Post 16 Education, Employment and Training for young adults with SEND in Darlington

Careers Advice and Work Related Learning (WRL)

The duty to provide independent careers advice for young people sits with schools and college. As part of that duty school and colleges are required to publish their Careers and Work Related Learning (WRL) policies on their websites. The statutory guidance (Careers guidance and access for education and training providers - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)) states that:

> Schools and colleges should encourage students to experience a wide variety of workplaces and support them to plan for, reflect upon and learn from these experiences. Experiences of the workplace should be designed to meet the needs of students and the local context, while bearing in mind the demands of delivering the full curriculum. Schools and colleges should interpret the benchmark flexibly and could provide short, light touch experiences of the workplace for students up to the age of 16. Following the raising of the participation age in education or training to age 18, the department has placed more emphasis on high quality and meaningful experience of the workplace as a strongly recommended element of 16-19 study programmes, and a mandatory part of T Levels, via the industry placement.

The traditional one-week work experience with an employer is not mandatory in schools and schools may provide alternative options for WRL.

Independent careers advice is defined as external to the school or college. External sources of careers support could include employer visits, mentoring, website, telephone and helpline access and personal guidance provided externally to the school or college. Taken together, the external sources must include information on the range of education and training options, including apprenticeships. Personal guidance does not have to be external – it can be delivered by school or college staff, if trained. Where this advice or any other element of the careers programme is internal, it must be supplemented by external sources of support to ensure compliance with the legal duty

The provision of careers and WRL in Darlington secondary schools and colleges in monitored using the Gatsby Benchmarks. This role is undertaken by the Tees Valley Combine Authority (TVCA) under contract from the Careers and Enterprise Company (CEC)

All adults can access careers advice through the national careers service, either online or through their telephone helpline (0800 100 900). Further details can be found at: Careers advice - job profiles, information and resources | National Careers Service. Specific information for those with special educational needs or a disability can be found at: Education advice if you have special educational needs or a disability | National Careers Service

Local careers information

TVCA provide local careers information through their own website which can be found at: Home - Students (teesvalleycareers.com)

DARLINGTON Borough Council

Post 16 Education and Training Opportunities

Study Programme

Study Programme is the generic programme for 16-18 (and 16-24 with an EHCP) young people. The programme must include:

- A substantial programme of study
- English and Maths where the student hasn't achieved a GCSE grade 4
- Work experience where appropriate
- Other activity to broaden the students skills, attitude, confidence, and to support progression.

Study programme can be full time or part-time and includes things like T-Level and A level programmes as well as 16-18 traineeships and Supported Internships. Further details can be found at: 16 to 19 study programmes: guidance

The study programme providers in Darlington are: Beaumont Hill Academy, Carmel College, Darlington Borough Council, Darlington College and Queen Elizabeth Sixth Form College.

T Levels

T Levels are an A level alternative, they are a two year course with classroom based learning alongside an industry placement and are the equivalent of 3 A levels. Further details can be found at: Introduction of T Levels - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)

Traineeships

Traineeships are available for young people aged 16-24 (and 25 for those with an EHCP). They consist of an unpaid work placement alongside a training course and can last from six week up to a year (although most last up to 6 months).

Supported Internships

Supported internship are for those young adults aged 16-24 with an EHCP. The young adult will spend at least 6 months on an unpaid work placement with support from a qualified work coach. They will also undertake a personalised study programme, including the chance to study a relevant qualification, if suitable, and English and maths to an appropriate level.

Supported Internships are funded by the Department for Education as part of Study Programme, although not all providers offering Study Programme will offer Supported Internships.

Project Choice is the NHS's supported internship programme and further details can be found here: Project Choice - Supported Internships | Health Education England (hee.nhs.uk). Darlington College also offer Supported Internships.

Apprenticeships

Apprenticeships are paid jobs, for anyone over 16, where the employee learns and gains valuable experience alongside off-the-job training (often one day a week – but must be at least 20% of their paid time). The length of the programme and the academic requirements are dependent on the level and occupational area. Apprenticeships start at level 2 or 3 and can go up to Master level. Further details can be found at: Browse apprenticeships before you apply, applications are made through

the national ' Find an Apprenticeship' system: Find an apprenticeship (findapprenticeship.service.gov.uk)

Further details about support for apprentices with a learning difficult or disability can be found at: Support for apprentices with a learning difficulty or disability - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk). There are currently over 1,500 providers registered to deliver apprenticeship nationally.

The Tees Valley Learning Provider Network (TVLPN) publishes a range of information, including a list of Apprenticeship, Study Programme and T-Level providers who offer provision in the Tees Valley. Further details and the apprenticeship provider guide can be found at: Apprenticeships – Tees Valley Learning Providers (tvlpn.co.uk). Please note that is a membership organisation and therefore only lists the providers in their network.

Foundation Apprenticeships were introduced in May 2025 and are entry-level paid jobs with structured training and are available to those aged 16-21 (or up to age 24 for those with an EHCP and care leavers).

English and maths requirements

The English and maths condition of funding applies to students on Study Programme and the associated elements such as supported internships. Students have to study towards an English and maths qualification at the appropriate level is included, such as:

- GCSE
- Functional Skills qualification level 2
- an accepted stepping stone qualification

If a student is exempt from the English and maths condition of funding, they still have to pursue appropriate literacy and numeracy.

Adult Education

Adult skills and community learning provision is available for those aged 18 and over. Some of the courses are free, some require a contribution and some, level 3 and above qualifications, are accessible through a government loan. There are around 30 adult education providers in the Tees Valley. These providers offer a vast range of courses. All adult education providers are required to publish their course lists on the National Careers Service website: Find a course | National Careers Service. However, the geographical search facility may bring up national programmes as well as local ones.

Special Post 16 Institutions / Independent Specialist Colleges

There are around 90 special post 16 institutions nationally that are approved under Section 41 of the Children and Families Act for young people with SEND. The full list can be found at: Independent special schools and colleges - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk). Attendance of young people with EHCPs at these institutions must be agreed by the home local authority.

Employability Programmes

Youth Guarantee Trailblazer

The Youth Guarantee Trailblazer is a pioneering employment support programme launched in 2025 across eight regions in England, including Tees Valley, where Darlington Borough Council plays a key role. This initiative is part of the UK Government's broader Youth Guarantee commitment to ensure that every young person aged 18 to 21 has access to employment, education, or training opportunities.

The Trailblazer aims to tackle the high number of young people not in education, employment, or training (NEET), which nationally stands at nearly one million. In Darlington, the programme builds on the legacy of the Youth Employment Initiative (YEI), which concluded in early 2024, and transitions into a more targeted and locally governed support system backed by UK Shared Prosperity Fund resources. The programme runs from Spring 2025 to March 2027 and will be rolled out Nationally after that.

Eligibility: Young people aged 18–21 residing in Tees Valley, including Darlington, who are NEET.
Support offered includes: Access to paid work placements (3–6 months) at National Minimum Wage. Work tasters and pre-placement support including CV writing, interview preparation, and confidence building. Dedicated key workers to guide participants through the process. Help with travel costs and other barriers to participation.
Placement Outcomes: While placements do not guarantee permanent jobs, they are designed to equip participants with the skills and experience needed to secure future employment or training.

Work Well

A crucial initiative aimed at reducing economic inactivity by integrating health, work, and skills support. This programme is designed to sit alongside existing services like the DWP Patient Advisor Service and the Connect to Work programme, aligning with the national "Get Britain Working Plan." The principal objective for the Accelerator is to support over 2,000 individuals across the NENC region in becoming economically active through targeted interventions.

A vital component of this effort is the one-year, £1.3 million Work Well pilot focused specifically on the Tees Valley. This pilot aims to prevent 458 currently employed people from becoming economically inactive. The target cohort consists of Tees Valley residents aged 16+ who have received a current or recent FIT Note, signifying they are either absent from work or at risk of absence.

The intervention model relies on dedicated Work Well Advisors based within established teams across the Local Authorities. Individuals will be referred primarily by GPs and Primary Care who are incentivized to engage through a Local Enhanced Service or by Occupational Health. Advisors will conduct person-centred needs assessments to understand barriers to work, ranging from debt and housing issues to healthy lifestyle needs. Advisors will then develop tailored action plans, navigating individuals toward necessary support services, and, crucially, liaising with employers to facilitate workplace adjustments or, where necessary, find alternative local employment.

Connect to Work

Connect to Work in Darlington is part of the wider Tees Valley employment initiative designed to help people with disabilities, long-term health conditions, or other barriers move into sustainable work or remain employed. It offers personalised one-to-one support, working closely with local employers, health professionals, and community organisations. Recently launched, the programme will run for five years.

The programme will support working age residents who face challenges entering or staying in work. It will focus on people with; disabilities, long-term health conditions and complex or multiple barriers to employment. The programme will provide tailored, ongoing support rather than one-size-fits-all interventions.

How It Works

One-to-one personalised employment support using a supported employment model in collaboration with; local employers, health and wellbeing services and community and voluntary organisations.

Helps individuals find meaningful, sustainable jobs or stay in their current roles if they're at risk of falling out of work.

Connection to Other Local Support

Works alongside community initiatives such as Darlington Connect, which helps residents access support for wellbeing, finance, accessibility, and more—ensuring people are linked to the right services while preparing for work.

Darlington Delivery

In Darlington the Darlington Employment Initiative will provide dedicated employment specialists, tailored employment action plans, support with CV's, job applications, interviews and training. We will help build confidence and key workplace skills, and our connections with local employers, along with ongoing workplace coaching and support will help those Darlington residents in a streamlined and efficient way to find long term sustainable employment.

For further information on the employability programmes please contact Steven Winterburn at steven.winterburn@darlington.gov.uk or by phone on 07966 347401. For post 16 options please contact the provider direct.