



Post School Learning Choices in Scotland



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Introduction

This guide will be useful for:

- Young people thinking about their learning options after school;
- Adult learners thinking of taking up a new learning opportunity;
- Carers of disabled people considering their learning options.

What are your learning options?

Learning opportunities are becoming more flexible in Scotland. This means you can choose to learn in your own home, at college, a local learning centre, or anywhere you can find a quiet space and an internet connection.

The option that is right for you will depend on your individual circumstances. You might want to learn a few hours a week around your other interests or commitments, or you might be looking for a full-time opportunity.

Community-based Adult Learning (CBAL)

For a fuller guide to community-based adult learning (CBAL), have a look at our [guide to CBAL](#) for disabled people, available in Easy Read, BSL as well as six different community languages.

If you feel college isn't the right learning environment for you, or if you are taking your first steps into the world of learning since school, community learning might be a better option for you. Community learning opportunities are often more flexible than other types of learning, and you may be able to learn in the evenings or weekends.

Community learning opportunities may vary in different areas, and some may target certain groups (e.g. specific age groups, disabled people, or those for whom English is not their first language).

Where can I Learn?

Most community learning opportunities are provided by local councils or voluntary organisations and charities. They happen in places like libraries, community centres and learning centres.

What can I Learn?

Community learning covers many different subjects and types of learning, both formal (learning that leads to a qualification) and informal (learning that does not normally lead to a qualification).

You can choose to learn on your own, with a tutor, or perhaps with other people in your local community.

The Big Plus helps adults improve their reading, writing and number skills. It's a free service that allows you to work with a tutor in places like libraries, community centres or colleges. It is a flexible method of learning, and attendance can be suited around your needs. For more information, call the Big Plus helpline on 0800 917 8000 or go to the [Big Plus website](#).

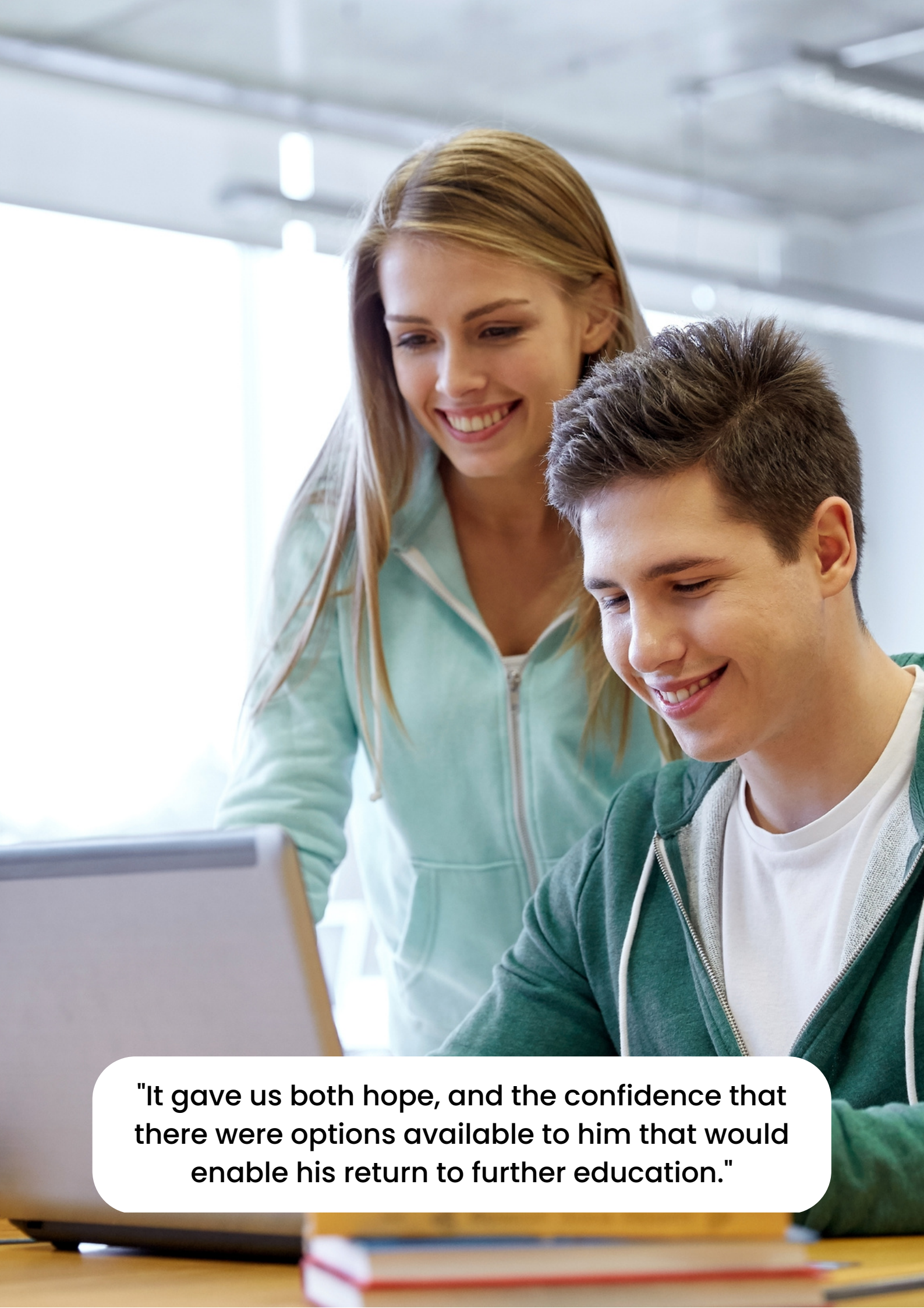
If English isn't your first language and you want to improve your verbal and written skills, an English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) course could help. These courses can be taken in many learning centres and colleges across Scotland.

Helping you choose what to learn

You can find out about what learning opportunities are available in your area by contacting your local council or by looking at the course search tool on the [My World of Work website](#).

If you are thinking of taking up a formal learning opportunity (which leads to a qualification), you may find it useful to look at the [Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework](#) to help you see what level of learning is best for you. This places different qualifications into levels from 1 to 12, to give you an idea of the demands of each qualification. It will also help you see what your previous qualifications are worth, and what learning you might be able to do next.

Lead Scotland provides free one-to-one and group tailored support to disabled people and carers to learn online, in their own homes or in their community. A Learning Co-ordinator will create an action plan that supports each person to learn in a way that suits them - whether for fun, to gain skills for work, or to talk to someone about getting back into learning. See [Lead Scotland's website](#) to find out where we offer this service.



"It gave us both hope, and the confidence that there were options available to him that would enable his return to further education."

Learning in Colleges

You can read more about going to college and getting the right support in our [Supporting you at College guide here](#).

Colleges offer a range of courses, most of which are known as 'further education' or 'higher education' courses. This guide focuses on further education options. For information on higher education courses in colleges (e.g. Higher National Certificates and Diplomas), please see the [Lead Scotland guide 'Higher Education in Scotland'](#).

What is Further Education?

Further education is usually for people aged 16 years or over (with no upper age limit), and either takes place in colleges, the workplace or a combination of both. Occasionally, people under 16 can take further education courses at college as part of their school-based learning, which you can read more about later in the guide.

Further-education level courses in college are mainly vocational (work-related), rather than degree-level courses, and include:

- Supported learning courses
- National courses in various topics (at National levels 1, 2 and 3), e.g. communication skills, Information Technology (IT), workplace skills, etc.
- Courses which help prepare you for adult life (e.g. Life Skills). Some courses may be offered at National levels (where you will receive a National award if you successfully complete the course), whereas some basic skills courses do not lead to a qualification.

These courses can be particularly useful for people with learning disabilities as they provide the support needed to gain independence skills, as well as being a good starting point for moving onto other courses.

General educational courses in various subjects:

- National courses
- Highers
- Advanced Highers

Work-related courses:

- Scottish Vocational Qualifications (SVQs), e.g. Plumbing, Cookery, Administration, etc.
- Professional Development Awards (PDAs), e.g. Childhood Practice, Financial Services, etc.
- Sector-specific qualifications (e.g. for working in the care sector)

Basic skills courses:

- Literacy and numeracy for adults
- Core skills
- English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL)

Courses for School Pupils in Colleges

- Link courses for pupils making the transition to college.
- Skills for Work courses to prepare pupils for further learning or work.

'Access to higher education' courses: these allow people who do not hold formal qualifications to go on to higher education.

Where you can study further education courses

You can study a further education course in various different places, including:

School

You may be able to stay at your current school if it accepts students beyond age 16. You can take academic courses such as Highers, or you might wish to take a work-based course such as an SVQ or a Foundation Apprenticeship.

If you are leaving your school, your careers adviser or Skills Development Scotland may be able to help you find a new place to learn or train.

Gradual transition opportunities

Many young people may find it easier to start a college course by making a gradual transition from school to college. Most schools have opportunities for pupils to take part in college courses while they are still at school. This may involve attending college for one or more days a week until they are ready to attend college on a full- or part-time basis. Some colleges also offer transition and summer courses that can help you get used to the college campus and a new style of learning, as well as being helpful for getting support put in place before you start.

If you are an adult learner, you may be able to take evening classes before you apply to do a full-time course at college to allow you to try out the college and its facilities beforehand.

College

You may find your local college offers a wider range of courses than is available at your school. You can study full-time or part-time, or you may be able to take some courses as evening classes or study a distance learning course from home through the college.

Attending a Specialist College

If your support needs cannot be met at a local school or college, you may want to think about going to a specialist college. They are likely to have more experience of supporting students with a range of impairments.

There are currently two specialist colleges in Scotland:

- [Cantraybridge College](#) in Inverness
- [Corseford College](#) in Johnstone

You may also be able to apply to a specialist college elsewhere in the UK. You can find information on specialist residential colleges online from the [Association of National Specialist Colleges website](#).

These colleges charge very high fees and it is usually not possible for Scottish residents to get public funding to cover the costs.

Open or Distance Learning

If you do not want to attend a course at a set time or place, you could think about studying at home or at work instead. This is called open learning and courses vary in the way they are set up and how you study. For some courses you will be sent a list of books and worksheets to work through, or you might use additional study methods like the internet, videos, computer software or watching TV programmes.

Occasionally, attendance at college is necessary for practical work or supervised assessment, but this can usually be arranged flexibly. You may also have the support of a tutor who can provide guidance and support on a regular basis.

Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs)

MOOCs offer another way to learn from home and still fit in with your needs and requirements. MOOCs are short courses that can be done online in your own home or at work. They are open to everyone and have no entry requirements. Courses are free and are set at a variety of levels from a variety of institutions, including many prestigious universities from all over the world. Some MOOCs may lead to formal qualifications while others are not accredited. You can search for available MOOCs online at the [MOOC List website](#) or on [Open Learn](#) from the Open University. Lead Scotland have developed a free Open Learn online course in [Everyday computer skills](#) with and for disabled people.

Choosing a Course

You may want to study a course because you are particularly interested in it, or you may want to think about which courses are most likely to get you the job you want. Sometimes people think that they cannot study certain subjects because of their impairment. This is most often not the case.

You might find it helpful to arrange a meeting with the course tutor or careers adviser and/or the disability adviser. You might also want to speak to [Skills Development Scotland](#) as they hold information on the whole range of courses available in Scotland.

How do I Apply to College?

Once you decide which course you would like to take, you can either contact the college to get an application form or download it from the college website. There is often an 'apply now' button on the course website page. You might find it useful to get in touch with the Learning Support department and visit the college before you apply to talk about the support you might need when you start the course and to make sure the campus is accessible and meets your needs.

When should I apply?

Once you have decided which course you want to take, you should apply to the college as early as possible. This will give the college time to meet your support needs when you start, as well as increasing your chances of getting accepted on to the course you want. Most courses starting in August tend to open for applications from January onwards.

What Support can I get at College?

Lead Scotland have created a free online guide called '[Supporting you at College](#)' which provides information and advice about getting support at college and how to arrange it.



Vocational Training

There are a number of training opportunities available in Scotland to help you get into a specific job or improve your job skills. These usually involve on-the-job training or placements in the workplace and, in some cases, off-the-job training in a college. Training programmes are also available for people in employment wishing to develop or update certain skills, or for those about to start work.

Some are aimed at specific age groups, while others are open to anyone.

Training programmes allow you to improve your job skills while providing you with practical work experience and in many cases, formal qualifications. Depending on what programme you are on, you might get paid as you are working. Some also allow you to study for a qualification at the same time (which may involve spending part of your time at college).

Some of the major training programmes in Scotland include:

Certificate of Work Readiness

This programme aims to give you a mix of training and a work placement to allow you to gain new skills employers want to see on a CV, as well as letting you build your self-confidence in the world of work. It is aimed at young people aged 16-19 but is open to anyone who is not yet ready to go into work.

A Certificate of Work Readiness can offer a number of benefits such as:

- Developing your skills in reading, writing, number work, using a computer and working with others – the skills that employers usually look for;
- Building skills and work experience for your CV or application forms;
- Getting a reference from your employer or training provider;
- Gaining an SQA qualification valued by employers;
- Building your confidence and job-seeking skills;

You could be offered a job with your employer or training provider, or it could help you move into another position – such as a Modern Apprenticeship.

You do not need to pay anything to take part in this programme and you may be eligible for an Education Maintenance Allowance (EMA) of £30 per week for taking part.

More information on EMAs is available from your school, college or local authority, and also from this [Scottish Government webpage on EMAs](#).

If you are interested in this programme, you can find out more on the [My World of Work website here](#).

Modern Apprenticeships

Modern Apprenticeships allow you to work in a paid job while undertaking workplace training to gain new skills and qualifications. They offer people aged 16-24 (or 16-29 if you're disabled) paid employment, combined with the opportunity to train for a job at the same time. Many Modern Apprentices also attend colleges or training centres to study the theory related to their chosen occupation.

Modern Apprentices can gain job-related skills and qualifications that will help to start a new career without having to study full-time. Training programmes are available across a wide range of industries, such as craft bakery, business administration, electrical installation, or hairdressing and barbering for example.

You and your employer decide how long it will take, but most apprentices work toward an SVQ Level 2 or above for between two and four years to gain the qualification. Your employer and Skills Development Scotland will pay your training fees. You will have full employee status from the start of your training, and you will receive a wage equivalent to at least the national minimum apprentice wage from your employer.

Your employer has a responsibility to provide you with the disability related support you need to access your job.

Foundation Apprenticeships

Foundation Apprenticeships are for pupils in school from S4-S6, or people studying Highers in college. They provide the opportunity to spend some of the week studying parts of the Modern Apprenticeship, including training with an employer, and the other part of the week at school/college.

You will be given the chance to develop expertise and knowledge through on-the-job assessment and gaining skills such as teamwork and problem solving. Foundation Apprenticeships are usually completed in two years.

Foundation Apprentices can gain job-related skills and qualifications that will help to start a new career while still at school. You could progress to a Modern Apprenticeship in the same subject and complete it quicker, because you'll have done some parts of the qualification during your Foundation Apprenticeship. You could also move into college or university, as the qualification is recognised by many Scottish universities and colleges.

For a Foundation Apprenticeship, you do not receive wages, however you may be eligible for an Education Maintenance Allowance (EMA) of £30 per week.

If you are interested in taking up a Modern Apprenticeship or Foundation Apprenticeship you should contact your careers adviser or guidance teacher if you are still at school or contact your local Skills Development Scotland centre for further details. You can also find out more and search for opportunities on the [apprenticeships.scot](https://www.apprenticeships.scot) website.



No One Left Behind

No One Left Behind is a programme of support delivered by each local authority (council) area in Scotland. Support is provided to anyone who requires help to prepare for work, training, education and/or volunteering, regardless of their age or background. There may be a programme of support specifically aimed at disabled people.

You will receive support from an Employability Key Worker, and work on an individual plan to help you reach your goals.

The agreement could include activities specifically designed to prepare you for progression, such as taster sessions at college, time with training providers, mentoring, peer mentoring opportunities and group projects.

You can [find out more about No One Left Behind and get contact details for your Local Authority here](#).

Lead Scotland currently provides support on behalf of Aberdeenshire Council to young disabled people aged 16-24 to get into learning, volunteering or training on their pathway to employment. You can read about our Aberdeenshire employability projects for young people [on our website](#).

Young Persons Guarantee

The ambition of the Young Person's Guarantee is that, within two years, every person aged between 16 and 24, based on their own personal circumstances and ambition, will have the opportunity to study, take up an apprenticeship, job or work experience or participate in formal volunteering.

You can search for opportunities on the [Young Person's Guarantee website here](#) and you can look for [support to access these opportunities in your local area here](#).

Other Employability Support

Fair Start Scotland is a free programme that provides people with help to get a job. It is a voluntary programme for people who are on benefits or are out of work.

You can take part in Fair Start if you:

- Live in Scotland
- Are eligible to work in the UK
- Are out of work
- Are over 18 or 16/17 – if you are 16 or 17 you must either be disabled or get Employment and Support Allowance or Universal Credit

You will work with an advisor to create a personalised plan to help support you into work. You will get help with creating a CV, applying for jobs and preparing for interviews. You may be able to do courses and work placements to build your confidence and specialist disability support will also be available. The programme also offers support once you get a job to help you keep it.

There is no timeframe put on this programme, as times are based on your needs, but the programme will offer pre-work support of at least 12 months to help you to feel prepared for work and offers up to 12 months of additional support when you are in work.

You will not need to pay anything to take part in this programme and will continue to receive any benefits you are eligible for.

If you are interested in this programme, you can contact the Fair Start Scotland Information Line on 0800 804 8108 or find your local provider on this My Gov Scot link.

SUSE

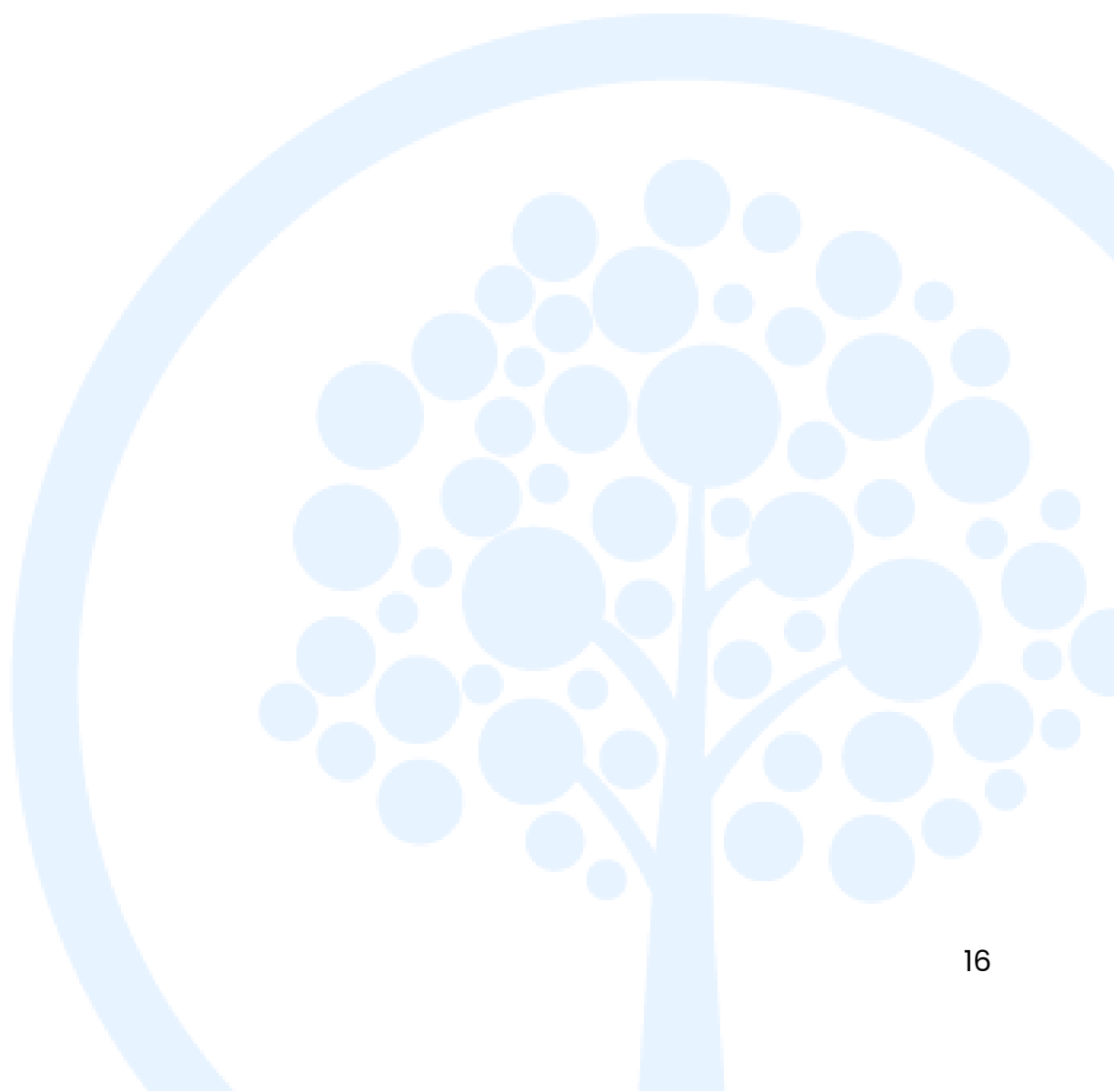
The SUSE (Scottish Union of Supported Employment) website has a database of supported employment services across Scotland. These organisations are skilled at supporting disabled people to find a job. You can [search their database here](#).

Enable Works

Enable Works provide lots of different services for disabled people of all ages to prepare for and progress in work. They have a programme for 14–19-year-olds called Stepping Up, which is a comprehensive support programme initially exploring the world of work and then progressing to planning and engagement with employers in real workplace settings.

Their programme 'Breaking Barriers' is a ground-breaking partnership from Enable Works, enabling young people who have learning disabilities to attend one of the leading business schools in the UK within a university campus, achieve an accredited qualification and gain real work experience with some of the largest employers in Scotland.

You can [read more about the different services Enable Works provides here](#).





"I am very grateful that this service exists for those of us with a disability and being able to receive all the relevant information in one place. "

Qualifications and Progression

There are many different types of qualifications available across Scotland, ranging from basic starter courses to general educational courses to more specialised work-related qualifications.

Many colleges also offer higher education courses such as Higher National Diplomas and degree courses (for details of higher education qualifications in colleges or universities please see the Lead Scotland guide [‘Higher Education in Scotland’](#)).

Entry Requirements

Entry requirements will vary depending on the nature and level of the course. Although some courses ask for standard entry qualifications, such as National 4’s and 5’s, formal qualifications are not required for entry to all courses. Some learning providers consider the experience you may have gained informally, such as the skills you use in your daily/family life, voluntary work or key events and experiences in life (see the section on ‘Recognition of prior learning’ for more information). Although you may not be given formal ‘credits’ for this type of learning on its own, it helps others see what you have learned from these experiences. You may also be able to write about these experiences to reflect on what you have learned.

If you are returning to study after a break in education or you do not have the standard entry qualifications, you may be able to take Access or introductory programmes to provide you with the qualifications you need for further study in your chosen subject.



Qualifications Explained

The Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF) have produced an interactive table which shows the different levels of further and higher education qualifications you might receive in Scotland. This helps learners understand how different learning opportunities relate to each other and how they can progress their qualifications.

The main qualifications (below higher education level) in Scotland include:

Introductory Qualifications and Awards

There are a range of qualifications and awards on offer for people who need extra support, or for those who don't feel ready to go into formal education yet. These include:

- International Certificate in Digital Literacy (ICDL), formally European Computer Driving license: this is an introductory computer course which gives learners with little or no previous IT experience a good understanding of how to use a computer for work-based tasks. It is available at SCQF levels 4 to 6.
- English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL): this is a useful qualification to help with verbal and written skills for people for whom English is not their first language. It is available at SCQF levels 2 to 6.
- Steps to Work award: this award provides a steppingstone for some learners between school, further education, training and employment.
- Award in Volunteering Skills: this award provides formal recognition of volunteering activity and is available at SCQF levels 3, 4 and 5.

National Qualifications (NQs)

National Qualifications are awarded by the Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA), the main awarding body in Scotland. They are available at 7 levels:

- Nationals 1-5
- Higher (SCQF 6)
- Advanced Higher (SCQF 7)

NQs cover many different subjects, and some can be taken as stand-alone National Units or built up into National Courses. So, for example, if you complete three National Units in 'Business Management', 'Administration' and 'Travel', as well as passing an exam, you could gain a National Course award in Business.

You can also build up National Courses into 'cluster' awards such as Scottish Group Awards or National Certificates. These can be particularly useful for people who have been out of full-time education for a while as they allow you to build up Units at your own pace to gain an award.

The main qualification types are:

- National 1 is suitable for students who require considerable support with their learning;
- National 2 is suitable for students with mild support needs;
- National 3 is of a similar level to the old Foundation level Standard Grade.

Learning at National 1, 2 and 3 is assessed by the college and does not involve sitting an exam. National 1, 2 and 3 Units can be taken as qualifications in their own right, or as routes to further learning. A number of units in a particular area can also be grouped together into Courses or Group Awards.

National qualifications 4 and 5

These qualifications are suitable for students who have completed National 3-5, Standard Grades, Access level 3, or those who wish to take up a new subject. For some students, National 5 is a steppingstone to taking a Higher.

National 4 and 5 qualifications can be studied at school or college - you do not necessarily need to have existing qualifications.



Highers

Highers are aimed at students who have passed subjects at Credit level Standard Grade or Intermediate level 2 or National 5. Adults wishing to study for Highers at college may not need previous qualifications. Highers are normally needed for entry into university or college to study for degree or Higher National Certificate or Diploma courses (HNCs or HNDs).

Advanced Higher

These are aimed at students who have passed Highers, and they are usually taken in sixth year at school or in college. They extend the skills and knowledge gained at Higher level and are additional qualifications that are useful for entry into higher education or the workplace.

Scottish Vocational Qualifications

Scottish Vocational Qualifications (SVQs) are work-related (vocational) qualifications and give you the skills and knowledge you will need in employment. There are SVQs which apply to most types of jobs, and they are available at college or in the workplace, or by a mix of college attendance and workplace training. SVQs are intended to guarantee your ability to do a particular job.

SVQs are available at 5 levels, each made up of a certain number of Units:

- SVQ Level 1 – foundation or unskilled work.
- SVQ Level 2 – semi-skilled / a broad range of skills and responsibilities.
- SVQ Level 3 – complex / technical / skilled and/or supervisory work.
- SVQ Level 4 – managerial / specialist.
- SVQ Level 5 – professional / senior managerial.

Other Qualifications

Qualifications offered by the Scottish Qualifications Authority:

- **Core Skills:** these are a group of five skills that are important for the world of learning and work. Employers have identified these skills as those that are most likely to be needed in any work environment. They can either be taken as stand-alone units, or embedded within other courses such as Nationals 1-5, or Highers.

They include:

1. Communication
2. Numeracy
3. Information and Communication Technology
4. Working with Others
5. Problem Solving

National Qualification Group Awards

These include:

National Certificates: these are designed to prepare people for employment, career development or progression to more advanced study at HNC/HND level. They are aimed at 16–18-year-olds or adults in full-time education.

National Progression Awards: these are work-related qualifications which are available in a variety of industry areas, e.g. Construction, Childcare, etc. They also help learners to gain general employability skills such as time management, working with others, managing people, etc.

Qualifications Offered by other Awarding Bodies:

- Access to higher education courses

Some colleges also offer access to higher education courses in partnership with one or more universities. Most access courses are run at colleges and enable those who do not hold formal qualifications to go on to higher education.

Most courses are one year full-time and lead to a place at university if you complete the programme successfully. You can get further advice about this, including information on the courses available from the [SWAP](#) (Scottish Wider Access Programme) website.

- Other awarding bodies

Many learning providers offer the qualifications of other bodies such as City and Guilds, EAL and many other awarding bodies.

Recognition of Prior Learning

If you have few or no qualifications, you may feel that you will be unable to take part in many learning opportunities. However, many learning providers and employers will consider prior informal learning which you may have done. This might include learning gained through life and work experiences, voluntary work, or community-based learning for example. This is called 'recognition of prior learning' (RPL).

Using the RPL process can help you to:

- Think about the learning you have already achieved and plan how to build on this learning to meet your learning and career goals;
- Get a place on a course at a college, university or other learning provider;
- Gain credit towards a qualification to shorten the normal period of learning by showing that you already have the knowledge, skills and understanding needed for particular parts of the course.

The Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF) website has an [RPL tool here](#), which can help you to make connections between the life experience you have gained and what you have learned from these experiences.



"I was apprehensive about applying for a college course due to my disability and how I would manage financially. The information given was extremely helpful and reassuring and I felt able to go ahead with my application and was accepted onto a course starting in August."

Support for Disabled Students

If you need to fill in an application form for a course, it should ask if you have an impairment or additional support needs. You do not have to answer this, but if you do, the learning provider will be legally obliged to try and meet your needs more effectively. All information given to the learning provider about your impairment or support needs will be kept private and will not be passed on to anyone else unless you give your permission. It is against the law for learning providers to discriminate against you because you are disabled. You can read more about your rights as a disabled learner and what legal responsibilities learning providers have in our [guide to the Equality Act in post school learning here](#).

By letting the learning provider know about your support needs at an early stage, you are giving their staff time to think about what changes, if any, would need to be made to support you if you are offered a place. If you do not tell the learning provider about your support needs before you start the course, these changes might not be in place in time, or it may not be possible to make the changes at all.

Support from Community Learning Providers

If you decide to take part in a community learning opportunity, speak to your tutor about what extra support or changes you might need to help you fully participate. There are a variety of measures available that can remove or reduce the barriers you face and many of them may be simple or won't cost a lot of money. For example, you could ask to start learning sessions in the afternoon if you take medication that makes you drowsy in the morning. Or you could get access to free software and apps that can help with your reading and writing. Have a look at our [guide to Community-based Adult Learning for disabled people here](#) for more information about getting the right support.

Colleges

If you decide to go to college, it is a good idea to speak to the college support staff before you start the course to find out what support they can provide to meet your needs. You will be able to talk about your course, the support you have used before and any new support that the college might be able to provide.

[Click here to read our supporting you at college guide](#) for further information.

Training Programmes

If you are thinking of starting a training programme, either the college, training provider or the employer will be responsible for meeting your support needs, depending on which training programme you choose. For more information, you should contact your careers adviser at school or college, or a Skills Development Scotland careers adviser.

Work-based Learning or Training Programmes

If you are taking part in work-based learning (such as an SVQ) or training, you should be given enough support to enable you to take part in and successfully complete the training. This will either be arranged by a college student support adviser (if the college runs your training programme), or your employer or training provider. As each programme differs, you should contact the provider to find out who will be responsible for arranging your support.

Who Provides the Different Types of Support I Need?

If you are disabled, you may need different kinds of support from different agencies while you are learning. It is therefore important to be aware of who is responsible for meeting your needs.

Educational needs

Learning providers are responsible for meeting your educational needs. This might include learning materials in alternative formats, computer software, help with study skills, training in the use of specialised equipment, or arranging for extra time in exams.

In some cases, you may receive an allowance to pay for some of your own disability-related costs – see our [supporting you at college guide](#) or our [higher education in Scotland guide](#) for further information about this.

Personal Care Support

In many cases, your needs assessment by the social work department may identify a need for healthcare support in addition to your personal care support. If this is the case, your local NHS board will be responsible for providing that support, such as someone to give you medication at college. You should contact your local health centre to discuss this.

Healthcare Needs

If you are taking part in work-based learning (such as an SVQ) or training, you should be given enough support to enable you to take part in and successfully complete the training. This will either be arranged by a college student support adviser (if the college runs your training programme), or your employer or training provider. As each programme differs, you should contact the provider to find out who will be responsible for arranging your support.

Careers Advice

Your school or college careers adviser or a Skills Development Scotland careers adviser can help you work out which education, training or employment options suit you best.

They can also give you information and advice about the support available when you have finished learning if you have additional support needs, such as going into employment, training or higher education. You can also [research careers on the My World of Work website](#).

Travel Needs

You may have specific transport requirements, such as travelling by taxi, because of the nature of your impairment.

If you receive the mobility part of Disability Living Allowance (DLA), Personal Independence Payment (PIP), Adult Disability Payment or Child Disability Payment – either funding or a Motability car, you will be expected to use this to pay for your travel costs. If you do not receive this allowance, and you need specialist transport to get to and from the college, this will be discussed by the college, your social work department and NHS board. These agencies should decide between them who will pay for your transport if this is necessary.

Funding for Disabled Learners

As you may need to pay to access some types of learning opportunities, it is important to think about your finances before you enrol on a course to make sure that you can afford it. There are various types of funding support available depending on what type of learning you are doing and your personal circumstances.

Staying on at School

If you choose to stay on at school after your school leaving date, you may be eligible for an Education Maintenance Allowance (EMA) of £30 per week. You can also get an EMA if you undertake a course of non-advanced further education (SCQF Level 6 or below) at college or an education centre.

More information on EMAs is available from your school, college or local authority, and also from [this Scottish Government website on EMAs](#).

Community Learning

Community learning opportunities are offered by a wide range of organisations, including local authorities (the local council) and various voluntary organisations. While some community learning opportunities are free to take part in, some learning providers charge fees. Many community learning providers, including local authorities, will offer discounted places for people on low incomes or in receipt of certain benefits.

There are no specific funding sources to meet disability-related costs when learning on a community education course. However, under the Equality Act, community education providers must make reasonable adjustments to ensure that it is not impossible or unreasonably difficult for disabled students to access courses. See our [Guide to CBAL](#) for further information.

If you are taking part in a course funded through The Employability Fund, there is an Access Fund to help with additional support costs. Speak to the training provider running the course or Skills Development Scotland to find out more about this fund and how to access it.

College Courses

Please see our [supporting you at college guide](#) for information on funding for disabled learners.

Employment Training Courses

Skill Development Scotland can provide learners with up to £200 as part of their Individual Training Account (ITA) funding. This programme replaces the previous Individual Learning Account (ILA) scheme and provides £200 to help with the cost of an eligible course or training to help you get a job. The £200 can cover the total cost of a course, but if a course costs more then you will have to pay the rest yourself.

To apply you must be 16 or over (there is no upper age limit), have an income of £22,000 or less, or be in receipt of a qualifying benefit. You must also not be in education, or any other Skills Development Scotland funded programme.

Unlike the ILA, the course must be aimed at developing skills and experience to help you get a job or progress in a career.

If you are interested in an [Individual Training Account](#) you can read more about it and search for courses online.

Other Sources of Funding

If you are not able to receive any of the funding listed above, or if you are looking for additional funding, you may be able to apply for a grant or financial award from a charitable trust. There are various trusts in the UK, and the amount of money that they give varies. Each trust has its own criteria for whom it will offer help. There are some trusts that specifically offer funding to disabled people and/or students. Please check our free [online guide to charitable trusts](#).

Support and Funding for Unpaid Carers

As a carer, you may find it difficult to find the time to take up a learning opportunity which fits around your caring responsibilities. You may also have had to give up work to care for someone, making it difficult to afford to take part in certain learning opportunities.

There are various sources of support for carers to help you take part in learning, including financial help and practical support and guidance. The support you get may depend on your personal circumstances, including your income.

Carers may also be entitled to some of the following sources of financial support:

Dependants' Allowance

This is an allowance for students taking further education courses at college, if you have financial, care or legal responsibility for an adult. This allowance takes into account the income of the person you are caring for. Check your college's funding page on their website for further information and how to apply.

Carer's Allowance

[Carer's Allowance](#) is a welfare benefit for people who care for someone with a severe disability. Not all learners qualify for this allowance. You may be able to get it if you meet the eligibility criteria and your course is not more than 21 hours per week.

Carer's Credits

If you don't qualify for Carer's Allowance, you may qualify for [Carer's Credit](#). This is a National Insurance credit which lets carers build up qualifying years for the basic State Pension and additional State Pension. This means that there will be no gaps in your National Insurance record if you have to take on caring responsibilities.

Carer's Allowance Supplement

[Carer's Allowance Supplement](#) is an extra payment for people in Scotland who get Carer's Allowance on a particular date.

Community Care grants

Provided by The Scottish Welfare Fund through your local authority, a Community Care Grant is for you if you're getting certain benefits and need financial help to ease exceptional pressure on your family. You could be eligible if you are over 16 and caring for someone who is ill or disabled. To find out more about Community Care grants including how to apply, visit the Scottish Government's webpage on [The Scottish Welfare Fund here](#).

"Hugely knowledgeable, they provided the relevant information for me to help my son get his life back on track following the difficulties caused by his late diagnosis."



Support Services for Carers

Local authorities are responsible for providing various kinds of support to carers. To qualify for such support, you need to get a carer's assessment (if you are aged 16 or over). This is used to assess your needs and find out what support you need. Under the [Carers \(Scotland\) Act 2016](#), you have a right to get such an assessment from your local authority.

Support from other agencies

There are a range of voluntary organisations providing specific support and guidance for carers. Some support all carers, whereas others support specific groups such as young carers, or carers of disabled children:

- [Carers Trust in Scotland](#)
- [Carers Scotland](#)
- [Coalition of Carers in Scotland](#)
- [MECOPP \(Minority Ethnic Carers of Older People Project\)](#)
- [Shared Care Scotland](#)
- [Scottish Young Carers Services Alliance Network](#).

Welfare Benefits for Disabled Learners and Carers

As a disabled person you may receive certain welfare benefits and tax credits. For general enquiries about benefits you can contact your local [Jobcentre Plus](#) (for UK benefits including Employment Support Allowance, Carer's Allowance, Disability Living Allowance and Personal Independent Payment), [Social Security Scotland](#) (for Scottish benefits including Adult Disability Payment and Child Disability Payment), [Citizens Advice Scotland](#) or find a local advisor on [Turn2Us](#).

You need to be aware of how studying will affect your benefits before you start a course. You must inform your local Jobcentre Plus or your local benefits office of any major change in your circumstances as soon as it happens.

The Scottish Government produces a guide to student funding which has a [section on benefits for students here](#). You can also contact the [Lead Scotland helpline](#) if you require further information about how studying will impact your benefits.




Helpline Number

0800 999 2568

Email Address

info@lead.org.uk

Lead Scotland
525 Ferry Road,
Edinburgh, EH5 2FF

 0131 228 9441

 enquiries@lead.org.uk

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