

# Planning for Life After School

Guidelines for Students with Special Educational Needs  
and their Parents/Guardians

NCSE 2016



The word 'parent' in this document should be taken to include guardians of children.

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## Introduction

**There are a number of ways you can prepare for life after school.**

Preparation and planning are key to a successful transition from school. It is never too early to think about and to plan what you would like to do with your life, and what steps you might take to get you there. Will you leave school and move straight into a job or will you need to do further study and/or training? Will you need further support when you leave school?

The most important thing you can do is to develop your independence during post-primary school. This helps you to be ready to take the next step.

Independence may mean different things for everyone, but examples include: beginning to take responsibility for your own decisions; travelling independently on the bus or train; managing your money; learning to cook; organising your own belongings; preparing lunches; making arrangements to meet friends and so on.

Get help from your school and/or parents to develop a post-school plan so that you feel comfortable with your chosen career path. If you have an individualised education plan in school, you may ask to include targets that will help you to develop skills for the workplace or further/higher education.

**Preparation and planning are key to making a successful transition.**

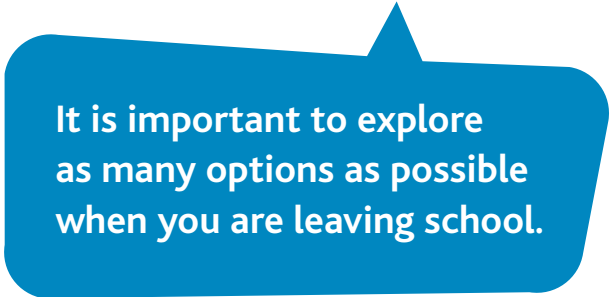
It is very natural to have mixed feeling about leaving school. You may worry about whether you will find something you like doing and whether you will be ready and able to take the next step.

Some young people find change very hard and don't like leaving behind teachers they have known in school. If you have been in a special school or class you may be used to having very small numbers in your class and you probably got to know your teachers and other staff really well.

It will be easier if you have thought about leaving school and have prepared for it. Your parents and teachers can help you with this. It is never too early to begin to think about what you want to do after school and to plan for that. Talk to teachers about what skills you need to develop for work when you leave school. Your parents may also be able to help by contacting people on your behalf.

A range of post-school options are available to suit all levels of ability and interests, whether you decide to go straight into the world of work or take a few more years to acquire further skills and learning.

It is important to explore as many options as possible by making contact with the relevant people and institutions in time, to ensure your needs are met. We hope that this pamphlet helps to start you thinking and planning for your next move.



**It is important to explore  
as many options as possible  
when you are leaving school.**



### **Section 1:**

has been written for people who are interested in getting more education or further qualifications after leaving school.



### **Section 2:**

has been written for people who wish to go straight to work after school.



### **Section 3:**

has been written for people who may require high levels of support to follow their chosen path after school. These are most often students who have complex learning disabilities and who may have other difficulties as well, for example, physical or communication difficulties.

A graphic for Section 1. It features a light orange background with a dark red arrow pointing right. The arrow contains the text 'Section 1:'. To the right of the arrow is a dark red rounded rectangle containing the text 'For students thinking of further, vocational or higher education'.

## Section 1:

For students thinking of further, vocational or higher education

**Further Education** options, for example, Post-Leaving Certificate (PLC) courses act as a stepping stone to a job or to additional education or training courses. Many PLC courses offer qualifications at FETAC level 5 or 6, which can lead to further studies at third level or to employment.

**Vocational Training** options include courses which are geared to the workplace and/or courses of apprenticeship training. These courses are provided by SOLAS and the Education and Training Boards.

**Higher Education** options include courses provided by Universities, Institutes of Technology, Colleges of Education and other private bodies. In these institutions you work towards an undergraduate or postgraduate degree. Some institutions offer courses leading to a Certificate or a Diploma.

Many Colleges and Universities operate the Disability Access Route to Education (DARE) scheme for students with a disability or special educational needs. DARE offers access to reduced points places at third level where the student, because of a disability, has experienced additional educational challenges in post-primary school.

Most third level colleges have a Disability Access Officer who can offer support to you during your studies.



**Remember! Unless you are financially independent you will need to discuss your plans with your parents.**

**A list of useful contacts for those interested in Further, Vocational or Higher Education is provided at the end of this booklet.**

### **How you can prepare:**

#### **2nd or 3rd year in post-primary:**

- Talk with your parents, career guidance counsellor or other teachers in your school about the subject choices you are making as this can make a difference to which courses you can apply for after you leave school.
- Get advice from your career guidance counsellor or other teachers about post-school options that may be available to you.
- Be sure to take into account your own strengths and interests – you can discuss with teachers and parents what they think are your abilities, strengths and needs.
- Look up useful websites for information about courses that interest you.

#### **Two years before leaving school:**

- Talk with parents and teachers about the application process including any disability access supports available to you.
- Continue to look up useful and relevant websites.
- Look at what courses are offered in the different Colleges/ Universities and what interests you by checking out their prospectus.
- If relevant, contact your local **SOLAS** office and the Education and Training Boards (**ETBs**), who are responsible for delivering vocational training programmes.

**Sometimes it can be difficult to decide what course you want to do or to fill in detailed forms. If you require assistance, your parents or teachers should be able to help.**

### **Final year in school:**

- Attend open days.
- Get information on DARE and any supports services available for your course.
- Apply for your chosen course.
- Attend interview if you are asked.
- Consider where you will live, how you will travel to your course and whether you will have to pay fees.

### **When you are offered a place:**

- Make contact with the staff member who links in with students with disabilities.
- Find out about any available funding or supports that you may be eligible for.
- Make sure that you have all the information you need about starting the course, transport arrangements, any fees to be paid and so on.
- Organise suitable accommodation if you have to move away from home.
- Confirm how you will travel to and from work or your college/ university.

## Section 2:

### For students wanting to go straight to work

Some young people want to go **straight to work** after school. Taking part in work experience, while still at school, can be a good way to find out more about the kind of work you would like and what you wouldn't like. You can get work experience in different ways either at weekends, or summer holidays or as part of a transition year programme in your school.

#### If you want to go to work straight after school you will find it helpful to:

- Take part in a Transition Year Programme in your school, if available.
- Prepare a Curriculum Vitae (CV) – speak to your Career Guidance Counsellor, other teachers or your parents, who will be able to advise you about this.
- Check out vacancies in newspapers and on websites.
- Contact employers in your local area.

A list of useful contacts, for those seeking work, is given at the end of this booklet.

A large, light orange arrow pointing to the right, with a darker orange rounded rectangle inside it. The text 'Section 3:' is written in white inside the arrow, and 'For students with high support needs' is written in white inside the rounded rectangle.


## Section 3:

## For students with high support needs

Most young people hope to work at some point after school. Some young people need additional individualised support to achieve their full potential and live as independently as possible. There are a number of pathways that may be open to you.

### **Post-school options for people with high support needs**

The HSE Occupational Guidance Service helps people with a disability to find a training option that is suited to their needs. You or your parents or your school can contact this service through your local HSE disability service. An adviser will meet you and your family/advocate and may work closely with your school.

A red, irregular callout box with a pointed top and rounded corners, containing white text.

**There are a number of post-school options for students who have high support needs.**

Your needs may be met by a:

- HSE rehabilitative training programme **or**
- HSE adult day services **or**
- Mainstream education or training services (see section 1 above).

The HSE provides rehabilitative training and adult day services for adults with the following disabilities who have high support needs:

- Intellectual disability
- Physical
- Sensory (deaf/hard of hearing or blind/visual impairment)
- Mental health difficulty
- Autism spectrum disorder.

**Rehabilitative training** – these are training courses funded by the HSE to develop life skills, social skills, and basic work skills for people with intellectual disabilities, autism, or people with complex physical disabilities. The courses usually last from two to four years. These courses can be a stepping stone to more mainstream education or training options.

**Adult day services** are HSE funded programmes to provide day care activities, supported employment, and voluntary work programmes for people with high support needs. These programmes are for people with significant lifelong support needs. The programmes assist people to make choices and plans and to be an active, independent member of the community.

## What you need to do to prepare:

### You and your parents may find it helpful to:

- Talk to your school or HSE Disability Services about courses or programmes that are available in your area and whether these would suit your needs.
- Read Section 9 of the NCSE Booklet, 'Post-School Education and Training' which has information on HSE Rehabilitative Training and Adult Day Services. This booklet is available on the NCSE website at: <http://ncse.ie/wp-content/uploads/2014/10/NCSE-Post-School-Education-Training.pdf>.
- Apply to your local **HSE Disability Service**.
- Find out whether there are training allowances available from the local **HSE Disability Service**.
- Download the list of supports available to people using 'day services' from the **HSE website** [www.hse.ie](http://www.hse.ie).

**In summary,  
you need to  
think about:**

- 1.** What type of work or educational course would suit my strengths and abilities?
- 2.** What type of supports will be available at the next level?  
How will my special needs be managed?
- 3.** Where can I find out about disability access options?
- 4.** What professional reports, if any, are needed to access supports?
- 5.** Are any of my friends doing the same course?
- 6.** Are there any past pupils from my school I could talk to about this course?
- 7.** If I have worries or if things go wrong who could I talk to?
- 8.** How do I apply for any grants available?
- 9.** Is there a back-up option if my choice does not work out?

# Useful Contacts

## General

<b>Career information</b>	<a href="http://www.careersportal.ie">www.careersportal.ie</a>	Careers Portal
<b>Citizens' Information</b>	<a href="http://www.citizensinformationboard.ie">www.citizensinformationboard.ie</a>	Citizens' Information Board
<b>HSE Disability Services/Local Health Centre</b>	<a href="http://www.hse.ie">www.hse.ie</a>	HSE
<b>Information on students with disabilities</b>	<a href="http://www.careersportal.ie">www.careersportal.ie</a>	Careers Portal
<b>National Adult Learning Organisation</b>	<a href="http://www.aontas.com">www.aontas.com</a>	AONTAS
<b>National Adult Literacy Agency</b>	<a href="http://www.nala.ie">www.nala.ie</a>	NALA
<b>Parents Council for post-primary</b>	<a href="http://www.npcpp.ie">www.npcpp.ie</a>	National Parents Council Post-Primary
<b>SENO</b>	<a href="http://www.ncse.ie">www.ncse.ie</a>	National Council for Special Education



## Further, Vocational or Higher Education

<b>Association for Higher Education Access and Disability</b>	<a href="http://www.ahead.ie">www.ahead.ie</a>	AHEAD
<b>Central Applications Office</b>	<a href="http://www.cao.ie">www.cao.ie</a>	CAO
<b>Childcare education and training scheme</b>	<a href="http://www.dcy.gov.ie">www.dcy.gov.ie</a>	Dept of Children & Youth Affairs
<b>Disability Access Route to Education</b>	<a href="http://www.accesscollege.ie">www.accesscollege.ie</a>	DARE
<b>Fund for students with disabilities</b>	<a href="http://www.studentfinance.ie">www.studentfinance.ie</a>	HEA
<b>Further education and training courses</b>	<a href="http://www.solas.ie">www.solas.ie</a> <a href="http://www.etbi.ie/etbi-services/education-resources/further-education/">www.etbi.ie/etbi-services/education-resources/further-education/</a> <a href="http://www.qualifax.ie/">http://www.qualifax.ie/</a>	Solas Education and Training Boards Qualifax

## For those seeking work

<b>State Employment Service</b>	<a href="http://www.welfare.ie/en/Pages/Intreo_home.aspx">www.welfare.ie/en/Pages/Intreo_home.aspx</a>	Intreo
<b>Finding work in the open labour market</b>	<a href="http://www.welfare.ie/en/Pages/Work-Supports-for-People-with-a-Disability_holder.aspx">www.welfare.ie/en/Pages/Work-Supports-for-People-with-a-Disability_holder.aspx</a>	EmployAbility

**It can take time to decide what you want to do when you leave school but there are many different pathways to achieving your goals.**

**It is important to give yourself enough time to think about what you want to do and to plan ahead for life after school.**



