

nextsteps inlondon

SECTOR SPOTLIGHTS

Frontier
Innovation

Creative
Industries

Financial &
Professional
Services

Careers and qualifications in London

Where ambition meets opportunity

- Work experience
- Building your skills
- International education
- T Levels
- Apprenticeships
- FE & HE
- Mental health & wellbeing

**Next Steps in London
Careers Guide**
Autumn 2025

Planning your future just got easier!



Feeling overwhelmed about your next steps? We've got you covered! The London Careers Hubs have created the **Next Steps in London** guide to help you navigate your career journey with confidence.

This easy-to-use guide offers everything you need to learn more about all the options open to you post-16.

There are a variety of progression pathways you can take to build your career. Different pathways suit different people and what is great is that you can choose the best route to achieve your goals.

Foreword



I am committed to making London the greatest city in the world to grow up in, where all young people have equal opportunity to thrive.

Every young person should have access to the knowledge, skills and support they need to fulfil their potential and get a good start in life. And our city stands to benefit so much if we are able to harness the full energy, talents and imaginations of every young Londoner.

I know that in order to do this, we need to continue to grow the opportunities available in our city and break down the barriers that prevent too many from accessing them. That is why we have launched our London Growth Plan and committed to help create 150,000 new high-quality jobs in the industries of tomorrow by 2028. This will be supported by an Inclusive Talent Strategy, ensuring that more young people are equipped with the skills and guidance they need to have a fair shot and benefit from these exciting new opportunities.

As a young person, making sense of the many different pathways you have in front of you can be overwhelming. But whether you choose to take up an apprenticeship, study T-levels, or go to university, there are many routes to a rewarding and successful career. This Next Steps in London guide is designed to help you understand your options and make the right choice for you. And to parents, guardians and educators – I know what a vital role you play in supporting these decisions, so I hope this guide will prove useful to you too.

London's future prosperity relies on its young people. So whatever route you take, I encourage you to bring all of your incredible talent, energy and ideas to the table. I encourage you to take your next step with confidence in your ability to achieve your ambitions and dreams. And I encourage you to put your skills and knowledge to good use and help make London the greatest city in the world.

Sir Sadiq Khan
Mayor of London

Yes yes my future culture shapers,

First things first: if you don't know what you want to do with your life, relax. That's normal. Back in college, my career counsellor told me to play it safe and be an accountant. But how was an old man in a tweed jacket with no mobile phone meant to guide a neurodivergent brown teenager into a tech-driven future? No wonder I felt lost like Nemo.

I'm South Asian, working-class, with immigrant parents, and I grew up in East London without seeing many role models who looked like me. I didn't know what I wanted to do, only what I didn't – so I followed my curiosity and tried whatever seemed fun. That journey took me from YouTube comedy to hosting IRL shows, speaking at conferences, and working with brands like Samsung, the BBC, TED, Red Bull, and Soho House. Today, I live my best professional life as an 'edutainer' – part educator, part entertainer. I'm a host, speaker, TV presenter, facilitator, coach, comedian, and the founder of Dream Rehab, all rolled into one. I now get paid to do purposeful work I love. But it all started with small, uncertain steps.

That's the real message I want you to hear: your career is an adventure, not a straight line. You don't need the full map right now. Each "yes", each skill you pick up, each experience – it all helps you get to know yourself a little better. And here's a truth I've learned: courage is the gateway to confidence. You don't wait until you feel confident to try something – you try first, and confidence grows from there.

London, your city, is one of the greatest in the world. It's buzzing with opportunities across every sector you can think of, and probably some you haven't even heard of yet. Remember, your generation already has more tools, knowledge, and access than any before you. That's one hella advantage! You bring value, creativity, and perspectives that us older lot simply can't. So – put some respect on your name.

Your career is yours to design. In an AI-driven world, entire industries haven't even been invented yet, which means the future is yours for the taking. What we do know is this: as our reliance on digital tools grows, the human need for community and collaboration becomes even more important. So learn to lean on your people, talk about your struggles, support each other, and problem solve together – because isolation is the dream killer.

So dive in, my friends! Approach your career as an adventure. Try, fail, learn, pivot, and grow. Good luck, and enjoy this magazine, as it opens you up to possibilities that only London can provide.

Big love,

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Published Autumn 2025

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About

This is a free publication produced by the London Careers Hubs with support from the Careers & Enterprise Company, the Mayor of London and the Greater London Authority. It is designed to help young people understand the range of career and qualification opportunities available to them across London.

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Discover London's Growth Sectors

London is focused on growing specific sectors that will shape the future economy—and making sure these jobs are spread across the city, not just in the centre. That means more local opportunities for young people in every borough.

Priority Growth Sectors

These are the industries where London sees the most potential for careers and innovation:

- 1. **Frontier Innovation** – cutting-edge areas like artificial intelligence, life sciences, and green technology
- 2. **Financial, Professional & Business Services** – including finance, law, engineering, and cybersecurity
- 3. **Creative Industries & Technologies** – from film and gaming to architecture and digital media
- 4. **Experience Economy** – hospitality, events, culture, and tourism
- 5. **International Education** – connecting students with global learning and career options

What this means for you

- New jobs are coming in high-growth, tech-savvy, and creative areas.
- London needs a skilled, diverse workforce and to prepare for this there will be more apprenticeships, training routes, and local access to careers support.
- Schools, colleges, and employers will work together to help young people step into these sectors.

The key growth sectors in more detail

1. Frontier Innovation is about exciting new discoveries like artificial intelligence, life sciences, robotics, and clean technologies that solve big challenges such as climate change and health. London is a global leader in turning bright ideas into businesses.

Why it's exciting

- These are fast-growing, high-paying sectors with strong job prospects.
- London has top universities, investors, and startups—all building the jobs of tomorrow.
- It's not just about having big ideas, it's about having the right skills and mindsets to make them real.

2. Financial, professional and business services and technology will grow in London and includes careers in:

- Finance (like banking, insurance, financial technology (fintech))
- Professional services (law, accountancy, consulting)
- Business services (urban planning, engineering, project management)
- Emerging fields like cybersecurity, regulatory technology (regtech), and property technology (proptech)
- This is one of London's most powerful and productive sectors—and the city is considered a global hub for it.

Why it's exciting

- These industries offer high-paying, varied careers that reward problem-solving, teamwork, and leadership.
- Technology is transforming the sector, creating new roles in innovation, data, and sustainability.
- London is investing in training the next generation for these jobs—whether through university, apprenticeships, or technical routes.

Where the Opportunities Are

- The City of London remains a magnet for top companies in finance and law.
- Innovation is strong in areas like cybersecurity and digital infrastructure.

3. Creative Industries and Technologies

includes careers in

- Film, TV, gaming, music
- Fashion, marketing, architecture
- Emerging tech like virtual production, advertising technology (adtech), and immersive media
- London is a global leader, rivalling Hollywood in production. These industries are growing fast!

Why it's exciting

- These sectors are innovative, international, and full of opportunity.
- They combine creativity with technology, offering exciting careers for young people with big ideas.
- London plans to boost training, affordable studio space, and global promotion of this talent.

4. The Experience Economy refers to culture, events, sports, attractions, retail and hospitality. These are the parts of London that make it a world-famous destination—enjoyed by both tourists and Londoners.

Jobs range from event planning and hospitality to retail management, digital marketing, and venue operations.

London is growing vibrant destinations outside the city centre—so careers are opening up in more local areas.

Where the opportunities are

- Events & Venue Management – planning concerts, festivals, exhibitions, or conferences.
- Hospitality & Tourism – working in hotels, restaurants, or travel services
- Retail & Customer Experience – from fashion to tech, focused on service and design

5. International Education is a sector where London is the world's top city for international students, welcoming thousands from all over the globe. They come here to study, launch careers, and start businesses, making international education a key part of London's economy and cultural life.

This creates a wide range of career opportunities—not just in teaching, but across business, tech, and student support.

Career Paths to Watch

- Teaching & Lecturing – at schools, colleges, or universities (including abroad!)
- Student Support & Admissions – helping international students settle and succeed
- Policy & Research – shaping the future of international education
- Marketing & Partnerships – promoting study abroad programmes and global campuses
- Education Technology (EdTech) – designing online learning tools and platforms

Why think about this now?

It might feel early to think about your future, but starting now gives you more freedom and confidence later on. Exploring ideas isn't about locking yourself into one path—it's about discovering what excites you, what you're good at, and where those things could take you.

1. Link your passions to careers

Think about what makes you buzz. Love gaming? There are careers in game design, creative tech, coding, and even esports. Passionate about the environment? There are jobs in clean energy, sustainable construction and wildlife conservation. Your interests can be the starting point for real opportunities

2. Explore and experiment

Use resources like Talking Futures (<https://www.talkingfutures.org.uk/>) to discover new industries. Watch videos, take quizzes, attend local events or even online talk. It's about exploring with curiosity, not choosing right now.

3. See beyond University

Uni is just one option. Apprenticeships, T Levels and internships let you learn on the job, earn money, and build real skills. Many people succeed by taking routes that fit their style of learning. Think about what might suit you. You got choices!

4. Celebrate your skills (not just grades)

Yes, exams matter, but they don't define you. Skills like teamwork, creativity, communication and problem-solving are just as important. Employers are looking for them more than ever in areas like health, tech and design.

5. Spot careers in everyday life

Look around you — new train stations, electric buses, apps that use AI, or even the way your favourite brand advertises online. All of these are powered by people working in jobs like engineering, urban planning, marketing and digital innovation. The future isn't far away, it's happening all around you. Take the time to find out more about what looks interesting to you.

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Getting the Most from Your Work Experience

Are you work experience ready?

Work experience is more than just time outside the classroom! This is your chance to step into the real world, explore different careers and discover what you're good at.

Whether you're placed in a local business, a charity, or a large organisation, this is your opportunity to build confidence, develop new skills and make connections that could shape your future. The key to making any work experience a success starts with preparation!

1. Before Your Work Experience

Do your homework

Take time to research the organisation before your first day. What do they do? Who are their customers or clients? What kind of roles exist there? Understanding the basics will help you feel more confident and show your enthusiasm from the start.

Set personal goals

Think about what you want to gain from the experience. Do you want to improve your communication skills? Learn how to work in a team? Get better at presenting ideas? Write down a few goals so you can stay focused and track your progress.

Communicate your aims

Let your school and the organisation know what you hope to get out of the placement ahead of time. This helps them support you better and may open opportunities to try tasks that align with your interests.

Make a good impression

Plan your journey in advance so you arrive on time. Check if there's a dress code and dress appropriately and always bring a notebook and pen! This shows you're prepared and ready to learn.

2. During your work experience

Be Curious

Ask questions! If someone has an interesting role, find out how they got there. Ask what skills are important in their job, what their day-to-day tasks look like and what advice they'd give someone starting out. People love to share their experiences and you'll learn a lot.

Explore what's on offer

Does the company offer apprenticeships, internships, or other entry routes? Even if you're interested in one department, try to speak with people in other areas too. You might discover a role you'd never considered before.

Take initiative

If you've brought your CV, politely ask to see if someone can review it. Take notes on what you're learning and think about how you can add these new skills to your CV later. If you finish a task early, ask what else you can help with to show motivation and interest.

3. After your work experience

Ask for Feedback

Before you leave, ask your supervisor what you did well and where you could improve. This feedback is valuable and can help you identify skillsets you didn't know you had previously!

Reflect on Your Experience

Write down what tasks you enjoyed and what you found challenging. Did anything surprise you? Did the experience change your ideas about your future career? Use these reflections to guide your next steps and communicate these with your school.

Remember

Work experience is what you make of it. With the right preparation, a curious mindset and a willingness to get involved, you'll gain far more than just something to add to your CV. You'll walk away with real-world insight, valuable skills and the confidence to take your next steps, wherever they may lead.

CASE STUDY

From Placement to Profession: Lewis's Journey at Gladious Ltd

When I first started my work experience at Gladious, a company that manufactures facades, my only aim was to complete the hours for my course. But within days, my mindset completely changed. I found myself thinking: *"I need to listen and learn as much as I can from this placement."* Soon after, it shifted to: *"What do I need to do to work for this company? I want to be part of their growth."*

That's the power of real work experience. It didn't just give me a glimpse of the industry, it gave me purpose, confidence and a clearer idea of what I want for my future.

I split my time between the office and the factory floor. In the office, I sat with every department including design, procurement and project management. I was given tasks that showed me how projects move from an idea to a finished product. In the factory, I shadowed the team on different machines, seeing how design links to delivery. It was a complete picture of how the business worked.

At first, it was intimidating. Everyone around me used technical terms and software I didn't know. But the team was really supportive, taking time to explain things properly. I made sure to take notes, ask questions and learn from feedback. The more I listened and practised, the more confident I became. By the end, I was contributing to projects and feeling like part of the team.

One of the biggest lessons I learnt was that work isn't just about doing the job, it's about *how* you do it. Gladious helped me understand the importance of communication, teamwork and adaptability. I realised that asking questions, showing interest and responding to feedback are just as valuable as technical skills.

"I started just wanting to finish my hours, but by the end, I wanted to be part of the company's future – that's how powerful work experience can be."



The experience shaped me personally as well as professionally. I learnt how to manage my time, stay organised and communicate in a professional way. More importantly, I saw work not just as something you *have* to do, but as an opportunity to grow and make an impact.

My proudest achievement is that the placement led to a full-time role. I'm now a Junior Fabrication Drafter at Gladious, learning industry tools like SolidWorks and Landtech, gaining certifications and even contributing to live projects. I've also had the chance to support improvements in our systems and continue to upskill on the factory floor.

Looking back, the placement was the turning point. It gave me confidence, respect for my teammates and a deeper awareness of how my contributions matter. For anyone thinking about work experience, my advice is: grab the chance. It might feel daunting at first, but it could open the door to your future career – just like it did for me.



The London Cancer Hub



From scaffolding to science, it's full STEAM ahead for career opportunities at London Cancer Hub

Whether in construction or cancer research, a huge range of Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts and Mathematics (STEAM) opportunities are coming down the track at the London Cancer Hub.

The game-changing £1bn development in Sutton is set to be a world leading district for cancer research and innovation. Backed by world-class institutions like The Royal Marsden and the Institute of Cancer Research, Aviva Capital Partners and Socius' plans for **The London Cancer Hub (LCH)** will create a centre of excellence in the fight against cancer.



With prominent mentions in the Mayor's London Growth Plan and the South London Partnership's BIG Ambition, London Cancer Hub has been identified as a key place for growth over the next decade.

Councillor Barry Lewis, Leader of Sutton Council, said: "London Cancer Hub is a once-in-a-generation opportunity for young Londoners, especially those in outer boroughs, to access high-quality, future-facing careers in science, healthcare and beyond."

What's in it for you?

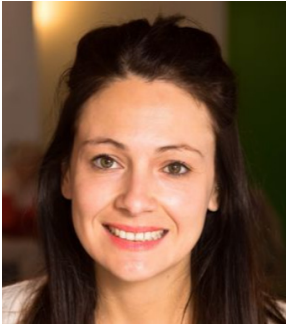
LCH will unlock hundreds of cutting-edge jobs in science, tech, business and beyond. Whether your interests lie in biology, business, engineering or entrepreneurship, there's something for you.

From bench to bedside, LCH isn't only focused on creating jobs which fight cancer. Read on to find out how it will create a huge range of opportunities with long-term careers for young people.



We caught up with people working across London Cancer Hub to learn more about how they got into the industry

Lydia Spencer Fundraising Manager at Maggie's, The Royal Marsden



Lydia first discovered her passion for charity work while at university, where she joined the Cancer Research fundraising group. She loved organising events, inspiring others to get involved and talking to students about how they could make a difference. It was then that she knew she wanted to build a career in the charity sector.

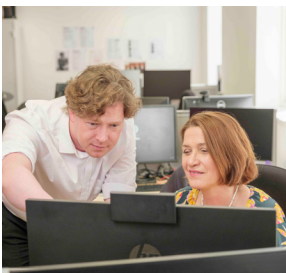
After completing internships and early roles in fundraising, Lydia joined Maggie's as Special Events Manager, specialising in high-value fundraising events.

She later took on responsibility for a wide range of income streams, including corporate partnerships, funding proposals, community fundraising and Maggie's annual gala ball.

Her degree gave her the foundation to connect with supporters, plan events and develop new opportunities; skills that continue to shape her work today.

Reflecting on her role, Lydia says: "I'm proud to work somewhere that makes people feel safe, heard, and supported. Maggie's creates a home-from-home for people living with cancer, and our incredible supporters ensure we can keep our doors open for everyone who needs us."

Nick Hitchens PR and Communications Manager, Royal Marsden NHS Foundation Trust



Nick began his career in journalism, working as a reporter and news editor in regional media for over a decade after graduating from university. In 2017, he made the move into public relations, seeking a role where he could use his skills to support the NHS.

During the pandemic, Nick worked for NHS Test and Trace, helping to deliver vital public health information and advice

on testing. In 2023, he joined The Royal Marsden as PR & Communications Manager, ensuring patients, families, colleagues and the wider public stay informed about the team's pioneering work in cancer care and research.

Reflecting on his role, Nick says: "It's humbling to be surrounded by such extraordinarily talented and dedicated people here at The Royal Marsden. I feel honoured to share the information people need; helping to ensure patients and families are supported and that the wider public can learn about our incredible work."

Andrea Kohn Cancer Stories Officer, The Institute of Cancer Research



Andrea began her career as a television producer, working for more than 20 years on major programmes including Good Morning Britain and This Morning. After two decades in broadcasting, she decided to move into the charity sector, where she could use her storytelling and journalistic skills to raise awareness and make a real difference.

In 2024, Andrea joined The Institute of Cancer Research (ICR) as Cancer Stories Officer. In her role, she brings to life the ICR's "bench to bedside" approach by telling powerful stories that connect scientific discovery with the experiences of people affected by cancer. She works closely with patients, families,

fundraisers, donors and scientists to highlight how the ICR's groundbreaking research translates into real impact.

As part of the communications team, Andrea produces content for the ICR's website and publications, while also securing regional and national press coverage to showcase the organisation's pioneering work.

Reflecting on her role, Andrea says: "It is a privilege to turn people's cancer journeys into stories that raise awareness and celebrate the ICR's incredible work. I feel fortunate to work for an organisation whose scientific breakthroughs make such a huge difference to people's lives. Given the deeply personal nature of these stories, I deeply appreciate that people trust me to share their experiences and use them to highlight the ICR's life-changing research."



Careers you never knew existed...

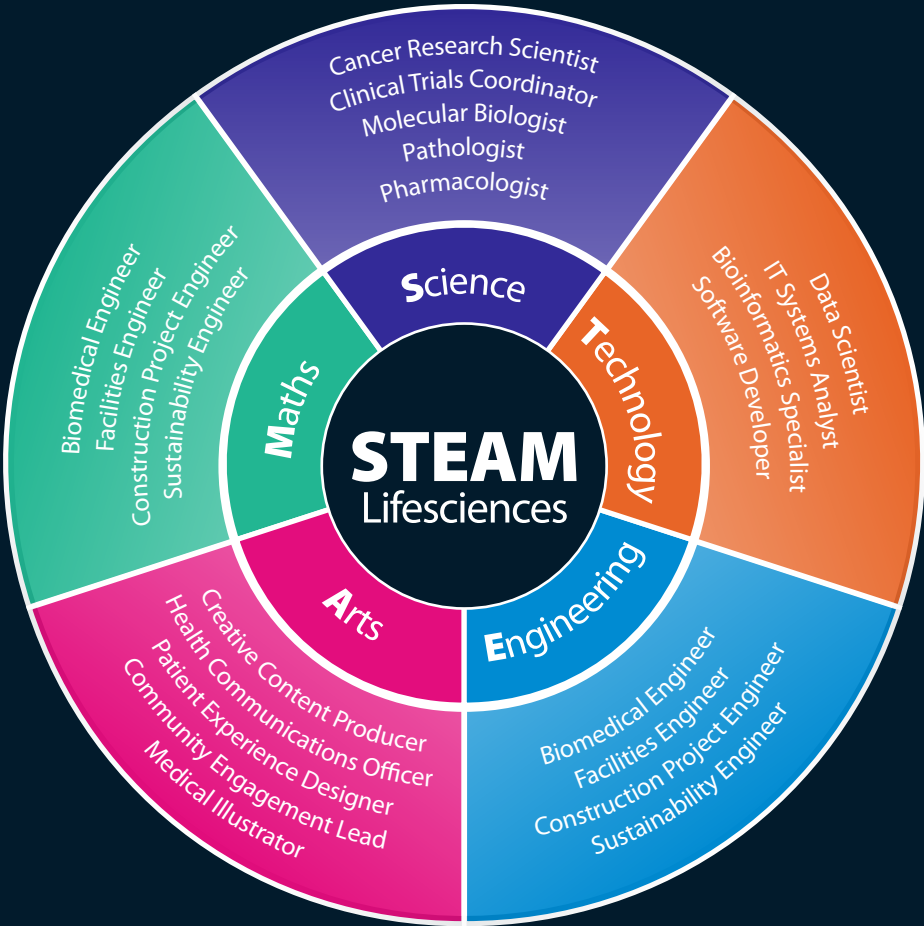
Think working in life sciences means needing a PhD, wearing a white coat and mixing chemicals in a lab? Think again... LCH will challenge these outdated ideas. You don't need top grades or a science background; even a love of biology isn't essential!

The truth is, careers in life sciences are powered by data, storytelling, construction, logistics, graphic design and more. If you're practical, passionate about sustainability or skilled in social media, there could be a future for you at LCH.

There's a route into this thriving sector; whether that's through T Levels, apprenticeships, internships or traditional degrees.



A summary of some of the STEAM careers coming down the track...



Get in touch to learn more!

Email us: londoncancerhub@meeting-place.uk | Find out more: www.cancerhub.london
Follow us: @TheLondonCancerHub



Docks to discovery

Canary Wharf's life science transformation creates opportunities across London



Indicative CGI of 17CC, viewed from West India Quay

Centred on the West India Docks, Canary Wharf was at the heart of London's bustling shipping industry for centuries, handling goods from across the world.

After the dock's decline in the 1960s, the area was reborn as a thriving international financial district to rival the City of London.

Today, it is undergoing another transformation, but this time, as one of the capital's largest hubs for life sciences.

The Mayor of London's Growth Plan recognises the life sciences sector as key to creating 150,000 high-quality jobs across the city, giving young Londoners the chance to enter an industry that is shaping the future of medicine, sustainability and technology.

Despite this, demand for lab space in the capital has grown fourfold since 2016, with half a million sq @ of space required to support research and development.

Excellent transport links, modern infrastructure, expansive offices and open spaces make Canary Wharf the perfect place to meet this challenge and one which is opening opportunities for nearby residents and London's school-leavers.

One of the most exciting projects currently underway at Canary Wharf is LS Estates' 17 Columbus Courtyard (17CC), a pioneering office-to-lab retrofit that will set a new benchmark for sustainable development.

The scheme will transform the existing building into 180,000 sq ft of cutting-edge laboratories and collaborative workspace, designed to meet the evolving needs of life sciences and technology companies.

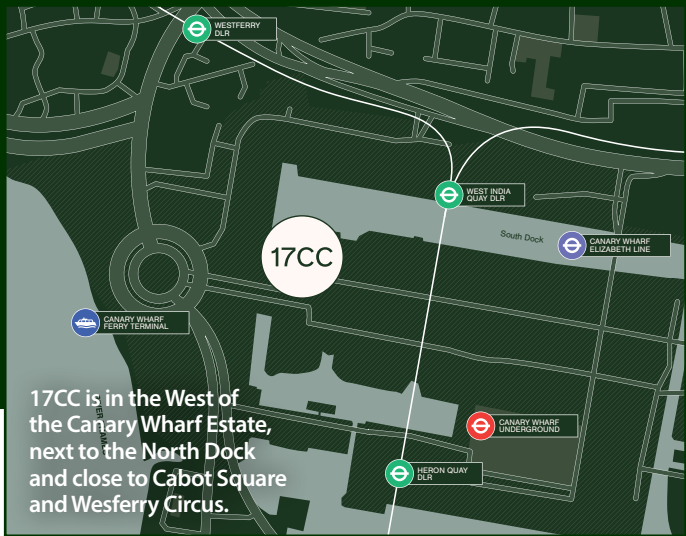
Flexible lab space, co-working zones, meeting suites, and a new café, will establish 17CC as a vibrant hub where scientists, entrepreneurs and innovators can meet to collaborate and innovate.

Although life sciences careers might have once conjured up images of PhDs, microscopes and lab coats, today, the sector offers a wide range of opportunities open to people from all backgrounds.

Led by Morgan Sindall, 17CC's construction will create a wide range of opportunities, from engineering and design to digital modelling and project management. The Morgan Sindall team have also created *The Knowledge Quad* - a dedicated space for delivering accredited programmes to help people gain skills and access employment opportunities.

17 Columbus Courtyard, developed by LS Estates with Morgan Sindall Construction, is committed to engaging the local community. The teams have delivered skills programmes, built partnerships with schools and colleges and supported young people from Tower Hamlets and beyond to access training and employment pathways.

This is a rare chance to watch a new industry cluster emerge in real time and to play a part in it.



Whether you're interested in opportunities through construction or beyond, Canary Wharf could be just the place to launch your future career.

Keep an eye out for events throughout the year. You can also learn more about the project, and help shape the future of 17CC and Canary Wharf's life sciences district, by visiting: www.community.17cc.co.uk

To learn more about the opportunities in construction, please contact Morgan Sindall's Senior Social Value Manager, Monica Paul: Monica.Paul@morgansindall.com



What are T Levels?

T-LEVELS
THE NEXT LEVEL QUALIFICATION

T Levels are technical qualifications that are an alternative to A Levels aimed at students aged 16-19. They are designed to provide a clear path into skilled employment, further study or a higher apprenticeship.

About T Levels

T Levels are designed to ensure that students are prepared for skilled employment by combining study and practical skills.

They provide a pathway to higher education, such as university degrees, higher apprenticeships or other higher education courses.

Developed with employers and businesses, T Levels are designed to meet the needs of industry and help fill skills gaps in the workforce.

What T Levels can you do?

T Levels are available in a range of sectors, including Digital, Construction, Education, Childcare, Health, Science and more.

80%
CLASS
CLASS
CLASS
20%
WORK



Where can I do a T Level?

Visit the [official T Levels website](#).

Use the "Find a T Level Near You" tool, which allows you to search for T Level providers based on your location and the T Level subject you're interested in.

The National Careers Service website offers a [course search tool](#) that can help you find T Level courses by subject and location.

What Will T Levels Be Made up Of?

T Levels are made up of a technical qualification which focuses on the theory as well as skills, behaviours and knowledge covering the overall industry and a specific job role. You'll also undertake a sector placement with an employer.

During your industry placement, you'll gain vital work experience in the workplace while building your understanding of the industry and developing skills which will help you become career ready!

Each T Level is equivalent to three A Levels. If you haven't already achieved English or maths qualifications at GCSE level then you'll also work towards gaining these.

T Levels will be graded as pass, merit or distinction while your nationally recognised certificate will also show what you have successfully achieved within the course which will help you take the next step into the professional world.

Awarded UCAS points

T Levels will contribute towards your UCAS points with a T Level Distinction being equivalent to 3 A Levels at an A*. This will be recognised by universities and education providers enabling you to continue your learning journey if you would like to.

How Do T Levels Differ From Apprenticeships?

Apprenticeships involve 80% in the workplace getting paid and 20% of the time studying towards a qualification. T Levels involve more study time with a minimum of 45 days in the working environment. How and when you complete your industry placement will all depend on the type of T Level, employer and college.

CASE STUDY

From gaming to a career in Tech

Andreas Hambi's T Level Journey

When Andreas Hambi left school at 16, A-Levels didn't appeal to him. "I didn't want to sit exams that didn't feel connected to real work," he says. "I wanted something practical." By chance, he visited Big Creative Training with a friend and spotted a T Level in Digital Production, Design and Development. "It was the perfect blend of information and hands-on learning and far more modern than other options."

Starting with no GCSE in computer science and only a hobbyist interest in IT, Andreas found the course challenging but rewarding. "I learnt programming from scratch – Python, HTML, CSS, databases and how tech works in a business setting. The best bit? Everything had a real-world purpose."

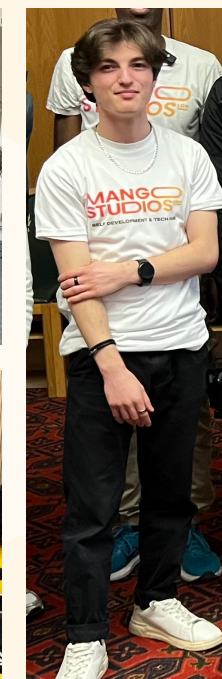
"I started with no computer science GCSE and now I am working in tech. My T Level gave me the skills, confidence and real experience to get here."

A key feature of his T Level was an industry placement at Mango Studios LDN, working on augmented and virtual reality projects. "I learnt office etiquette, made industry connections and built a portfolio of real work. That gave me a head start. Not just knowledge, but experience that employers value."

Andreas credits his college's support for his success. Careers advisers matched students with placements that suited their interests, while tutors explained concepts in multiple ways until everyone understood. "It's not an easy course, but if you put in the work, you'll come out with skills that get you noticed."

The T Level also built Andreas's confidence. "We had mock interviews, learnt the STARR method (see page 24) and developed communication skills. I realised how important it is to work well with others and to clearly explain ideas to stakeholders."

His efforts paid off. After finishing his T Level with a Merit, Andreas applied to universities, jobs and competitive degree apprenticeships. He was accepted into several universities, offered remote work and eventually secured a place as a 1st Line Support Analyst Degree Apprentice with FDM Group, which landed him a job at Imperial College London's IT department. "The application process was tough, but the skills I'd learnt gave me the edge."



Looking back Andreas sees the T Level as a turning point. "It showed me different tech roles like: software development, networking, cyber security and data analysis. This let me work out what suited me. It gave me the mindset to design and develop my own solutions, not just fix problems."

His advice to others is clear: "If you know the industry you want to be in, go for it. T Levels aren't easy, but they give you a head start and the confidence to take opportunities."

For Andreas, the journey started with building his own gaming computer during the pandemic and grew into a career in technology. "I've gone from gaming for fun to working in a sector that's constantly evolving. My dream now is to design a full-stack app and website that rivals the best out there."

Andreas's story shows that with the right course, determination and support, you can turn a passion into a profession – and open doors you never imagined.

MANGO STUDIOS LDN



Skills Builder

THE UNIVERSAL FRAMEWORK 2.0

The Skills Builder Universal Framework is a tried-and-tested tool designed to help you develop eight essential skills in clear, tangible steps.

Getting ready for the world of work

Employability skills include personal skills that you need to perform well in work and as well as skills needed to find and apply for jobs. Visit the [Skills Builder Universal Framework 2.0](#) and choose a skill or search a step to get started. There are free activities and challenges that will help you develop your skills in your own time.

Skills are like muscles – the more you use them, the stronger they grow. Every activity you are involved in, from school projects to sports teams, from volunteering to hobbies, is an opportunity to work on these skills. Even if they are not sure what career you want to pursue, these skills will help you in whatever path you take.

The updated Skills Builder Universal Framework 2.0 consists of eight skills that will help you succeed. These skills can be added to a CV, job application and for discussion in interviews.

Activities you can do to improve your skills now!

LISTENING: Comparing views: I compare different perspectives

1. Read the three scenarios:

- Belinda lives in the United States of America and is an advocate for prisoners' rights. She has dedicated her career to campaigning to end the death penalty and believes that the criminal justice system should be based on rehabilitation.
- Aled was born with cerebral palsy and experiences symptoms such as tremors and muscle weakness. He has used walking frames and wheelchairs since early childhood. Aled is campaigning for better accessibility on public transport.
- Hamza is a single father to four young children, aged 1 and 6 years old. He works full-time in a shoe factory. Hamza is campaigning for an increase in minimum wage and improved benefits for working single parents.

- For each scenario, note how their perspective might differ from your own.
- Reflect on what you might gain from listening to them speak.



SPEAKING: Choosing language: I choose appropriate varied language

- Imagine you are preparing a 2-minute speech about your career aspirations to deliver to a friend and a mentor at work/college.
- Write notes on the words and phrases you might use when speaking about this topic to your best friend.
- Write notes on the words and phrases you might use when speaking about this topic to your mentor from work/college.
- Consider: How does the language vary for these two different audiences?



PROBLEM SOLVING: I identify advantages and disadvantages of potential solutions

Talk it Through

- Identify a complicated problem you are facing currently.
- Generate at least 2 potential solutions.
- Write a list of pros and cons for each.
- Share with a trusted colleague, family member or friend to help you work out which solution will be best for you.



CREATIVITY: I can reflect critically

Free Time Boost

- Reflect upon your free time.
- Ask yourself:
 - What do I enjoy the most?
 - What about this do I enjoy?
 - What would I like to do more of?
 - Is this feasible at the moment?
 - What do I need in place to make this feasible?
- Consider new ideas and plans that could be made based upon the answers to these questions.



PLANNING: I secure the resources I need to achieve goals

Securing Resources

- Imagine you are planning a team celebration event.
- Consider:
 - How could you secure the resources needed to make it a success?
 - How might this differ depending on the different types of resource?
 - How might you secure resources if you were limited in terms of budget, resources or timeframe?



LEADERSHIP: I support shared decision making Dual Decisions

Imagine you are about to be stranded on a desert island but you can only take 3 items.

- Choose 3 items to take with you, justifying your choice.
- Find a friend, family member or colleague and ask them which items they would bring.
- Note where you disagree and reflect upon whether you were able to reach a shared decision on any of the items.



Skills Builder
UNIVERSAL
FRAMEWORK 2.0

The **Skills Builder Universal Framework 2.0** gives you a common language to recognise where your young person is doing brilliantly already and simple steps to help them grow. By spending time focusing on helping them to develop their skills set, you will be supporting their wellbeing, giving them confidence and helping them build their employability skills.



Apprenticeships

Apprenticeships are on-the-job training programmes. They combine work and study and are always paid. An apprentice will spend 80% of their time working with an employer, learning new skills and gaining real workplace experience. The remaining 20% of their time will be spent studying either at college, with an independent training provider or at a university (depending on the apprenticeship level).

Some apprenticeships are the equivalent of GCSE's and A-Levels, while others will earn you a foundation degree, full degree or a master's degree. Apprentices never have to pay for their own training even when studying at university as the company and the government pay for them (that means no tuition fees for apprentices!).

There are over 700 types of apprenticeships available (they are called 'standards'), and according to the government, 70% of occupations can now be entered through an apprenticeship! That means that there is a very good chance your career aspiration could be met through the apprenticeship route.

Bradley Davis, AIM London (Apprenticeships, Information, and Meaningful Encounters) programme manager.

Apprenticeship vacancies are advertised throughout the year. The application process may include CVs, application forms, online tests (especially for bigger companies), interviews, and assessment centres. Every employer has its own recruitment process, so you may see some or all of the stages mentioned, depending on the company.

When applying for apprenticeships, it's important to think about what skills you have, and match them with what skills the employer is looking for. Employers serious about employing young people don't expect you to have years of industry experience, so you can point to transferable skills gained at school, work or volunteering.

Want to find out more?

If you would like to find live apprenticeship vacancies or would like advice on how to get 'application ready' please follow the links below.

[Find an Apprenticeship](#)

[Amazing Apprenticeships | Explore Vocational Education & Apprenticeship Opportunities](#)

[Higherin: Student Jobs, Career Advice and Reviews](#)

[Alternatives To University | NGTU](#)

[Careers advice | National Careers Service](#)



Funded by
UK Government

SUPPORTED BY
MAYOR OF LONDON



The AIM project is funded by the Mayor of London and the UK Shared Prosperity Fund.

CASE STUDY

Meet Maddy

Education & Community Intern at The Old Vic

I was offered my internship at The Old Vic through the 10,000 Black Interns Programme, which provides paid internships for Black students and graduates to help them get a foot in the door. I didn't think I would get it because I got a lot of rejections from other organisations but then months later, they got in contact about this internship. I didn't know much about The Old Vic until I spoke to my grandma and who told me it was an amazing opportunity as it's a renowned theatre. When I saw education and theatre together, it really intrigued me as I am interested in both things, but I didn't know they could go together.

It would be hard to describe a typical day as Education & Community Intern as every day was different. I supported across a lot of different programmes for people of all ages. I supported in the office with data entry, research, preparing resources and I got to observe and take part in workshops. The most recent programme I worked on was a work experience week working with 20 young people. They got to learn about lots of different backstage roles and meet different departments across the theatre. It was great getting to work on programmes that helped to make peoples lives better.

The Old Vic are also about to open a new space called Backstage which will include a community cafe and bar and a dedicated space for Education & Community projects. I think it's going to be great to have a space where young people can come together, connect with each other and learn about theatre. Hopefully they'll see that there could be a place for them in the industry and it might inspire them to pursue a career in theatre.

"My advice for anyone looking to do a similar role in the creative industries would be to just jump straight in."



One of the biggest challenges for me in my internship was meeting lots of new people because I am a naturally introverted person. I see it as a positive because now because I feel more confident in myself when talking to other people as I've had that practice. My team were great as it was my first time working in an office environment, but everyone was supportive. I could talk to any of them if I needed help.

My advice for anyone looking to do a similar role in the creative industries would be to just jump straight in. It is going to be scary and daunting, but you will learn along the way and there's going to be the people there to support you. Don't hold back and remember you don't need to change yourself to fit in. Networking is also important. Beforehand I didn't do much networking because I didn't see the point but now, I realise that through networking you get to meet amazing people, and you never know where a connection might lead you.

I'll never forget this internship; it was very special to me, and I'll remember it for the rest of my life. I now feel more confident with this experience under my belt. My internship has made me feel less lost in terms of my career goals. Beforehand, I didn't know what I wanted to do but going forward I want to work in a similar area or sector because I really enjoyed it. I'm sad that it's coming to an end, but I'm really excited for what the future holds.

THE OLD VIC

DISCOVER!

creative careers

The creative industries need YOU...

The creative industries are all around us. They can be seen in the clothes we wear, the buildings we live and work in, the music we listen to, the books we read, the adverts on our screens, the apps we use and in countless other places.

When you take a good look, the creative industries show up everywhere in our daily lives and the world would be a very different place without them!

There are all sorts of jobs and people in the creative industries. From technicians to accountants, events managers and marketing specialists – who work alongside musicians, actors, designers and performers. You don't have to be a specific kind of person; there's a career for you in the creative industries.

Have you thought you need to be 'good' at art, design, creative writing, acting, dance or anything considered 'creative' to work in these exciting (and expanding!) industries? Well in fact, almost 50% of all jobs in the creative industries are 'non creative', yet they underpin the UK's thriving sectors that produce world leading entertainment, design, fashion and much more. The wide range of jobs in the creative industries means there's options to suit everyone's skills and interests.

There are also lots of different pathways to jobs in the creative industries and many employers offer apprenticeships and training programmes that allow you to earn while you learn.



Image © One Dance UK, Dani Bower



Image © RIBA, Luke O'Donovan



Image © Get Into Theatre, Alex Brenner

There's a career for you in the creative industries

Ever heard of a User Experience Designer? A Floor Runner? Or a Media Planner? These are all entry level roles that exist in the creative industries and there are hundreds more.

You can discover a huge range of job roles and case studies that suit your skills and interests using the interactive **Discover! Creative Careers Finder**. Featuring information from across our industry partners, this tool covers everything from careers in fashion and textiles, video games, advertising and marketing, theatre and much more.

You can access all these by clicking the Young People tab at discovercreative.careers

Discover! Creative Careers Month for your school or college

During November, hundreds of employers from across the creative industries will volunteer their time to offer **free** activities to schools/colleges.

You can find out about the thousands of job roles and pathways that exist in these thriving sectors. Plus there are extensive online programme run by Speakers for Schools across the month.

Tell your schools or college to register their interest at discovercreative.careers.



Image © Get Into Theatre, Alex Brenner

About Discover! Creative Careers

Discover! Creative Careers is a government funded, industry-led programme working to ensure there is a larger and more diverse intake of talent into the creative industries via a broader range of routes. The free to access hybrid programme of activities and resources offers meaningful encounters with industry professionals, online tools, training, and support throughout the year.

The 2025 - 2026 programme is running across England, Wales and Scotland and has a brand-new work experience programme for 14-16 year olds and a pilot initiative with the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) to identify entry-level roles linked to the Sector Based Work Academy programme (SWAPs).

The programme's flagship Discover! Creative Careers Week has extended for 2025 across the entire month of November, giving industry and schools greater opportunities to forge connections and offer more 11-18 year olds vital encounters with creative industry careers.

Go to discovercreative.careers now to discover more



Image © UK Music, Courtney Wallace

What are the options for study beyond the age of 16?

The education system in the UK is split up into stages.

	Age	Phase of education	Where is this provided	Description
	18+	Further Education for Adults (19+) Higher Education (18+)	- Colleges - Universities - Institutes of Technology - Training companies - Employers	Higher education (HE) is education and training at a standard beyond A Levels and T Levels. HE programmes are offered by universities or colleges, and vary in size and type. HE can include: Higher Technical Qualifications (including Higher Nationals and Foundation Degrees), undergraduate degrees, higher apprenticeships and postgraduate courses. Many adults also continue to improve their skills by studying Further Education (FE) courses – from basic skills to technical courses.
Key stage Five	16–18	Further Education (16+)	- Colleges - School sixth-forms - Training companies - Employers - Charities	At this stage young people may undertake a full-time course at college or school sixth-form, such as A Levels or a T Level, or start an apprenticeship. They can also combine work or volunteering with part-time study or training. Education or training is compulsory until the age of 18 in England.
Key stage Four	14–16	Secondary Education	Secondary schools	Secondary education starts at age 11 and continues until age 16. Students are usually studying GCSE courses, and/or other courses as appropriate (e.g. a technical qualification). Some regions also have middle schools.
Key stage Three	11–14			
Key stage Two	7–11	Primary Education	Primary schools	Primary schools generally have students aged 4 to 11 years, with infant and junior classes. The Government has set out a national curriculum for all subjects across Key Stages One to Four, and there are national tests and teacher assessments for students at the end of both Key Stage One and Two. Throughout their school and college education some students attend alternative settings, which offer an adjusted curriculum to better meet their individual needs e.g. if they have Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND).
Key stage One	5–7			
	0–5	Early Years	- Nurseries - Primary schools	The Government sets standards for learning, development and care of young children to age 5 in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) framework. This can take place in state nursery schools, nursery classes and reception classes within primary schools, but also in voluntary pre-schools, privately run nurseries and with childminders.

The Gatsby Charitable Foundation, 18 July 2022, [The Education Landscape] A Guide for Employers.
Available at: www.gatsby.org.uk/education/latest/the-education-landscape-a-guide-for-employers.

However, the technical education reforms of the past ten years have created a system more flexible and more closely related to the needs of business than previous generations.

There's also a blurring of the historical categories, with Further Education providers delivering Higher Education courses and vice-versa.



Green Skills Digital Campus

The Bridge partnership of Central London Skills Providers has launched the *Green Skills Digital Campus*. This online resource helps people interested in green careers explore how the construction and built environment sectors are changing, what skills are in demand, what careers are available and where to find training opportunities to begin their journey.

Examples include the **Solar Panel Installer** and **Retrofit Assessor** roles

Access to the Green Skills Digital Campus is free and open to all: bridge-skills.london/resources/green-skills-digital-campus/



Technical and vocational education has changed, with higher quality courses, up-to-date skills, and great job prospects.

There are a huge range of opportunities to learn such as:

- A Levels**
2-year academic courses usually taken after GCSEs. Students pick 3–4 subjects and are assessed mainly by exams. They're the main route to university.
- T Levels**
2-year programmes for 16–19s combining study with a 45-day industry placement. They prepare students for skilled work, apprenticeships or higher study.
- BTECs**
Vocational qualifications focused on practical learning. Assessment is through coursework, projects and some exams. Accepted by many universities and employers.
- Applied Generals**
Level 3 qualifications mixing theory and practical skills in areas like business or science. Usually taken with other courses, they keep routes open to university or work.
- Apprenticeships**
Paid jobs with training, leading to recognised qualifications. Apprentices split time between work and study and can progress up to degree level.

Local Skills Improvement

The Department for Education's Local Skills Improvement Plan (LSIP) programme gives businesses across England the chance to highlight where they face staff shortages and skills gaps. In response, Further Education providers have received funding to develop new, industry-relevant courses that equip learners with the knowledge and skills to begin careers in areas where demand for jobs is high.

In London, colleges, schools, and independent training providers have been adapting to these needs across sectors such as digital, creative, health, hospitality, and the built environment. In this publication, we will focus on one cross-cutting priority that has been a key area of attention across the capital: green skills.

Green Skills

"Green skills" are the abilities needed to help the UK reach its net zero targets. They span almost every sector, though construction and technology are currently leading the way in recruitment.

Over the past three years, new courses have been launched related to retrofit (insulating older homes to make them less energy intensive to heat), low carbon heating (heat pumps, solar thermal) windfarm operations, EV charging point design & installation, solar panels and battery storage,

A great example is the new *Low Carbon Heating Apprenticeship* at London South Bank Technical College. This programme equips learners with the advanced electrical and plumbing expertise required to install air- and ground-source heat pumps. It is also helping to open up opportunities for more women in the construction and built environment sectors.



One apprentice, Georgia Greenfield, explains her motivation and experience:

"I wanted to contribute to a sustainable future, and because I'm a practical person I knew I wanted to learn a trade. I like the variety of the job—no two days are the same. One day I might be working on the ground, the next up on scaffolding. It's better in sunny weather, but I really enjoy it. The work environment and the people are great. I also love the technology—it's fascinating to learn about systems from companies like Samsung and Vaillant, and I enjoy the problem-solving that comes with each job."

CASE STUDY

Finding My Voice as a Mentor

Becoming a MindJam mentor has been about more than supporting the young people I work with. It has also helped me understand myself. Before mentoring, I often pushed my own needs aside and just focused on getting through the day. Working with others has made me reflect on my own experiences and put into practice the strategies I suggest to them. In many ways, I have been learning alongside them.

A highlight of the role is sharing my passion for gaming. I have been a gamer for as long as I can remember and it is still one of my favourite ways to relax, learn and connect. In MindJam sessions, that shared enthusiasm often becomes the bridge between me and the young people I mentor. We swap tips, share favourite moments and sometimes create projects inspired by what we play. Gaming is more than fun; it teaches problem-solving, persistence, creativity and teamwork. My love for games is a big part of how I connect and help others grow.

At school, I found social situations confusing. I often missed what people were trying to say because I struggled with certain audio, visual or social cues. At the time, I thought I just was not very good socially. Now I know it was part of being neurodivergent. That understanding means I can support others who feel the same way. I can explain what might be happening in a conversation, share ways to navigate it and reassure them that thinking differently is not a weakness.

About MindJam

MindJam is an online mentoring service that supports young people through creativity, technology and play. We use video games, coding, digital art and other creative tools to connect with children and teenagers in a way that feels natural to them. Many of the young people we work with are neurodivergent or struggle with anxiety, confidence or social skills. By meeting them in spaces where they feel comfortable, we can help them build resilience, learn new skills and find their own strengths. Our mentors bring both technical expertise and lived experience, creating a safe and supportive environment where young people can grow and thrive.

www.mindjam.org.uk



One of the best parts of mentoring is seeing a breakthrough. Sometimes you work with someone for months, slowly building trust and skills, and then all of a sudden something clicks. It might be completing a task independently or speaking up with confidence, but those small moments often lead to much bigger changes. Watching and supporting that growth is hugely rewarding.

To thrive in my role, I have built habits that work for me. I set aside one day a week for admin, take regular breaks from the computer and do activities that recharge me. If I feel stuck on emails, I will work somewhere different, like a café, so it feels less like a chore. These small adjustments help me stay organised and balanced.

If I could tell my younger self one thing, it would be this: you do not need to choose your lifelong career at sixteen. There is no single right path, and it is okay to try different things until you find what feels right. Even within one job, there are many directions you can take. The journey matters just as much as the destination.

Joe Wray - 26



Show your skills

Want to smash your job interview?
Write a perfect cover letter for a CV?
Use the STARR method for maximum impact.

Interviewers are looking for many things in a candidate. Giving examples of how your experience makes you perfect for the job is the key for success.

Using the STARR Method allows you to show the transferable skills you have, regardless of whether you have any work experience or not!

What is the STARR Method?

It is a method of answering questions in preparation for an interview and for writing a perfect cover letter for a CV or job application.

When do I use the STARR Method?

When you need to show employers how you are a good match. It will help you relate your experiences to the job. Transferable skills (like teamwork, communication and negotiation) you have developed both at work and outside can be highly desirable.

Be sure to read job descriptions carefully so you understand what they are looking for.

How does the STARR technique work?

The STARR method helps you tell a story - one that shows how you have worked through a situation and found a resolution.

Situation

Give your story context. What was the background to it? Who else was involved? When, where and why did it take place? For instance, you helped plan a charity event or created a social media campaign for your friend's business.

Task

What was the task as a whole? Describe what was your role and the overall aims of the activity.

Action

Explain how you handled and resolved the situation. Did you do it alone? Or as part of a team? Show how you assessed the situation and solved the problem. Tell your story in a way which engages.

Result

How did it end? Emphasise the positive lessons you learned during the process. What were the benefits?

Reflect

Explain how this experience relates to your ability to do the job you're applying for.

Preparing for an interview

Preparing to answer questions using the STARR Method will help make you more relaxed on the day. Practising will make the interview flow and demonstrate your confidence.

Here are some tips:

- Think about an example of a situation which needed you to show positive behaviours and actions where you have shown skills like teamwork, leadership, planning and organisation.
- Make sure your story flows - give it a beginning, a middle and an end.
- Focus on the parts which most involve you.
- Talk about what you have learned and how it could be relevant to the job requirements.
- Prepare and use several examples that show different, related skills so you don't rely on one story.
- Share a draft of your CV with a trusted friend or family member for honest feedback.
- Practise for an interview!. Saying it out loud will help you see where you might go into too much or irrelevant detail.

The Investment Industry

Investment management is at the heart of the UK economy, helping people secure their financial future. By investing wisely, the sector drives economic growth by funding exciting projects and innovative companies.

Investment management is crucial because it channels money into businesses and projects that need funding to grow, develop new products, and create jobs. The UK investment management industry is a global success story, giving the UK a strong voice on the international financial world.

Beginning a career in investment management

Investment management is about helping people and organisations grow their money responsibly. It's a career that offers purpose, variety, and global opportunities — and it needs fresh talent like you.

The investment industry offers plenty of high-quality and stimulating jobs that help shape the world we live in. People from all backgrounds, with a range of education experiences and skills, work in the sector.

The UK investment management industry supports approximately 124,800 jobs with 45,800 people directly employed by investment management firms. Of the 45,800 people employed by investment managers, 23% of employees work in investment management roles, 18% work in business development and client services and 16% in operations and fund administration. The highest proportion of investment management roles (27%) are in London, whilst the highest number of operations and fund administration roles are located in Scotland (24%).

(Source: [Investment Management in the UK 2023-2024.pdf](#))

Investment management in a glance

- **Big numbers:** UK investment managers looked after £9.1 trillion in 2023.
- **Global picture:** Worldwide, investment managers handled a massive \$119 trillion in 2023. The UK alone managed 36% of Europe's total.
- **International clients:** Nearly half of the money managed in the UK came from overseas clients.

(Source: [Investment Management in the UK 2023-2024.pdf](#))

The UK investment management industry is a global success story, giving the UK a strong voice on the international financial world.



What types of jobs are there in investment management and what skills are required?

Investment management isn't just about numbers and spreadsheets — it's a dynamic, global industry with a wide range of career paths. Whether you're into tech, people, problem-solving, or creativity, there's something for you.

People work in:

- **Marketing:** helping firms tell their story and connect with clients
- **Risk:** spotting potential problems before they happen
- **Investment operations:** making sure everything runs smoothly to deliver fantastic service to clients
- **Technology & AI:** building tools and systems that power the industry
- **Human resources (HR):** supporting people and shaping company culture

...and many more!

What skills are needed?

Everyone working in the sector brings different strengths, characteristics and life experiences. Some of the skills needed include:

- **Curiosity about the world:** Global events can affect investments, so being interested in news and current affairs is a big plus.
- **Teamwork & communication:** This is a people business. You'll need to work well with others and explain your ideas clearly.
- **Confidence with tech:** Technology and AI are used in almost every role. You don't need to be an expert — employers will train you — but being comfortable with digital tools is important.
- **Problem-solving:** Can you think creatively and find smart solutions? That's a huge asset in this industry.
- **Adaptability & motivation:** Things change fast. Being open to learning and ready to take on new challenges will help you thrive.

Starting a career in investment management through Investment20/20

For over a decade, Investment20/20 has been helping people kickstart their careers in this dynamic industry. Founded to support people to begin a career in the sector, Investment20/20 provides access to a network of over 50 investment management firms who are committed to helping people start, grow, and succeed in the industry. In partnership with our member firms, we have supported almost 3000 people to start their professional careers through our Trainee Programme.



Find out more you can access all our social media platforms [here](#).

What is the Investment20/20 Trainee Programme?

The Investment20/20 Trainee Programme is at least a 12-month full time paid job with training, support and networking opportunities. Sometimes the trainee year is included as part of an apprenticeship. Trainees are employed by the firm and enrolled on the Investment20/20 Trainee Programme. Find out more about the Investment20/20 Trainee Programme [here](#).



Watch [here](#) inspiring people from a wide range of backgrounds share their stories about their journey into investment management. See how inclusive the industry is and open to everyone with a real passion, purpose and a drive to succeed.



How to apply

To become an Investment20/20 trainee, you apply directly to the roles, which can be found on our [Latest Jobs webpage](#). Jobs are released all year round. It is best to register [here](#) for Investment20/20 vacancies update emails, so you don't miss out!

Supporting schools and colleges

If you are a teacher or careers professional, please get in touch to discuss how we can support your careers programme. Our comprehensive outreach service helps students to develop their understanding of the sector and explore career pathways in investment management.

Email: Career.Events@investment2020.org.uk



Joining the asset management industry as an apprentice can be daunting, but Investment20/20 has provided an excellent platform for networking with other apprentices in a formal yet relaxed setting. This has helped me build networks with trainees/apprentices from various companies. Being part of the trainee forum has been invaluable for practicing my organisational skills in a formal environment, making for a smoother start to my career in the asset management industry.

Finlay Truelove
Resolutions Apprentice
Fidelity International



Is university the best option for me?

Your dreams and goals

It can be difficult to picture the future, but imagining a meaningful life is a great way to plan ahead.

Perhaps you already know what you want to do and the exact path to get there. Maybe there's a degree, apprenticeship or training programme that leads directly to your chosen career. Or perhaps the only thing you're certain of is a thirst for knowledge or creativity. That's okay! Think about your interests and how to reach where you want to be.

Not all jobs or passions require a degree, but there's still a lot to be gained from the university experience. Your wider dreams can be achieved in many ways so consider which journey best suits you.

What are you passionate about?

What excites you? What is your favourite subject and why? What do you enjoy doing?

This doesn't have to be limited to school subjects. Perhaps you don't study music but you love producing songs, or you're passionate about acting or helping others.

Explore whether any universities offer degrees that align with your passions, goals and interests.

Job opportunities

All UK universities have a Careers Service. The Careers Service is a great place to go for job opportunities and help with your CV and cover letters. A lot of Careers Services have dedicated professionals tailored to the subject you've chosen to study.

Some degrees offer placements or internships, this is a great way to gain experience in the field that you're interested in. Does the university you're interested in offer pathways that can help you gain real world experience?

Personal growth and fun

University helps you gain independence, social skills and new friends. It's a chance to explore your identity and build a professional network. Look into student culture, clubs, societies and activities to see what fits you.

Cost of university

For home students, most courses cost £9,535 per year. The government pays this on your behalf and may also pay you living expenses, depending on household income. After graduation, you repay 9% of anything you earn over £25,000 a year.

For example, if you earn £35,000 a year, you repay £75 a month. This loan gets wiped after 40 years, however much or little you have paid back.

Many students also work alongside their degree to support their cost of living. Things to remember:

- Not tuition fee upfront
- A loan for living expenses is also available (depending on your household income).

Where to study

There are many factors to consider: city, town or countryside, including how close the university is to home and travel costs.

Course structure also varies. Consider whether there is a certain module or academic that inspires you.

Check out campus facilities such as libraries, accommodation, and sports centres to be sure they meet your needs.

Taking a gap year

Not sure if uni is right for you? Taking a gap year can provide time to work, travel or explore interests. This might help you build confidence in your next steps.

University quality and reputation

Look at how universities rank, especially for your chosen subject. Resources such as the **Complete University Guide: University and Rankings and League Tables 2025** and **The Guardian's University Guide 2024** are interactive and incredibly informative.

Make sure the courses you are considering are recognised by professional bodies if accreditation is needed for your career.

Goldsmiths
UNIVERSITY OF LONDON

Ruth Boon - Access, Engagement and Success Officer
Goldsmiths, University of London

CASE STUDY

Meet Kieran

A student at Carshalton Boys Sports College

A student at Carshalton Boys Sports College, Kieran first engaged on the Aimhigher London programme back in 2016/17 when he was in year 9. Over the next five years, he attended about 15 different university campus visits, in-school workshops and activities to support choosing a course, applications and finance.

"In year 9 thinking about going to university was far from my mind. My first experience with Aimhigher London did mean at least I was introduced to higher education as a possible pathway"

Kieran enjoyed school and thought he was good at his subjects, but he was not especially focused on the future. Between year 9 and year 11 he joined a number of activities which:

"started to breakdown some of the unknowns. I thought university was all just academic work, similar to school where teachers pushed you to do your work, or somewhere where people from boarding schools or private schools mainly went."

After attaining great GCSE results, Kieran began to see university as an option. Staying on at Carshalton Boys, he took advantage of the more bespoke Aimhigher London sustained and progressive programme, including visits to Roehampton University and St Mary's University. These proved key to his decision to look into sports coaching and management as his future options.

The programme also brought him into contact with new people, new experiences and deeper insights, as well as providing constant support from Ms Lorna Ellis.

"I felt myself growing in confidence – something I bring with me today, I am at ease with people, irrespective of their background and enjoy the sense of togetherness that I get from football and futsal coaching"

Although he found the application process daunting, Kieran had learnt to seek advice and explored options further afield. This led him to discover UCFB, which became his top choice.

"All the preparation over the years had fine tuned my thinking along the way, such as the visit to St Mary's University Twickenham (which was one of my UCAS choices) with Aimhigher London, this trip clarified my thinking towards a sports related degree and this focus led me to my successful place at UCFB"



Finance was another challenge. Using available resources, he planned his money, learnt about student and maintenance loans, and took a part-time job.

Another key challenge for him was self-belief, the mental challenge of whether he was good enough to go to university, or whether he would excel. Ms Ellis from the school, alongside the information from the Aimhigher programme and support from his family all helped, but what really made the final difference were the student ambassadors.

"The ambassadors I met along the way in various trips with Aimhigher London were so helpful to be able to see that there were people like me at university, so if they felt like they belonged, so could I."

Kieran is delighted to be settled at UCFB. He is active in the university rugby society and works at the Bloomsbury Football Foundation, coaching under-16s and futsal teams of all ages.



**Carshalton Boys
Sports College**

Moving Forward with Confidence >>>

Starting a new school, going to college, starting your first job or heading off to university is an exciting new chapter. It brings opportunities to grow, meet new people and explore your independence. At the same time, it is natural to feel pressure when stepping out of your comfort zone. Some people may notice changes in their mood, levels of stress or general well-being during this period of transition.

Understanding Change

Leaving familiar surroundings can be a big adjustment. While this is a time to look forward to, it can also stir up feelings of anxiety or low mood. Remember, these feelings are normal and you are not alone.

New environments and expectations: Starting somewhere new, whether that is a workplace, college or university, can feel overwhelming. Getting used to different routines and responsibilities takes time, so try to be patient with yourself.

Changes in support networks: If you and your friends are moving on in different directions, you may feel a sense of loss or loneliness. This is a common experience and it does not mean you are without support.

Academic and financial pressures: Studying for A Levels or a degree or managing the cost of living, can sometimes feel intimidating. Recognising this and talking about it can ease the load.

Coping Strategies and Support

Whatever you are feeling, support is available and reaching out shows a sign of strength. Here are some helpful ways to care for yourself during this new stage:

Plan ahead: If you are moving to somewhere new, it can help to explore your area, plan your budget and ease into your new routine.

Build a support network: Keep in touch with family and friends. Universities and colleges also provide student support services, including trained mental health counsellors. Never hesitate to reach out if you need to talk.

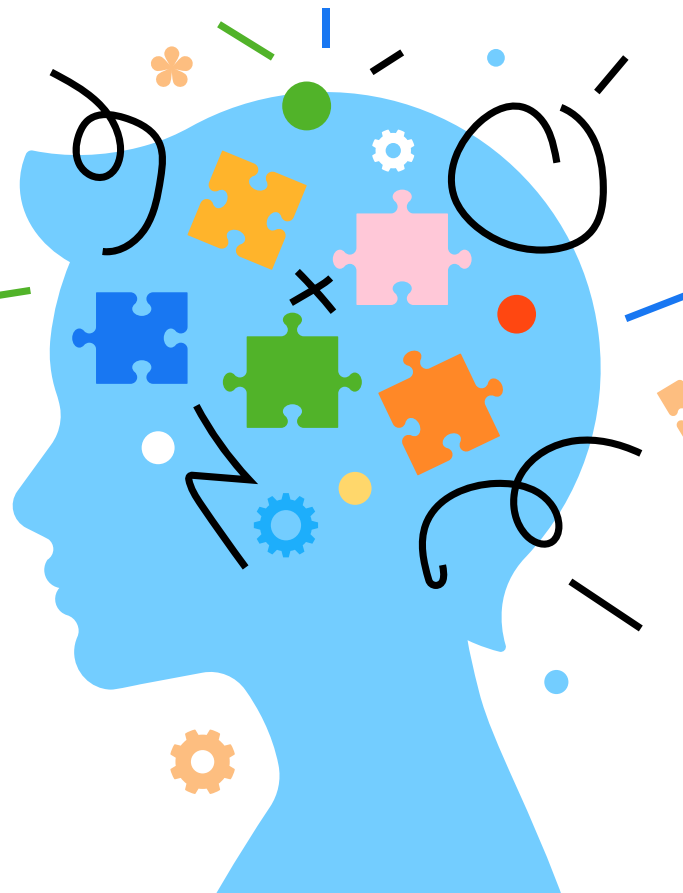
Stay informed: Knowing what to expect can help you feel more prepared. Charities like **Young Minds** share practical advice and support any issues relating to your mental health.

Healthy lifestyle choices: Looking after your body supports your mind. Sleep, regular movement, balanced meals and good rest all play an important role. **Mental Health Foundation UK** has lots of information and guidance showing how much of a difference healthy habits can make.

Mindfulness and relaxation: Simple practices such as meditation, yoga or breathing exercises can bring calm during stressful moments. Apps like **Headspace** and **Calm** offer guided sessions to help you unwind.

Remember

Change can feel daunting, but it also brings opportunities for growth and self-discovery. Be kind to yourself and use the support available. Looking after your mental health is just as important as your studies or career.



You are not alone

If feelings of anxiety or depression become overwhelming, it's crucial to seek professional help. The NHS 111 **NHS Mental Health Services online** can help you to know what to do next.

Additionally, you can text organisations like **Shout**, a free, confidential 24/7 mental health text service. Text 'Shout' to 8528. Or call **Samaritans** on 116 123 for free confidential support for anyone in distress.

If you need urgent help for your mental health, get help from or call 111. If you or someone else is in danger, call 999 or go to A&E now.

Resources to help you

Where Can I Study

[Connecting you to Education](#)

Skills Builder

[Skills Builder Universal Framework 2.0](#)

GLA Growth Plan

[London's growth plan - London Growth Plan](#)

Find out more about different qualifications

[Amazing Apprenticeships](#)

[Apprenticeships | Learn About Apprenticeships And Find The Right One For You \(ucas.com\)](#)

[Become an Apprentice \(gov.uk\)](#)

[T Levels](#)

[Careerpilot - Qualifications](#)

Find out more about different careers

[Next Steps in London: London LMI](#)

[Careermap Career Advice Hub](#)

[Not Going to Uni Advice Library](#)

Wellbeing and Mental Health Resources

[Chasing the Stigma - Hub of Hope](#) Find mental health support near you

[Place2Be](#) Support for parents and careers

[Shout](#) Free, confidential and 24/7 mental health text service for crisis support. Text 85258.

[Young Minds](#) Free, confidential support for young people and parents/carers

Job Search Resources

Job Boards: Websites like Indeed, LinkedIn Jobs, and Glassdoor list thousands of job openings.

Recruitment Agencies: Agencies like Reed, Hays, and Michael Page can help match you with suitable roles.

Company Websites: Many companies list job openings directly on their websites.

University Career Services: If you're a student or recent graduate, your university's career service can be a valuable resource.

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