PARENT/CARER NEWSLETTER

Autumn 2026

Gyrfa Cymru
Careers Wales

For parents and carers of young people in mainstream education

Welcome

Welcome to our autumn newsletter for parents and carers.

A new school year brings new opportunities and important decisions for young people. Whether your child has started a new year group, moved on to college or sixth form, or is beginning to think about their future, Careers Wales is here to help.

This term, our careers advisers will be working with schools and colleges across Wales to support young people as they explore their options and plan their next steps.

We will also be checking that those who left year 11 have settled into further education, work or training and helping anyone who is still unsure about their next move.

As part of our work for the Welsh Government, we may contact your child to find out what they have progressed to after year 11, 12 or 13. We are also working with schools to ensure all learners have the opportunity to receive a careers guidance interview before leaving compulsory education.

In this edition, you'll find practical tips, resources and real-life stories to help you support your child with career planning. From understanding how Welsh language skills are valued by employers, to exploring the opportunities in emerging technologies such as AI and learning more about subjects, careers and future pathways, we're here to help you and your child navigate the year ahead with confidence.





YEARS 8/9

Choosing subjects

If your child is in year 9, they may soon be choosing the subjects they will study in years 10 and 11.

Selecting GCSE subjects is a great opportunity to talk about your child's interests, strengths and future goals. While it might seem early to be thinking about careers, the choices they make now can influence the options available to them later, including college courses, employment, apprenticeships, A-Levels and university.

The good news is that they don't need to have their future mapped out just yet. Choosing subjects they enjoy and feel motivated to study is often a good place to start.

Read our guide to choosing options.

YEAR 10

Building strong foundations

Year 10 is an important transition into Key Stage 4. Your child will settle into their GCSE studies, develop good study habits, and start exploring their interests, strengths and future ambitions.

You can help by:

- Encouraging regular revision habits.
- Talking about subjects they enjoy.
- Helping them explore career ideas and labour market information.
- Attending school careers events where possible.

YEAR 11

Timeline: What you need to know



September: New term.

Encourage your child to start thinking about life after year 11 in preparation for their careers interview.

Whether they're considering sixth form, college, an apprenticeship, training or employment, their school careers adviser can help them explore their options and plan ahead. You can contact us if you have any questions after their interview.

November: Prepare for applications.

As your child starts their Year 11 mock exams, it's a good time to think about what comes next. Applications for sixth forms, colleges, apprenticeships and some training programmes may start to open.

Our Options at 16 page provides information about the different pathways available. Visit the website with your child, use our subject and apprenticeship search tools, and get all the information you need to make informed decisions.

Supporting your child to research options and understand application requirements can help them feel more confident and prepared.

October: Time to start planning ahead.

Many sixth forms and colleges hold open evenings during the autumn term. These events are a great opportunity for your child to learn more about courses, ask questions and compare different options.

They can also start exploring apprenticeship opportunities and local job vacancies. Sign up to our job bulletin to gain an insight into the kinds of jobs available locally and nationally. You and your child can also search our website for current vacancies across Wales.

December: Everything you need to support your child.

As a parent or carer, you play an important role in helping your child make decisions about their future. The parents section of our website brings together practical information, advice and resources to help you understand your child's options, support career conversations at home and feel confident in guiding them through key decisions.

January to March: Continue exploring and applying.

Larger companies begin to advertise their apprenticeship opportunities. Encourage your child to keep exploring opportunities, submitting applications and having a back-up plan in mind.

Find out where to look for apprenticeship vacancies, and how to make your child's application the best it can be. How to get an Apprenticeship | Careers Wales

Careers advisers can help them review their options and make informed decisions.

May: Supporting your child through exams.

GCSE exams begin. Help your child create a revision routine, stay organised and maintain a healthy balance between studying and taking breaks.

July: Support if your child's plans have changed.

Most learners will have applied for their chosen destination by this point. If your child is still unsure about what to do next or their plans have changed, we can help them review their options and find the right pathway. Encourage them to get in touch with us. If you have concerns, you can also contact one of our careers advisers to discuss your child's options.

Contact us.



April: How the Working Wales team can help.

If your child is interested in work, training or an apprenticeship, Working Wales may be able to provide additional support and guidance. Working Wales is part of Careers Wales. You can contact the Working Wales team here.

June: School's out.

The school leaving date is the last Friday in June, regardless of when your child turns 16. Your child cannot begin an apprenticeship or training programme before this date. Careers Wales advisers may contact your child over the summer to check in and offer support with their next steps.

August: Support with results.

Results are released. While many young people will move forward with their planned next steps, results can sometimes change plans. Careers advisers are available in school, by telephone, e-mail, text or at your nearest careers centre. They can discuss the available options and help your child make informed choices about what to do next.

YEAR 12

Looking ahead to year 13

Year 12 is about settling into chosen courses and beginning to think about longer-term plans. The choices made during this year can help shape future opportunities.

You can support by:

- Encouraging attendance at school or college and independent study outside lessons.
- Helping your child build experience through volunteering, work placements or extracurricular activities.
- Exploring career ideas together.
- Discussing future options such as university, apprenticeships or employment.
- Attending university or college open days and or careers fairs.

YEAR 13

Preparing for life after year 13

Year 13 is an important time as your child prepares to take their next step after school or college.

You can support your child by:

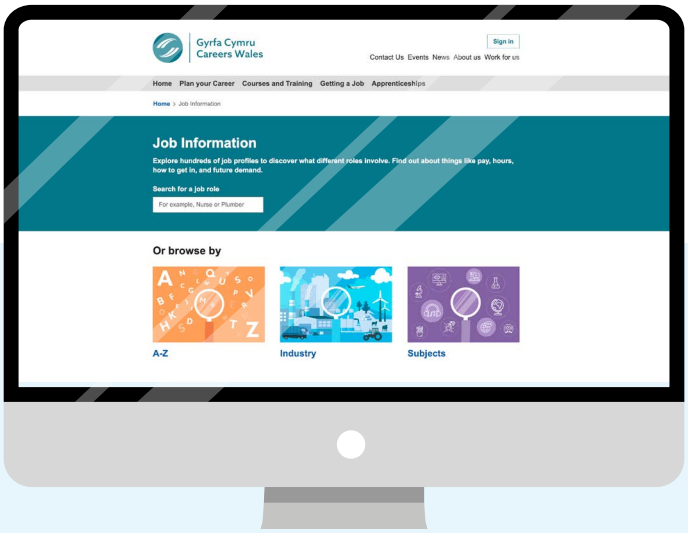
- Keeping track of important deadlines, including coursework and applications.
- Exploring university options, including courses, entry requirements, open days and student finance.
- Looking at all the options available, not just university.
- Finding out about apprenticeships, jobs and other career routes.
- Helping them prepare for applications and interviews.
- Having a back-up plan in case things don't go as expected.

You can find out more about the decisions young people make in years 7 to 13 and how you can support them here: [Parents | Careers Wales]



Website focus

Job information and NEW subject search feature



We are delighted to announce an update to our Job Information pages including a new subject search tool. Job Information is our online library of careers and labour market information. You can search for information on over 700 job titles and browse job role information by industry or subject.

Subjects can be a great way to start exploring career ideas, and we have new pages on our website to help do just that.

If your child enjoys or is good at a subject, they can use Single Subjects as a starting point to explore jobs they might like.

There are 50 different subjects, each with information about the skills they develop, where those skills are useful and a list of jobs linked to them.

Each job has its own page where you can find out more – like what the role involves, the pay, qualifications needed and how to get into it.

If there's more than one subject they like, Multiple subjects will give them ideas of jobs to explore that are linked to two subjects.

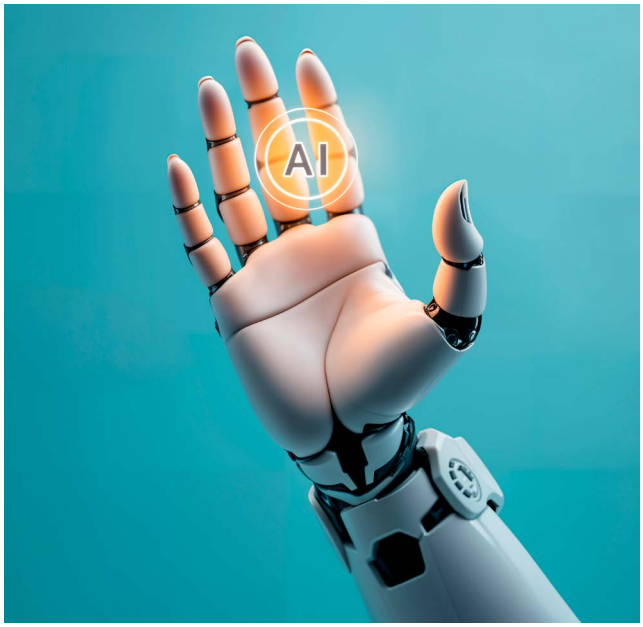
Whether they love languages, have a passion for performing arts, excel at engineering, or have a different interest, why not take a look with them?

More digital tools you and your child might like to explore together:

- **Buzz Quiz**
  Match your personality type to suitable jobs.
- **Career Match Quiz**
  Get career ideas that match your skills and interests.
- **Decision Making Quiz**
  Learn about your decision-making style and how to make good decisions.
- **Future Jobs Wales**
  Explore sectors in Wales. Find out what jobs you could do now and in the future.

Trends in the world of work

Artificial Intelligence (AI) what you need to know



Artificial Intelligence, or AI, is already changing the way people work. Many young people in education today are likely to be using AI now and in their future careers.

Across Wales, AI is being used widely in industries such as health, education, farming, renewable energy, finance, customer service and manufacturing. It can help people save time, understand information and make better decisions.

It is a myth that **'85% of jobs that will exist in 2030 haven't been invented yet'**. A better way to think about it is that many jobs are changing as new technology becomes part of everyday work.

For example, teachers, builders and designers all use different tools from the ones they used 25 years ago. But the main purpose of their work has not disappeared. Their knowledge, judgement and people skills still matter.

AI is also changing the skills employers want. Many employers now look for people who can use technology with confidence and adapt to change. Digital skills are important in most jobs. The Careers Wales video on 'What employers want' says that around 80% of job vacancies require digital skills.

The good news is that AI cannot replace many of the skills that make us human. Employers still value:

- Communication
- Problem solving
- Creativity
- Teamwork
- Critical thinking
- Adaptability
- Emotional intelligence and empathy

You can help by encouraging your child to be curious about technology. You can also support them to build confidence with digital tools and stay open to lifelong learning.

Specialised AI tools have the potential to improve access to work and career development for disabled people by reducing barriers, personalising support, and helping individuals showcase their skills.

It is also important for young people to develop responsible AI skills. This means knowing how to question information created by AI, spot possible bias and decide when and how technology can be trusted.

Young people who combine digital confidence with human skills will be well placed for the future. AI will be a useful tool in many jobs, but creativity, empathy, judgement and teamwork will continue to make people stand out.

Watch our new video about Technology: Its impact on your world of work to hear more about AI.

To explore future careers, skills and labour market trends in Wales, visit Future Jobs Wales and Job Information on the Careers Wales website.



The Value of Welsh in the Workplace

Could your child's Welsh language skills help shape their future?

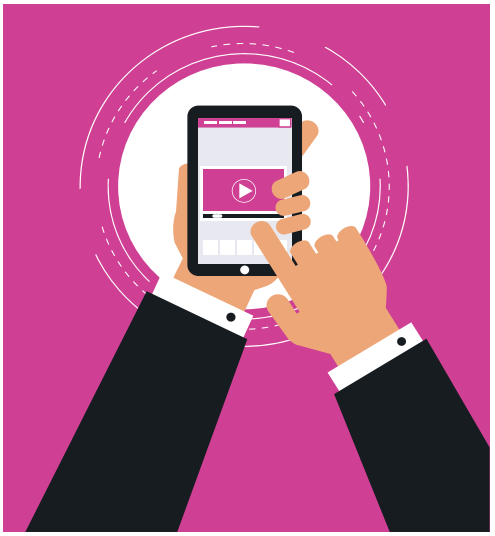
In Wales, being able to speak Welsh can be a real advantage when applying for jobs. Whether your child is fluent, learning Welsh, or just starting to build their confidence, their language skills could help them stand out to employers and access a wider range of future opportunities.

Welsh is valued by employers across a wide range of sectors in all areas of Wales, and being bilingual can bring benefits both professionally and socially. Encouraging your child to continue using and developing their Welsh could help broaden their career options in the years ahead. Many employers are seeking to increase the number of employees who can deliver services bilingually to customers.

Watch the videos

Hear from people working in a variety of industries as they share how Welsh has benefited them in their careers.

The links will take you to the Careers Wales YouTube channel:



Careers in Tourism

Careers in the Public Sector

Careers in the Health Sector

Careers in Public Relations and Marketing

Support for sixth form and college learners

We provide year-round support if your child has just started sixth form or college.
One way in which we offer support is through our campaigns. During the autumn term, we will be running two campaigns:



- **Secure Your Future** supports your child as they begin sixth form or college, helping them settle into their new environment, develop skills, explore career ideas and make the most of the opportunities available to them.



- **Stop Don't Drop** provides guidance for your child who may be unsure about their course, considering leaving education or questioning their choices. Our advisers will help your child to explore all available options before making important decisions.

The service also recognises the important role **you** play in supporting your child. We offer information and resources to help you understand post-16 options, have positive career conversations, and support your child as they plan their future.

Ways you can help:

- **Listen and be supportive**
  Encourage your child to talk about how they're feeling and help them adjust to their new environment.
- **Share your experiences**
  Talking about your own work, education and life experiences can help build their confidence and resilience.
- **Explore future options together**
  Whether they're considering university, an apprenticeship, further study or work, help them look at the opportunities available.
- **Offer reassurance**
  Remind them that it's normal to feel nervous and that support is available when they need it.

If you or your child would like to speak to a careers adviser, you can **book an appointment here.**

Real-life learner story

How we helped Grace take her first steps towards a future in physics.

Grace knew she enjoyed physics, but she wasn't sure where it could lead. So, she booked an appointment with her school careers adviser, Claire O'Brien.

Grace said, "I knew I had an interest in physics during GCSEs. I wasn't entirely sure where I wanted to take that interest and what A-levels I should be picking. So, I went and spoke to Claire."

Exploring her options

At first, Grace was interested in motorsport engineering. During her careers sessions, Claire helped her explore this option. They looked at potential placements.

When it came to choosing A-levels, Claire encouraged Grace to keep her options open.

Grace explained, "Claire advised me to pick half of my A-levels in physics and then half of my A-levels in another subject. This was biology, and I was on the fence between these two areas."

"Whilst doing my A-levels, I realised that I was most interested in astrophysics. I much preferred this to the engineering side of physics."

University and building confidence

As Grace began thinking about university, Claire continued to support her. She helped Grace find opportunities that would strengthen her university application.

"She pointed me in the direction of some summer schools with universities that I could apply to. I went to one in Cardiff University and then one in the University of Bath. This massively helped my university application."

Claire definitely gave me a confidence boost. She encouraged me to aim for Russell Group universities, which have top quality research.



Grace's Story



She said I had the academic performance to apply.

"This has been particularly important for me, as I now want to work in research in the future."

The guidance also helped Grace feel more confident about the university application process.

"The whole UCAS process is quite daunting. Claire made it very straightforward, almost like a checklist of what I needed to do."

Inspiring others

Grace is now studying physics at a Russell Group university. She is aware that women are still under-represented in the subject. Grace has found support through university networks and enjoys encouraging younger students through outreach work.

"Physics in general is about 70% men and 30% women, which can be a bit daunting. I think it's really important that younger girls see other girls excelling in science."



Advice for others

Grace's advice to anyone unsure about speaking to a careers adviser is simple:

> ***Just do it. Nothing bad can happen if you go. You'll only end up getting more information and more help. You'll potentially discover opportunities that you might not have known about before.***

If you would like to explore your interests and opportunities with a careers adviser, please contact us today.

Our summer events round-up

Royal Welsh Show 2026: A busy four days in Builth Wells

Careers Wales attended this year's Royal Welsh Show, speaking to over 800 visitors over the four days. The stand was busy throughout the week, with visitors taking part in a range of interactive activities, including Career Pong, Giant Jenga, CareersCraft and our popular dress-up props. These activities helped young visitors and families explore careers in a fun and engaging way.

We were also delighted to work alongside Lantra Wales, promoting career opportunities in horticulture, forestry and the wider green economy.

If your child is interested in land-based careers take a look at our handy resource: Grow Your Career in Agriculture, Land and the Environment Industry





National Eisteddfod 2026: Careers Wales joins Wales' biggest celebration of language and culture

Careers Wales attended this year's National Eisteddfod, engaging with visitors to our stand throughout the week. Visitors took part in a range of interactive activities, including CareersCraft, lawn games, quizzes and careers-themed photo opportunities, helping people of all ages explore their future career options.

Our advisers were on hand to provide information, advice and guidance to young people, parents and adults considering their next steps. The event also provided opportunities to promote the value of Welsh language skills in the workplace and showcase careers in the creative industries through a Q&A session with S4C and Screen Alliance Wales.



Read more about Welsh language in the workplace here.

Stephen Williams, Team Manager at Careers Wales, shares why it's never too late to change careers.

After 17 years in retail management, including roles as Deputy Store Manager with Tesco and Morrisons, Stephen realised the part of the job he enjoyed most was helping people develop and achieve their goals. Wanting to focus more on supporting individuals, he spoke to a careers adviser. That conversation helped him recognise the transferable skills he had gained through retail and opened his eyes to opportunities he had never previously considered.

Inspired by that guidance, Stephen applied for a careers adviser role with Careers Wales. The role was a natural fit, combining his passion for helping people with his experience of coaching, supporting and developing others.

Making the Change

Changing careers was not without its challenges. Taking a financial step back and leaving a familiar organisation after many years was a difficult decision. However, Stephen knew the move would bring greater long-term job satisfaction. He also had to adapt to a new workplace and build new professional relationships, but he quickly found support from colleagues.

To qualify as a careers adviser, Stephen completed Level 4 and Level 6 qualifications in Advice and Guidance while working. Much like an apprenticeship, the role combined practical experience with formal learning.

Many of the skills he developed in retail continue to help him today, including leadership, communication, organisation and relationship-building. One of the biggest surprises was discovering how specialised careers guidance is. Rather than simply giving advice, the role involves understanding people's motivations, challenges and aspirations, then helping them create a realistic plan for their future.



Stephen Williams

Job Title:

Team Manager at Careers Wales

From Careers Adviser to Team Manager

Stephen began his Careers Wales journey as an adult careers adviser before working with schools, further education colleges and specialist services. Along the way, he gained a broad understanding of the organisation and the different ways it supports people across Wales.

Although becoming a Team Manager was never part of his original plan, he embraced new opportunities when they arose. After gaining valuable experience in temporary management roles and specialist adviser positions, including supporting young people with Additional Learning Needs, he successfully secured a permanent Team Manager position.

Today, no two days are the same. His role includes supporting staff, reviewing performance, leading projects and helping improve services. What he enjoys most is helping colleagues overcome challenges, develop their skills and progress in their own careers. He also values Careers Wales' strong focus on staff wellbeing, allowing him to support both performance and people.

Stephen Williams

Job Title:
Team Manager at Careers Wales

Skills, Learning and Advice for Others

Stephen believes the skills gained in previous careers should never be underestimated. Leadership, problem-solving, coaching, communication and earning people's trust have all been essential throughout his career journey.

One of the biggest lessons he has learned is that there is no one-size-fits-all approach. Everyone has different goals, motivations and challenges, which is why understanding people and listening carefully is so important.

Looking back, Stephen is most proud of having the confidence to take a chance on something new. While changing careers was challenging, it allowed him to build a career that reflects his values and gives him the opportunity to make a positive difference every day.

His advice to anyone considering a career change is simple: think about the parts of your current role you enjoy most, recognise the value of your transferable skills, and seek professional careers advice. Speaking to a careers adviser helped him explore opportunities he had never considered and gave him the confidence to take the next step.

Asked to sum up his journey in three words, Stephen chose:

> **"Challenging, rewarding and worthwhile."**





If you think you'd like to work for Careers Wales, keep an eye out for our vacancies here.

Working Wales

Cymru'n Gweithio
Working Wales

Parents:

Looking for work, planning a career change, or returning after a break? Get the support you need to move forward with confidence.



As well as supporting school and college leavers, our Working Wales service can provide free, impartial support for you, whatever your situation.

Our team of advisers can help you explore opportunities, develop your skills, access training, find work, progress in your career and achieve your goals.

So, if you are looking to get into work, fancy a career change, are facing redundancy or have been made redundant, Working Wales is here to help you take your next step with confidence. Whatever your circumstances, we'll support you in finding the right path forward.

You can access free support from Working Wales at a Careers Wales centre, in outreach venues, over the phone or digitally.

You can find out more at Working Wales or book an appointment here.

Thank you for reading our newsletter. We hope you found it helpful. Remember, Careers Wales is here to support you and your child at every stage of their learning and career journey.

Contact us:

- You can contact a careers adviser at school or by phoning **0800 028 4844**
- We have a Wales-wide live chat facility available via www.careerswales.gov.wales
- Drop into one of our careers centres
- Email post@careerswales.gov.wales

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