

YOUTH SERVICE

What's Next?

2026 Provision Guide – West Essex

Employability & Skills Team

A guide to support a young person's next steps.

The purpose of this guide is to give you an overview of the options for post-16 provision in your local area. Delivery and availability of the opportunities listed may change.

Many of you will expect to achieve the grades needed and will be staying in your school sixth form, have secured a place at college, or have a start date agreed for an apprenticeship. If you do not have any firm plans in place, then please read on.

Planning

When considering your next steps, it can seem confusing as there are so many options to choose from. Whether you are looking at further education, apprenticeships, work or training, we recommend that you research thoroughly.

There are several websites listed in this resource which can help you to explore courses and careers. In addition, it is important to identify existing skills as well as your hobbies and interests to help you when considering your options.

You could also speak with school or college staff, careers advisers and family networks to help you to make a strong choice. Remember to have a backup plan.

Still unsure?

Where possible, speak with the Careers Adviser at your school or college for guidance on subject choices and career paths.

From Monday 29th June: If you are aged 16–18, do not have access to a school or college Careers Adviser, and do not have a firm plan for September, please get in touch.

Employability and Skills Team
0800 707 6384

KeepInContactTeam@essex.gov.uk

You may receive communications from our Keep In Contact Team, who will update records and offer support from our Employability and Skills Advisers.

Website: <https://youth.essex.gov.uk/young-people/education-employment-and-training-support/>

Extension to Child Benefit

If you are a school or college leaver, under 18, unemployed and do not have a course or training programme to start in September 2026, your parent/carer may be entitled to claim Extension to Child Benefit. There is a time limit in which you can register your claim. For more information and to apply for an extension please call:

HMRC Child Benefit General Enquiries on 0300 200 3100 or visit:

www.gov.uk/child-benefit-16-19

YOUTH SERVICE

College and Further Education options

If you have not already applied, then we suggest that you make applications quickly as some providers have deadlines early in the academic year. There are broadly two different types of college course:

Academic Courses (e.g. A levels/ International Baccalaureate)

Usually involves studying multiple subjects. This may provide increased progression options at the end of the course.

- Assessment is usually weighted towards exams with less emphasis on continuous assessment.
- Entry Criteria: Typically, applicants will be expected to achieve at least five GCSEs at grades 9 to 4. The specific requirements vary across schools and colleges.
- Some schools and Sixth Form Colleges may offer GCSE resit options for young people that have narrowly missed out on GCSE grades.

Vocational Courses (e.g. BTECs/T Levels/NVQ/CACHE)

Vocational courses are typically designed around a specific industry/occupation.

Courses usually range from Level 1 and go up to Level 3 and higher.

Vocational courses are an opportunity to specialise early in a subject that interests you.

It often means studying one main subject (some schools and colleges allow you to blend academic and vocational options).

If you have not achieved Grade 4 in GCSE Maths or English, you will be required to complete these qualifications alongside your main course.

Sixth Form & College options for summer 2026

For more information about course availability, application procedures, open events and entry requirements, please contact the establishment directly.

School Sixth Forms

BMAT STEM Academy, Harlow

Telephone: 01279 621570

Website: www.bmatstemacademy.org

Davenant Sixth Form, Loughton

Telephone: 020 8508 0404

Website: www.davenantschool.co.uk

Debden Park Sixth Form

Telephone: 0208 508 2979

Website:

www.debdenparkhighschool.org/sfhome

Epping St John's Sixth Form

Telephone: 01992 573028

Website:

www.eppingstjohnsschool.org/926/head-of-sixth-form-welcome

The Helena Romanes School & Sixth Form, Great Dunmow

Telephone: 01371 872560

Website: www.helena-romanes.essex.sch.uk

Roding Valley High School Sixth Form, Loughton

Telephone: 020 8508 1173

Website: <https://rodingvalley.net/sixth-form/sixth-form-welcome>

Saffron Walden County High School & Sixth Form

Telephone: 01799 513030

Website: www.swchs.net

YOUTH SERVICE

Sir Frederick Gibberd Sixth Form, Harlow

Telephone: 01279 307235

Website:

Website: www.sirfrederickgibberdcollege.org/1052/sixth-form**Sir George Monoux College, Walthamstow**

Telephone: 0208 5233 544

Website: www.sgmc.ac.uk**St Marks Catholic Sixth Form, Harlow**

Telephone: 01279 421267

Website: www.st-marks.essex.sch.uk**West Hatch High School, Chigwell**

Telephone: 020 8504 8216

Website: www.westhatch.net

Colleges & Sixth Form Colleges

Harlow College

Telephone: 01279 868000

Website: www.harlow-college.ac.uk**New City College, Epping Forest Campus**

Telephone: 0330 135 9000

Website: www.ncclondon.ac.uk/epping-forest**Stansted Airport College**

Telephone: 01279 701430

Website: www.stanstedairportcollege.ac.uk

Other Colleges close to West Essex

Access Creative College, ShoreditchSpecialist Performing Arts/
Creative Media college

Telephone: 0203 545 4086

Website: www.accesscreative.ac.uk**Anglo European School, Ingatestone**

Telephone: 01277 354018

Website: www.aesessex.co.uk**Barking and Dagenham College,****Barking and Rush Green**

Telephone: 0208 090 3020

Website:

Website: www.barkingdagenhamcollege.ac.uk**Beal High School, Ilford**

Telephone: 020 8551 4954

Website: www.bealsixthform.co.uk**Birchwood School, Bishops Stortford**

Telephone: 01279 655936

Website: www.birchwoodonline.co.uk**Big Creative Education, Walthamstow**

Telephone: 0208 498 3300

Website: www.bigcreative.education**Building Crafts College, London**

Telephone: 0208 522 1705

Website: www.thebcc.ac.uk**The Bishops Stortford High School,****Bishops Stortford**

Telephone: 01279 868686

Website: www.tbshs.org**The Broxbourne School**

Telephone: 01992 411060

Website: www.broxbourne.herts.sch.uk**Cambridge Regional College**

Telephone: 01223 418200

Website: www.camre.ac.uk**Capel Manor College, Enfield**

Telephone: 0303 003 1234

Website: www.capel.ac.uk**Chelmsford College**

Telephone: 01245 265611

Website: www.chelmsford.ac.uk**Chigwell School Sixth Form**

Telephone: 0208 501 5700

Website: www.chigwell-school.org**Colchester Institute,****The College at Braintree**

Telephone: 01206 712000

Website: www.colchester.ac.uk/about-us/campuses/braintree

YOUTH SERVICE

CONEL, includes Enfield Campus

Telephone: 0207 832 5000

Website: www.conel.ac.uk**Fashion Retail Academy, London**

Telephone: 0300 247 0039

Website: www.fashionretailacademy.ac.uk**Goffs Academy, Cheshunt**

Telephone: 01992 661456

Website: www.goffs.herts.sch.uk**Haileybury Turnford School, Cheshunt**

Telephone: 01992 308 333

Website: www.haileyburyturnford.com**Hertford Regional College,****Broxbourne and Ware**

Telephone: 01992 411400

Website: www.hrc.ac.uk**The Hertfordshire & Essex High School &
College, Bishops Stortford**

Telephone: 01279 654127

Website: www.hertsandessex.herts.sch.uk**Hills Road Sixth Form College, Cambridge**

Telephone: 01223 247251

Website: www.hillsroad.ac.uk**Hockerill Anglo-European College,
Bishops Stortford**

Telephone: 01279 658451

Website: www.hockerill.com**John Warner School, Hoddesdon**

Telephone: 01992 462889

Website: www.johnwarner.herts.sch.uk**Lea Valley Academy, Enfield**

Telephone: 01992 763 666

Website: www.leavalley.org.uk**Leventhorpe Business and Enterprise
Academy, Bishops Stortford**

Telephone: 01279 836633

Website: www.leventhorpe.net**London Learning Consortium, Croydon**

Telephone: 0208 8774 4040

Website: www.londonlc.org.uk**Long Road Sixth Form College, Cambridge**

Telephone: 01223 631100

Website: www.longroad.ac.uk**Newham College, includes Stratford/East
Ham Campuses**

Telephone: 020 8257 4000

Website: www.newham.ac.uk**Oasis Sixth Form, Enfield**

Telephone: 01992 655 400

Website: www.oasisacademyenfield.org**Robert Barclay Academy, Hoddesdon**

Telephone: 01992 410800

Website: www.robertbarclayacademy.co.uk**St Mary's Catholic School,
Bishops Stortford**

Telephone: 01279 654901

Website: www.stmarys.net**St Mary's Church of England High School,
Cheshunt**

Telephone: 01992 629124

Website: www.st-maryshigh.herts.sch.uk**Waltham Forest College**

Telephone: 020 8501 8501

Website: www.waltham.ac.uk**Writtle College - ARU, near Chelmsford**

Telephone: 01245 424200

Website: www.aru.ac.uk/writtle-college

YOUTH SERVICE

Apprenticeships

What is an Apprenticeship?

An apprenticeship gives you the opportunity to gain work experience, a qualification and earn a wage at the same time.

Apprenticeships are available from Level 2 (equivalent to GCSE 9-4) all the way up to Degree level in some occupational areas.

For current information on local vacancies and further support, please visit:

www.gov.uk/apply-apprenticeship

www.apprenticeships.gov.uk

essexopportunities.co.uk/apprenticeship-hub

Training Providers that frequently deliver apprenticeship opportunities for young people in the local area:

ACL Essex County Council

Apprenticeships in Business Administration, Customer service and more.

www.aclessex.com/apprenticeships/

Debut Training Academy

Apprenticeships and funded training in Beauty with training centre/salons in Wickford, Brentwood and Stanford-Le-Hope.

www.debutacademy.com

Educational and Sporting Futures

Apprenticeships in sport, education and childcare.

www.esfapprenticeships.co.uk

First Intuition

Apprenticeships in Accountancy, based in Chelmsford and Cambridge.

www.firstintuition.co.uk/apprenticeships

Hit Training

Hospitality, Catering and Retail.

www.hittraining.co.uk

Halls of Ivy

Hairdressing, Barbering and Beauty Therapy Apprenticeships in Chelmsford and surrounding areas.

www.hallsofivy.co.uk

Ixion Holdings

Offers Apprenticeships and work-related training in: Business, Construction, Customer Service, Digital Media and Marketing.

www.ixionholdings.com/apprenticeships-for-individuals/

Jet Hairdressing Academy

Hairdressing Apprenticeships and Traineeships. Based in Basildon but some coverage of West Essex too.

www.j-ettraining.com

Leep

Apprenticeships in IT Support, Digital Marketing, Software Development and more.

www.leepgroup.com/training/apprenticeships

KEITS

Apprenticeships in equine, animal care, grounds person, horticulture, dog grooming and doggy day care.

www.keits.co.uk

Kleek

Hairdressing and Beauty.

www.kleekapprenticeships.co.uk/

London Hairdressing Apprenticeship Academy

Hairdressing Opportunities in London and into Essex.

www.thelondonhairdressingacademy.com

Lifetime Training

Apprenticeships in fitness, hospitality and business administration.

www.lifetimetraining.co.uk

YOUTH SERVICE

Multiverse

Business, Accountancy and Tech Apprenticeships in London.

www.multiverse.io

QA

Apprenticeships in IT Systems and Networking/ Software and Website Development, Digital Skills, Business Admin.

www.qa.com/learners/become-an-apprentice

Quest Training

Apprenticeships in a number of sectors across Romford, Harrold Wood, Colchester and Clacton.

www.questfortraining.com

VTS

Specialising in Early Years, Teaching Assistant and Healthcare apprenticeships.

www.vts.ac.uk/information-for-apprentices

Colleges that offer Apprenticeships

Barking and Dagenham College

www.barkingdagenhamcollege.ac.uk/find/courses-for-me/apprenticeship-vacancies

Cambridge Regional College

www.camre.ac.uk/apprenticeships

CONEL (College of North East London)

www.conel.ac.uk/courses/our-apprenticeships

Colchester Institute

www.colchester.ac.uk/apprenticeships

Harlow College

www.harlow-college.ac.uk/study-options/apprenticeships

Hertford Regional College

www.hrc.ac.uk/study-areas/apprenticeships/

New City College

www.ncclondon.ac.uk/become-an-apprentice

Foundation Learning Programmes

Foundation Learning providers offer English and Maths qualifications often alongside vocational elements to help improve your skills and get you ready to undertake an apprenticeship opportunity. This option often is usually accepted as approved training.

*Some Foundation Learning courses may have restrictions due to funding. Check with the provider when making your enquiries.

Central Training Group

www.centraltraininggroup.com

Study programmes in hairdressing, barbering, childcare, sport and personal development.

For more information, please email:

info@centraltraininggroup.com

or telephone: 0800 783 2901

CTP Training Study Programme

www.ctptrainingacademy.co.uk

16-19 programme consists of a vocational qualification in construction, motor vehicle maintenance or hair and beauty alongside functional skills in English and Maths and career and personal development support. Campus in Harlow and Witham.

For more information contact:

lee.hatwell@learn-construction.co.uk

or telephone 01279 424121

YOUTH SERVICE

First Rung

www.firstrung.org.uk/study-programme

Individualised programmes of learning and development activities that are tailored to the needs of each you person. Vocational options in business administration, customer service, early years, health and social care and accountancy. English and Maths functional skills or GCSE qualification for those who need it.

For more information contact:

Telephone: 0208 803 4764

MPCT Military Academies - Cambridge

www.mpct.co.uk

The Military Academy is a unique training college that helps 16+ year olds develop fitness, vocational qualifications and employability skills to help prepare for employment, including rewarding careers in the British Armed Forces.

Rainbow Services - Harlow

www.rainbowservices.org.uk/projects/youth-project

Youth project offers the opportunity to work towards the Gateway qualification Level 1 Award - Skills for construction. This 12 week course covers health and safety in construction and carpentry hand tools.

TCHC - GAPS Programme - Basildon

www.tchc.net

GAPS is long term programme which includes functional skills in English and Maths with an opportunity to link into various vocational areas.

Bowers Croft: Construction

Southgate House: Business and Retail, Health and Social Care, Nail and Beauty

For more information contact:

basildon.gaps@tchc.net

Telephone: **Southgate House** 01268 203841

Bowers Croft: 01268 103844

WS Training - Haverhill

www.wstraining.co.uk

An independent training provider based in Suffolk offering vocational studies and study programmes tailored to learners.

Youthbuild

www.essexyouthbuild.co.uk

Construction based courses up to Level 1 in Chelmsford. They also offer a CSCS course and test which is required to work on construction sites.

For more information contact:

admin@essexyouthbuild.co.uk

YOUTH SERVICE

Useful Websites

Below is a list of useful websites ranging from careers advice, skills assessments, finding work to volunteering.

Careers and Opportunities Research

www.essexopportunities.co.uk
<https://nationalcareers.service.gov.uk/>
www.youthemployment.org.uk
www.icould.com
www.careerpilot.org.uk
<https://careers.startprofile.com>
www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/careers
<https://animalme.myworldofwork.co.uk>

Apprenticeships

www.gov.uk/apply-apprenticeship
www.apprenticeships.gov.uk
www.aclessex.com/apprentices
www.ratemyapprenticeship.co.uk
www.amazingapprenticeships.com
www.talentview.org
www.essexopportunities.co.uk/apprenticeship-hub

Jobs

www.getmyfirstjob.co.uk
www.gov.uk/find-a-job
www.indeed.co.uk
www.notgoingtouni.co.uk

Higher Education

www.ucas.com
www.prospects.ac.uk

Volunteering

www.vinspired.com
www.volunteersessex.org
<https://www.england.nhs.uk/get-involved/get-involved/volunteering/>
www.doit.life/volunteer
<https://youth.essex.gov.uk/young-people/volunteering/>

This Guide was produced by the Essex County Council Employability & Skills Team. All information was correct as of April 2026.

Employability and Skills Team

Local provision options, opportunities & support

<https://youth.essex.gov.uk/young-people/education-employment-and-training-support/>

Raising of the Participation Age

www.essex.gov.uk/education-and-training-for-young-people

Youth Service Padlet's

WEST - [What's Next Guide](#)

WEST - [Advice & Guidance](#)

WEST - [Jobs & Opportunities Board](#)

Mental Health Support

The Southend, Essex and Thurrock Children's and Adolescent Mental Health Services (SET CAMHS) provides advice and support to children, young people and families who are in need of support with their emotional wellbeing or mental health difficulties. www.nelft.nhs.uk/set-camhs

Mon-Fri, 9am-5pm: call **0800 953 0222**

Email: set-camhs.referrals@nelft.nhs.uk

Urgent or out of hours: call **111** and press option 2 to speak to a mental health professional.

Vita Health Group

In partnership with the NHS, Vita Health Group offer talking therapies support for adults 16-years and over, who live and are registered in Harlow, Uttlesford and Epping. www.vitahealthgroup.co.uk/

For self-referral call: **0333 015 2966**

Mon-Thu, 8am-8pm and Fri 8am-5pm.