

# DOWNSIDE SCHOOL

In partnership with **FutureSmartCareers**



## MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

April 2026

In the newsletter this



**Issue Education  
Records Service –  
GOV.UK**



**Youth  
Unemployment at  
it's highest for over  
a Decade**



**Get Ready for  
Success: SEND  
Transition Event at St  
Mary's University -  
22<sup>nd</sup> April 2026**



**Free Employability  
Webinar: 8<sup>th</sup> April 2026**

## News updates

### Government releases the School White Paper: Every Child Achieving and Thriving



Department  
for Education

The newly released School White paper lays out its plans for the future of the education system, including major reforms to special education needs and disability (SEND) support. The paper will now enter a 12-week consultation period but this is an important indication of what might happen in the future. Read the full report: [Every child achieving and thriving - GOV.UK](#).

### Issue Education Records Service – GOV.UK



The Digital Education Record App is a secure, mobile app that gives pupils lifelong access to verified data about their education, including GCSE results. Education records provide pupils with all their essential educational information in one place, supporting application and enrolment to post-16 education and employment settings. You can read more about the service here: [Issue education records service](#).

### Youth Futures Foundation – Exploring Self-Employment for NEET young people



Youth Futures Foundation have partnered with [Institute for Employment Studies \(IES\)](#) and [University of Westminster, London](#) to understand young people's views and intentions in relation to self-employment and to explore the barriers and options available to NEET young people. Find out more about the project and explore the resources here: [Exploring self-employment for NEET young people - Youth Futures Foundation](#).

## Met Office transforms meteorologist training for a changing world



The Met Office is working in collaboration with the [University of Plymouth](#) to co-design and co-deliver a new training programme for early career meteorologists. Combining the Met Office's world leading operational expertise with the University of Plymouth's modern learning design capabilities, the two organisations will build a Foundation Operational Meteorology programme fit for a profession being transformed by climate change, extreme weather and artificial intelligence. The collaboration will also open more diverse routes into the profession, better recognising students' previous experience and creating clearer career progression pathways – all enhancing career opportunities and making meteorology more accessible to people from a wider range of backgrounds. Find out more: [Met Office transforms meteorologist training for a changing world - Met Office](#).

## UCAS white paper – Becoming an employer of choice



UCAS asked 1,692 young people aged 16–19 what they want from potential future employers. Here's what they found out.

✿ UCAS' research shows that future employability is now a core driver in young people's careers decision making. And **they want direct engagement with potential employers whilst still at school** to help their career discovery. Companies that engage early, shape aspirations and build trust, become employers of choice, translating directly into a stronger, higher-quality future talent pipeline. Read the UCAS whitepaper for full insights: [Becoming an employer of choice | UCAS](#).

## Government announces new incentive for businesses who employ young people struggling to find a job



Department  
for Education



Following tireless campaigning from [Youth Employment UK](#) and colleagues from the [Youth Employment Group \(YEG\)](#), businesses will receive £3,000 for every young person between the ages of 18-24 that they employ who has been searching for a job for six months or more. Small and medium firms will be paid £2,000 for every new apprentice they take on. The government's job guarantee will also be expanded from 18-21 year olds to 18-24 year olds. Find out more here: [Major employment drive to help unlock 200,000 new jobs and apprenticeships for next generation - GOV.UK](#).

## Skills England explore the potential of a Skills Passport

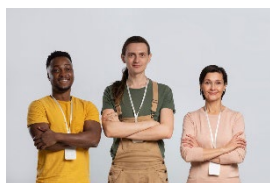


Department  
for Education

Have your say on skills passports in England 🗨️. Skills England is exploring the potential of skills passports: portable, verified records of people's skills and experience. In January, Skills England hosted a discussion with over 60 key partners on the potential role of skills passports in tackling skills shortages. They now want to hear from you 💬

Complete this short survey, to help Skills England get views from stakeholders across the skills system and help them to understand the value, user needs, and practical considerations of developing skills passports. Input is welcomed from employers, individuals, training providers, representative bodies, regulators, and any organisations already using or considering skills passports or similar tools. Complete the survey: [Skills Passport Survey](#) by the 17<sup>th</sup> April 2026.

## Youth Unemployment at its highest in over a decade



This article from [BBC](#) highlights a stark reality: youth unemployment in the UK is at its highest level in over a decade, with nearly one million young people not in education, employment or training. In the piece, CEO [Charlotte Bosworth](#) from [Lifetime Training](#) shares practical, no-nonsense advice for young people entering the jobs market - from focusing on transferable skills and using AI wisely, to showing initiative and letting personality shine. Read the full article: [Five tips to help you get your first job - BBC News](#).

## Upcoming Events

### NDTi Internships Work Programme short film premiere



[National Development Team for Inclusion \(NDTi\) | A world where everyone matters](#) have just premiered their new short film: Supported Internships for Young People — showcasing real experiences, ambitions and impact. Featuring [Emma Stone](#), Karla Harriott, and Rebecca Davies, the film brings forward their voices as they share:

- What they are proud of
- How supported internships have helped them
- Why working is meaningful to them

This short film embodies the core values of the Internships Work programme and sends a clear message: all young people want to work, can work, and have always had the potential within them — they simply need the right support to unlock it. You can watch the film here: [Short film: Supported Internships for Young People](#).

### Association for Child and Adolescent Mental Health (ACAMH) Conference - Thursday 7<sup>th</sup> May 2026



From Research to Practice: Advancing Early Intervention, Treatments and Services for Children and Young People with Intellectual Disabilities. CAIDPN Annual Conference. Open to all. This conference will present the latest research evidence and good practice examples in the delivery of early intervention approaches, supports and treatments, as well as health services for children and young people with intellectual disabilities. The conference aims to provide a reflective, evidence-based, and practical learning approach for multidisciplinary professionals interested in the health and care of children and young people with intellectual disabilities. Organised by Child & Adolescent Intellectual Disability Psychiatry Network (CAIDPN). Find out more here: [From Research to Practice: Intellectual Disabilities. In person conference | LinkedIn](#)

### National Apprenticeship and Education Event, Bristol - 27<sup>th</sup> April 2026



This event is held at Ashton Gate Stadium, Bristol, and welcomes year 10+ as well as young adults to find out more about apprenticeships at all levels as well as the educational pathways available to them. - meet businesses face to face; discover apprenticeships & how to access apprenticeship programmes as well as other career routes into work. - the opportunity to engage with universities, colleges, top UK employers & training providers. - access information on future study options. - discover career opportunities and work experience placements. Find out more: [Southwest - National Apprenticeship & Education Events](#).

## Get Ready for Success: SEND Transition Event at St Mary's University - 22<sup>nd</sup> April 2026



For Neurodiverse and disabled Year 12 & 13 students looking to go to University. Ready for Uni? Let's make it work for your wellbeing, inclusion and disability support needs. Parents/guardians and carers also welcome. To be held on Wednesday 22<sup>nd</sup> April from 9am-3pm. Check it out here: [Get Ready for Success: wellbeing and disability support at university Tickets, Wednesday, Apr 22 from 9:30 am to 3 pm | Eventbrite](#).

## West Dean College of Arts, Design, Craft and Conservation, Sussex Campus Open Day



If you haven't heard of West Dean University take a look here: [West Dean | College of Arts, Design, Craft & Conservation](#). If you are curious about studying art, craft or conservation go along to their Sussex Campus Open Day at 1000hrs or 1400hrs on **Friday 22nd May**.

## The Autism and ADHD Show, Business Design Centre, London 19<sup>th</sup>- 20<sup>th</sup> June 2026



Attend this national event for autism and ADHD to immediately access an unrivalled number of informative talks, advice clinics and specialist services. For parents, carers and professionals supporting an autistic, AuDHD or ADHD person in a home or school setting. CPD certified for professionals. Find out more and book your ticket here: [Autism & ADHD Show 2026 - UK's National Event](#).

## Free Employability webinar & Q&A hosted by Jack Donnelly – Wednesday 8<sup>th</sup> April 2026



As part of their Professional Connections webinar series, [Autism Charity | Ambitious about Autism](#) will be joined by Jack Donnelly, entrepreneur and inspirational speaker. Jack will talk about the successes and challenges he has experienced in his career so far, as well as his advice for autistic young people entering his industry. The webinar will be held on **Wednesday 8<sup>th</sup> April** from 12.00-12.45pm (online). Book your free space now: [Webinar Registration - Zoom](#).

## Upcoming Employability Skills day with Stephenson Harwood (date TBC)



This Employability Skills day is for young people interested in business support roles. Whether you're ready to apply or just exploring your options, you'll take part in a practical, supportive day focused on building your confidence. You will learn how to create strong job applications, understand what employers are looking for, and develop skills to help you succeed in the workplace. More details about this event will be shared soon. To register your interest, please sign up here: [Stephenson Harwood Skills day - express your interest](#).

## Emotionally-Based School Avoidance online event: 20<sup>th</sup> May 2026



The Association for Child and Adolescent Mental Health (ACAMH) is running an online event focusing on Emotionally-Based School avoidance (EBSA). EBSA is rising across the UK and internationally, placing increasing pressure on schools, services and families. This three-hour online event will examine the up-to date research landscape, emerging international developments, and recovery-orientated approaches grounded in complex real-world cases. Designed for experienced professionals, this event will support proportionate, evidence-informed and system-aware responses to EBSA. Book now: [Emotionally Based School Avoidance \(EBSA\) in Practice: Evidence, Complexity, and Recovery-Oriented Approaches - ACAMH](#).

## Music Careers Week – 13<sup>th</sup>- 18<sup>th</sup> April 2026



Music Careers Week 2026 is brought to you by [National Careers Week](#) and [London College of Contemporary Music | LCCM](#). There will be workshops, industry panels and networking opportunities to help aspiring professionals build careers in music. The week features events like LCCM Music Careers Day in London on **13<sup>th</sup> April!** Events highlight career paths in artist management, music tech, publishing and live sound, with insights from Warner Music and Universal Music. Check the National Careers Week website and social media channels for updates!

## Recommended Websites & Resources

### The WOW Show – Careers resources for teachers



The WOW Show programme is supported by a highly interactive lesson written by teachers for teachers. Built around the WOW film, it can fit straight into a careers lesson/tutor time and aligned with the Gatsby Benchmarks and the aims of the UK Careers Curriculum. You can access the resources here: [Teachers - The WOW Show](#).

### Uni Compare: Confident Choices – A University and Careers Workshop



Uni Compare are running some free university & careers workshops (online or in-person) for Years 10-13. They're practical, interactive, and focused on helping students make confident choices beyond league tables. Find out more: [Workshop Flyer Confident Choices](#).

### ERIC's Library Hub of Creative Talks and Resources



Explore Eric's library of Creative Talks and resources for teachers, career leaders and students, with more being released throughout the year. Access the talks and resources here: [Library Hub — ERIC | Creative Career App](#).

### MYPATH: 5 Very Unusual Jobs Video



Check out this fascinating video of 5 very unusual jobs that you've probably never heard of! Take a look here: <https://youtu.be/bPIEr47T34>.

### Animated Lessons by TechSheCan



Safe Online Gaming. Watch TechSheCan's brand-new Katie & Tex episode all about tech for online gaming and how to stay safe! In this episode, Katie and Tex meet Sara Cornish from Minecraft, who shares how young gamers can stay safe while playing online. She also explores the exciting future careers they could have in the world of gaming and tech. Watch it here: [Animated lessons - TechSheCan](#).

### Ambitious about Autism toolkit and resources to support young people with autism



Are you a careers leader in a mainstream or specialist school or college? Ambitious about Autism's autism-specific Careers Education Framework provides top tips and resources to help you support autistic young people through careers education into employment. Download the toolkit: [Careers Education Framework](#) | [Supporting young autistic people](#).

### FutureSmart Careers March blog: Foundation Year courses (Year 0 or IFP)



Watch out for this month's [FutureSmart Careers blog](#) covering 'Foundation Year (Year 0 or IFP) for UK or International students'. Covering Where/How to Search for universities offering Foundation Year (Year 0) courses for UK students, Universities and Specialist IFP providers for International Students, the range of subject areas on offer, entry requirements, Fee implications and Student Loans and Resources, Weblinks and Further Sources of Information this should prove a useful guide for students and staff alike. Access our blogs at [FSC Blogs](#).

## Apprenticeship, Work Experience & Internship Opportunities

### Specsavers Bright Stars Scholarship



Thinking about a medical career? Optometry is more than just glasses. It's detecting and diagnosing abnormalities and diseases using the latest technology. It's identifying problems with health – think high blood pressure and diabetes. It's about changing and saving lives. Interested? If you are, you should see what we have on offer through our Bright Stars university scholarship. Our exclusive university scholarship offers future Optometry students the chance to receive £10,000 over four years, towards the cost of their university experience. It's aimed at STEM students, with only 40 spots across the UK. Register your interest here:- [Bright Stars Scholarship](#) | [Specsavers UK Careers](#).

### Specsavers Virtual Work Experience Programme with TalentXP



See your future a little clearer with the Specsavers brand-new Virtual Work Experience Programme. This interactive experience gives you a behind-the-scenes look at what really happens at Specsavers, and the people who make it all work. Across six interactive modules - Optometry, Audiology, Marketing, Technology, Finance and Retail Support you'll explore how every part of our business comes together to help people see and hear better every day. The programme is now live — sign up today and start exploring your future with Specsavers. Full details here:- [Work Experience Programmes](#) | [Specsavers - Specsavers Work Experience](#) | [TalentXP](#).

### Ambitious about Autism – Supported Internships programme is expanding!



Ambitious about Autism, [Autism Charity](#) | [Ambitious about Autism](#) are expanding their Supported Internships programme. From September 2026, they will be also be partnering with [LEGOLAND® Windsor Resort](#) and Amazon, Crawley: [Amazon Careers: Impact the Future, Today](#). Supported Internships are a study programme for young people with an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) who want to move into paid employment with extra support. Learn more about the Supported Internship programme and the employers that Ambitious about Autism partner with here: [Supported internships for autistic young people](#).

## Apprenticeships with the National Trust



To mark their 130<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 2025 and their new **People and Nature Thriving strategy** ([Our strategy to 2035 | National Trust](#)), the National Trust are expanding their apprenticeship programme and opportunities for 2026 are now live. Roles will be based at locations across England and Wales in Project Management, Business Administration, Marketing, Recruitment, Information Technology, Gardening and Community Engagement. Customer Service and Community Activator Coach apprenticeships will open for applications in the summer. The National Trust are working closely with [Amazing Apprenticeships](#) to share opportunities with schools, colleges, youth groups and community organisations. Register your interest for apprenticeships with the National Trust here: [National Trust Jobs :: Apprenticeships](#).

## Choices College – supported internships



[Choices College - Supported internships | NHS England | Workforce, training and education](#) is a specialist college providing tailored educational support and a supported internship course for young adults aged 16-24 with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and/or autism. Interns typically spend one year learning Maths, English and employability skills and attend up to three, 12-week placements with a Choices College partner. Check out the above link for more details.

## Ambitious about Autism – Internship job opportunity for autistic job seekers – Closing date 2<sup>nd</sup> April!



Ambitious about Autism have a internship opportunity for a Recruitment Assistant, open to autistic job seekers. This is a hybrid role (the office is based in London and attendance is required there at least once a month). This is a 5-month internship role for 21 hours per week (hours to be agreed). The closing date is the 2<sup>nd</sup> April 2026, interviews will be held on the 29<sup>th</sup> April, and the internship will commence in May 2026. To find out more and apply, visit: [Recruitment Assistant | Ambitious about Autism](#).

## Customer Service Apprenticeships at Sky in various locations across the UK



[Sky](#) is currently recruiting for Customer Service apprentices in various locations including Cardiff, Glasgow, Osterley and Livingston. Applications close on the 13<sup>th</sup> April 2026 at noon. Explore the opportunities and apply here: [Vacancy details - Sky](#).

## BT Group Apprenticeship Opportunities in Service and Engineering



[BT Plc](#) are currently recruiting for Level 3- Level 6 apprentices in their Service and Engineering departments. Find out more: [Apprenticeships - BT Group](#).

## Springpod Virtual Work Experience Opportunities



[Springpod](#) offer free opportunities to gain virtual work experience with top companies and employers. The latest opportunities include:

- [CityFibre Sprint: Smart Support Tool | Springpod](#)
- [Rolls-Royce: Buyer | Springpod](#)
- [Hospitality Work Experience | Springpod](#)
- [Reliability and Maintenance Engineering with Amazon | Springpod](#)

## Get in touch

### Helpline



Kyley Houghton, our Helpline Manager and our team welcome enquiries from schools, parents, and students. The helpline is staffed between 9.00 am and 5.00 pm Monday to Friday at [helpline@futuresmartcareers.co.uk](mailto:helpline@futuresmartcareers.co.uk)

### FutureSmart Careers Apprenticeship Support



Since the announcement that the DfE has removed the funding for the ASK programme, we are now offering an Apprenticeship Support Package to schools and colleges. We have produced a suite of workshops and talks to include the best bits from the ASK programme, but with the added extras we feel are needed. The Apprenticeship support we are offering is a paid for service, but we are working hard to make it cost effective and flexible to help you support your students. We are also able to work in all geographic areas we cover. If you would like to find out more about this service or book in a meeting to discuss further, Please click on the link to complete the form: [Apprenticeship Support - Expression of Interest Form](#).

### Contact us



For all other enquiries, please contact our team at [enquiries@futuresmartcareers.co.uk](mailto:enquiries@futuresmartcareers.co.uk) or give us a call on Tel: 0330 311 9509. You can view our menu of services below:

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