face-to-face<sup>9</sup>.
31. A clear focus on the enterprise skills, experience and qualifications that employers want can support preparation for work. Schools should help pupils gain the confidence to compete in the labour market by providing opportunities to gain the practical know-how and attributes that are relevant for employment. Increasing contact with employers will help to raise the profile of the importance of career choices but the school's overall strategy for advice and guidance should recognise that some pupils will need additional support before they are ready to make decisions about their next steps.

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<sup>9</sup> The non-statutory departmental advice on careers guidance and inspiration in schools sets out details of these and other programmes aimed at supporting schools to deliver inspirational advice and guidance.

## The National Careers Service

32. The National Careers Service offers information and professional advice about education, training and work to people of all ages. Pupils and their parents can access support via a website, helpline and web chat (<https://nationalcareersservice.direct.gov.uk>, or National Contact Centre 0800 100 900). A mobile website and app are also available. To support customers with pay-as-you-go mobiles and no access to a landline, there is a facility to book a free call back through the website.
33. Schools can choose to commission additional support from contractors engaged in delivering the National Careers Service. From October 2014, the National Careers Service will expand its offer to schools and colleges. The National Careers Service will broker relationships with and between schools, colleges, local communities and employers, working with the local Jobcentre Plus where appropriate, to help young people benefit from first-hand experience of work and the opportunities available in the local and national labour market. Schools can contact the National Careers Service through the National Contact Centre, which will provide information and support on engaging with employers. Local area based contractors will also be able to work with schools on local arrangements. Contact details for these will be available through the National Contact Centre and on the website, along with other resources.

## Helping pupils to access information on the full range of education and training options and engage with other local learning providers

34. Schools must secure independent guidance that includes information on the full range of education and training options, including apprenticeships and vocational pathways. This should encompass good, appropriate local further education, apprenticeships, and vocational education opportunities. In good time before decision points schools should ensure that pupils are informed about the options available, including:
- Post-14: GCSEs; options offered by local university technical colleges<sup>10</sup> and studio schools<sup>11</sup>; opportunities for 14 year old enrolment at local colleges
  - Post-16: A levels, advanced general qualifications, apprenticeships, employment combined with training, supported internships, tech levels and traineeships.
  - Post-18: further education courses, higher apprenticeships, undergraduate degrees.

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<sup>10</sup> UTCs are new academies, backed by employers and universities, for 14 -19 year olds and specialising in one or two curriculum areas, e.g. engineering and construction. They teach core GCSEs and A levels alongside vocational qualifications, and prepare young people for a range of careers and pathways at 19

<sup>11</sup> Studio Schools are new academies for 300 students, aimed at those in the 14-19 age range who learn in more practical ways. They offer GCSEs in English, maths and science, alongside work placements and projects linked directly to employment opportunities in the local area. Students stand to gain a broad range of employability and life skills.

35. Visits to colleges, universities and workplaces can help pupils to make informed decisions, helping them to progress successfully at key transition points. Access to course information, open days and careers fairs can also inform the decision-making process.
36. Schools should make sure pupils can find out more about the range of options available by giving other providers who wish to do so the opportunity to inform pupils directly about what they offer. These could include further education and sixth form colleges, studio schools, university technical colleges and employers and other providers delivering apprenticeships. Schools can work within local partnerships with other schools, the local authority and other partners to understand pathways locally, and embed intelligence on the local economy. Schools have a responsibility to act impartially and recognise that some pupils will flourish most successfully by pursuing education or training options beyond the school. The primary consideration when advising on options should be the best interests of the young person.

### Securing support for choices and progression

37. Different pupils will need different support to make good choices based on their aspirations and the information they can access<sup>12</sup>. Some will need convincing that having a successful career is a positive and attainable option. Some will need help in thinking about their current position; their strengths; the opportunities and risks in different career paths and what it will take to get there. Others will be more advanced in their thinking but will still benefit from encouragement to explore alternative options before finalising their choices. Schools should ensure that the individual needs of all pupils are considered.
38. In addition to the National Careers Service website, which includes job market information and job profiles, there is a further range of digital resources that can help pupils self-assess their skills and research career options. For example, [plotr.co.uk](https://plotr.co.uk) can help to inspire and inform young people about the career and training pathways available to them. Created with input from teachers, young people and employers, it promotes inspiration, exploration and discovery of the world of work, and allows teachers and schools to connect with local and national employers. Teachers and students can access expert careers advice, knowledge and information from one single digital platform.

### Face-to-face advice and guidance

39. Pupils can gain confidence and motivation from the opportunity to explore career ideas through individual, face-to-face discussions with a range of people:
- Role models and inspiring individuals from the careers to which they aspire.

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<sup>12</sup> A Future First study showed that over 80% of students surveyed said that they feel more confident that they will succeed in the world of work as a result of hearing from alumni.

- Alumni who can pass on the benefits of their experience from vocational courses, apprenticeships and degrees. Pupils can often relate to successful former students, who can help change their perceptions of what they are capable of achieving.
- Mentors or coaches who can provide a more nurturing influence, helping young people to build their confidence and resilience.
- Careers advisers who can help pupils to locate ambitious education and career options, by identifying opportunities and assessing pupils' abilities, interests and achievements.

40. Schools should secure access to face-to-face advice and guidance where it is the most suitable support for young people to make successful transitions. While most young people can benefit from face-to-face guidance, it is likely to be particularly useful for children from disadvantaged backgrounds, those who are at risk of disengaging or those who have special educational needs, learning difficulties or disabilities.

### **Duty to participate in education or training after 16**

41. The Government has raised the participation age (RPA) so that all young people in England are now required to continue in education or training beyond the age of 16. Young people who left year 11 in summer 2013 are expected to remain in education or training for a further year after the compulsory school leaving age and pupils starting year 11 or below in September 2013 will need to continue until their 18th birthday.

42. Schools must ensure that young people are clear about the duty and what it means for them. In particular they must be clear that young people are not required to stay in school; that they can choose how to participate which might be through:

- Full time study in a school, college or training provider;
- An apprenticeship, traineeship or supported internship;
- Full time work or volunteering (20 hours or more) combined with part time accredited study.

### **Working with local authorities**

43. Local authorities<sup>13</sup> have a range of duties to support young people to participate in education or training which are set out in [statutory guidance on the participation of young people](#).

44. Schools should work with local authorities to identify those at risk of not participating post-16. Local authorities should have arrangements in place to ensure that 16 and

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<sup>13</sup> For the purpose of this guidance, local authorities includes services subcontracted by the local authority to deliver services to support young people's participation as set out in the Education and Skills Act.

17 year olds have agreed post-16 plans and have received an offer of a suitable place in post-16 education or training under the 'September Guarantee', and that they are assisted to take up a place. This process is increasingly important now that the participation age is being raised.

### Information sharing

45. Schools must provide relevant information about all pupils to local authority support services<sup>14</sup>. This includes basic information such as the pupil's name, address and date of birth.
46. Schools should also provide other information that the local authority needs in order to support the young person to participate in education or training. This may include for example, information to help identify those at risk of becoming not in education, employment or training (NEET) post-16, young people's post-16 plans and the offers they receive along with their current circumstances and activities. However, schools must ensure that they do not provide this additional information if a pupil aged 16 or over, or the parent of a pupil aged under 16, has instructed them not to share information of this kind with the local authority. The school's privacy notice is the normal means of offering young people and their parents the opportunity to ask for personal information not to be shared.
47. Schools should also work in partnership with local authorities to ensure they know what services are available, and how young people can be referred for support. All educational establishments (including maintained schools and academies) have a duty to notify local authorities, or the service provider of the local authority, whenever a 16 or 17 year old leaves an education or training programme before completion<sup>15</sup>. It is for schools and local authorities to agree local arrangements for ensuring this duty is met.

### Targeted support for vulnerable and disadvantaged young people

48. Schools should work with local authorities to identify young people who are in need of targeted support or who are at risk of not participating post-16. They will need to agree how these young people can be referred for intensive support drawn from a range of education and training support services available locally.
49. Pupils in alternative provision (AP) are a particular group who may require targeted support in order to achieve their full potential. Local authorities maintaining pupil referral units, AP academies and AP free schools should have high aspirations for these pupils and consider developing links with mainstream schools in order to broaden the experiences and advice that are provided to them.

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<sup>14</sup> Section 72 of the Education and Skills Act 2008

<sup>15</sup> Section 13 of the Education and Skills Act 2008

50. Ofsted's report [‘The Pupil Premium. How schools are spending the funding successfully to maximise achievement’](#) includes an example of how one school used the pupil premium to provide carefully targeted advice and experiences related to work for all their disadvantaged pupils.
51. Schools should ensure that young people understand that the 16-19 Bursary Fund has been set up to support those in financial hardship, and that they need to speak to their post-16 education or training provider to find out more information.

### **Ensuring adequate support for pupils with special educational needs or disabilities**

52. Schools should have high aspirations for all pupils with special educational needs (SEN) and disabilities, and support them in preparing for the next phase of education or training and beyond into adult life. Pupils with SEN or disabilities should receive independent and impartial advice about all of the mainstream education, training and employment opportunities on offer, regardless of their individual circumstances. They should also be given information on the full range of specialist provision that is available and the support available to help them access the provision.
53. Schools should make use of the local offer published by the local authority which will set out details of SEN provision - including the full range of post-16 options – and support available to children and young people with SEN and disabilities to help them prepare for adulthood, including getting a job. Schools should work closely with local authorities, who have an important role to play, in particular through the provision of SEN support services and Statements of Special Educational Needs/Learning Difficulty Assessments and Education, Health and Care Plans. Where a student has an Education Health and Care Plan, all reviews of that Plan from year 9 at the latest, and onwards, must include a focus on preparing for adulthood, including employment, independent living and participation in society. Statutory guidance on the new SEN duties will be provided in a new 0-25 Code of Practice.

### **Working with Jobcentre Plus**

54. Jobcentre Plus can play a role in supporting an effective transition from school to work for young people. Schools could work with their local Jobcentre Plus to develop a smoother pathway between education and work. This may mean in practice:
- Jobcentre Plus sharing its knowledge and experiences of the needs of employers with schools
  - Schools and Jobcentre Plus pooling their knowledge on setting up successful work experience placements
  - Forging greater links between Jobcentre Disability Employment Advisers to support the transition for those with special educational needs or disabilities into work.

## Evaluation and monitoring of advice and guidance

### Quality assurance and feedback

55. Schools should satisfy themselves of the quality of any external organisations they plan to work with, and can use quality standards where these are available. They should monitor and evaluate the activity taking place whether that involves school staff, volunteers or external providers. This could for example include observations by senior members of staff.
56. Schools can also take into account pupils' feedback. This can be done informally or formally, for example via school councils or other mechanisms. Feedback from parents and from employers engaged in the activities can also be useful. Schools can use this feedback to evaluate different activities and delivery options to inform future provision.

### The role of Ofsted

57. Ofsted inspectors will take account of the quality of independent advice and guidance in making their judgement on leadership and management. Ofsted's survey highlighted that the schools visited were not doing enough to evaluate the quality of their careers guidance provision and Destination Measures can be used as part of this evaluation.

### Destination Measures

58. Schools should assess their success in supporting their pupils to take up education or training which offers good long term prospects. One way of doing this is through use of [Destination Measures data](#)<sup>16</sup>. These data are produced and published by the Department for Education using existing data collections and are based on sustained participation<sup>17</sup>. They show the percentage of a school's former pupils who continued their education or training (including through an apprenticeship), went into employment, and those who were not in education, employment or training (NEET). The data are broken down by a range of pupil characteristics, including special educational needs and eligibility for free school meals. Schools can use the data to consider the destinations into which former pupils<sup>18</sup> progressed and how successful their transition into those options are. They can use this information to ensure that all pupils receive the support needed to prepare for and take up education, employment or training which offers good long term prospects. These measures will help schools to be held to account locally as well as feeding into judgements by Ofsted.

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<sup>16</sup> Data showing the destinations of pupils from Pupil Referral Units will be published in Destination Measures for the first time in summer 2014.

<sup>17</sup> The Destination Measures are based on activity in all of the first two terms (defined as October to March) of the year after the young person left KS4 or took A level or other level 3 qualifications.

<sup>18</sup> The data published in July 2013 relate to those students who were included in the 2009/10 KS4 or KS5 Performance Tables and show their destinations in 2010/11.

59. Local authorities also track young peoples' progress after they leave school and schools may want to ask their local authority to share this information with them.



Department  
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