

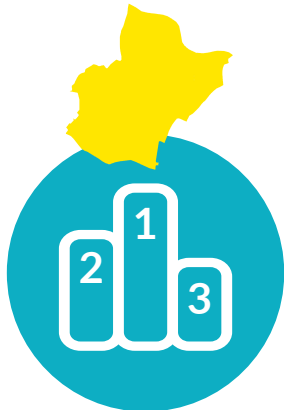


Learning, Skills and Employment Strategy 2019 to 2023

Bexley has had the second highest number of under-19 apprenticeship starts in London for a number of years



By the end of the **2022/23** academic year, Bexley would like to have the **largest number of under-19 apprenticeship starts** in London



2022/23



Bexley already has the highest number of under-19 apprenticeship starts in Construction, Planning and the Built Environment in London

Plans for a Place and Making Institute in Bexley will increase the local education opportunities for these learners.

Surveys suggest that over **1 in 5** employed Bexley residents are qualified below NVQ level 2, including those with no qualifications

Just **one in three** young people we spoke to in 2017 had accessed careers and education information, advice and guidance at school or college



Over

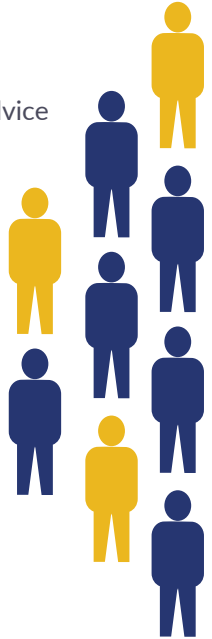
24,250

Bexley residents are in jobs that pay below the London Living Wage of £10.55 per hour, including half of those in part-time work

95.3%

Don't think they'll live or work in Bexley as an adult

We need to show young people 'It's amazing what you can be in Bexley'



#BeA
#BexleyApprentice
#BexleyGraduate
#BexleySuccess



We will increase use of our Adult Education Budget to provide free work-related learning to 'lower-skilled, lower-paid' residents

Contents & Foreword from the Member for Growth and the Member for Education

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Growth in Bexley is underway

The regeneration of Thamesmead into “London’s new town” and the developments of Erith Quarry, Erith Hills and the Eastside Quarter in Bexleyheath will bring new homes and new residents to Bexley. The Elizabeth Line will open at Abbey Wood, improving our public transport links into and across London and Bexley continues to call for it to be extended through the north of the borough. However, growth does not happen overnight.

Our existing workforce will need the skills to drive this growth forward, and we need to develop a future talent pipeline that can see the opportunities available and acquire the skills to capitalise on them.

It is concerning that young people on the cusp of making significant education decisions do not see Bexley as a place they will choose to work in as an adult. They see the borough as a ‘dead end’. It is clear that we need to inspire our students to see both the current and upcoming opportunities available to them or we risk Bexley’s talent being drawn away, which will only become easier as our transport links into London improve.

Feedback from employers in Bexley suggests the same. Only by working collaboratively through groups such as the Learning, Skills and Employment Board can a clear, cohesive, borough-wide message be delivered to our young people that Bexley is a place of opportunity from education to employment.

We are also driven by recent reforms in the education landscape:

- New statutory requirements for careers and education information, advice and guidance (CEIAG) in schools and colleges, increasing their need to engage with employers in order to meet the Gatsby Benchmarks

- The upcoming T-Levels, which promise to better align technical further education to employer skills needs
- Funding reforms from 2017, meaning that apprenticeships are increasingly able to deliver education pathways from GCSE level to bachelor's degree level and beyond
- New flexibilities in the Adult Education Budget, enabling those in lower-paying jobs to access work-related training without fees

This change to the Adult Education Budget means that our Learning & Enterprise College will now be able to engage with thousands of employed Bexley residents to provide free training.

However, we need to continue to support our residents who are not in education or employment. This includes those who may find accessing such opportunities more challenging due to their health or personal circumstances.

We will continue to seek new methods by which all Bexley residents will have the opportunity to engage in education and employment, enriching their own lives and contributing to the growth of the borough.

This document sets out our education and employment aspirations for the next 5 years, along with our plans to achieve them. We very much hope you will join and supports us on this journey.



Councillor Louie French

Deputy Leader of the Council and
Cabinet Member for Growth



Councillor John Fuller

Cabinet Member for Education

Bexley's employment and skills challenge

Employment in Bexley

Throughout 2017 the number of people living in Bexley who were in work fell. At the same time the number of people who were not looking for work increased, mainly due to an increase in students aged over 16 and the number of people with long-term sickness.

Most of the people who left work had been in full-time jobs.

There was an even split in the number of men and women leaving full-time jobs. The number of men in part-time jobs fell significantly while the number of women in part-time jobs increased slightly.

Qualifications and Work-Skills Needed

Compared to 2016 Bexley saw changes in the skills and qualifications needed by jobs in the borough.

The number of jobs needing low qualifications and skills increased and so did the number of jobs needing degree-level qualifications and skills. The number of jobs needing GCSE and A-level type qualifications fell.

This makes it harder for people who start in a low-skill job to progress as there are fewer middle-skill jobs available.

The number of Bexley residents aged 16 to 64 with degree-level qualifications fell, which may mean that employers will find it harder to fill their high-skill jobs.

At the same time, almost 1 in 3 of Bexley's students did not achieve a grade 4 or higher in their English and maths GCSEs while at school.

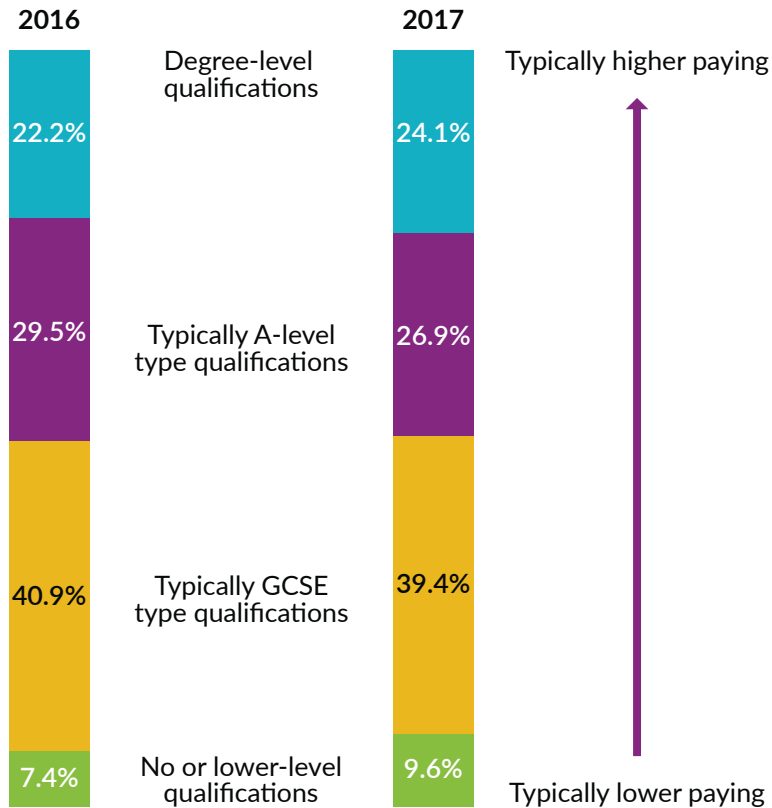
This increased to over half of young people whose personal or family circumstances may have made school harder for them. And while there was an increase in the number of jobs that need low qualifications and skills, changes in education may mean there are fewer apprenticeship-type opportunities for young people to start work and / or get their English and maths GCSEs between the ages of 16 and 19.

Businesses in Bexley

Surveys shows that larger businesses are more likely to provide training to their workers. This is usually because large businesses have the money to do so.

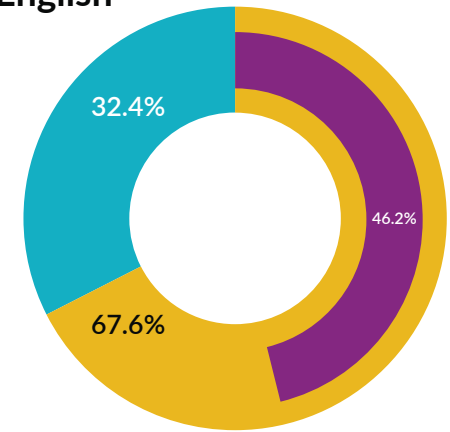
Most of Bexley's businesses have fewer than 50 people working for them and only a small number have 250 or more. Many Bexley businesses do their best to train their workers, however their size means that, for many, providing training may not be easy.

Qualifications needed by Bexley's jobs

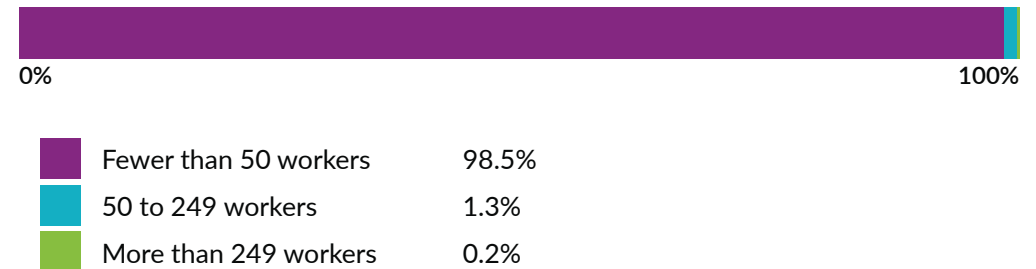


Young people who got their English and maths GCSE's at age 16

- 67.6% of young people got both
- 46.2% of young people whose personal circumstances may have made school harder got both
- 32.4% of young people did not get both



The size of Bexley's businesses



Our vision for Bexley

What the Learning, Skills and Employment Board hopes to deliver

Bexley's Learning, Skills and Employment Board want Bexley to be a place where the people who live, work and run businesses here have the chance to succeed.

We will help Bexley residents to achieve good education outcomes, complete apprenticeships, find work and have positive futures where they can live well. We will work with local businesses to help them find and train people so that their skills and job needs are met, and find out what they will need in the future so people can get the qualifications and skills required.

Together, we will make Bexley a successful borough where residents can live well and businesses can grow.

To do this, we will aim to make Bexley a place that has the four items detailed below:

Learning that helps students with their future	Good quality education that helps people to achieve and get the qualifications and skills to help them find work or go onto higher learning
Workers with the qualifications businesses need	People who work in Bexley will have the skills and qualifications needed by businesses and be able to earn money that allows them to live well
Successful businesses and opportunities	Businesses will want to come to Bexley, bringing new ideas and jobs with them
Life-long learning for everyone	Education that helps people of all ages to get the skills and qualifications to find work, progress in work and be independent and live well

What we hope to achieve by 2023

Bexley has 3 goals of its own that it would like to achieve by August 2023. They are:

1. It's amazing what you can be in Bexley
2. The highest number of under-19 apprenticeship starts in London
3. Improving the skills of lower-paid residents

It's amazing what you can be in Bexley

When we spoke to year 10 and year 12 students in 2017 most said that they don't think they'll live and / or work in Bexley when they're older.

They told us "Bexley is a dead-end, the jobs here aren't at a high enough level" and "the job I want isn't available in Bexley, and it's best to move around".

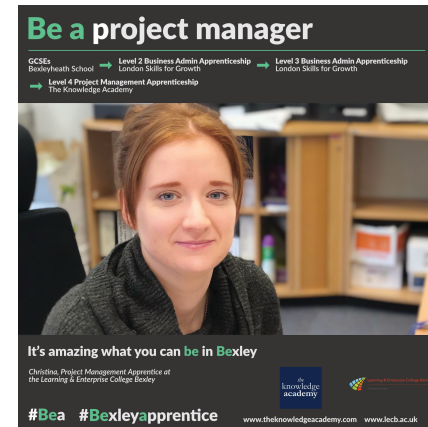
This told us that we need to improve young people's views of Bexley so that they can see the local job opportunities available to them.

To do this we will work with local employers and training providers to highlight the range of local jobs Bexley's young people have gone into, either after leaving school or through apprenticeships.

This will be done through posters and social media and show which schools and colleges the young people went to and what qualifications they took to get their job.

By meeting our goal, Bexley's young people will be more aware of the jobs available to them and not feel as though the borough does not provide them with a future.

Keep an eye on social media for the following hashtags that will be used as part of this work:



#BeA
#BexleyApprentice
#BexleyGraduate
#BexleySuccess

Bexley's goals

The highest number of under-19 apprenticeship starts in London

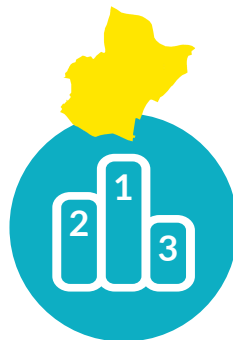
For a number of years Bexley has had the second highest number of people under-19 starting apprenticeships in London. Our goal is to have the highest number and move into first place.



Image: Young people, parents and carers queue to enter Bexley's 2019 apprenticeship event at the Civic Offices in Bexleyheath

To do this we will work with apprenticeship training providers and employers and build upon our annual apprenticeship event to ensure young people are able to access the opportunities available in Bexley.

We will link this to the "It's amazing what you can be in Bexley" goal by showcasing young people from Bexley who have moved into apprenticeships and what they did at school or college to get that apprenticeship job.



Improving the skills of lower-paid residents

Information we looked at suggests that there are over 24,000 Bexley residents in jobs that pay below the London Living Wage of £10.55 per hour. We want to give Bexley residents who are in work the opportunity to get the skills and qualifications that may help them to earn a salary that allows them to live well.

Our goal is to increase the number of Bexley residents in lower-paying work that take part in work-related learning to get new skills and qualifications and improve their earnings.



To do this we will work with our adult education provider, the Learning & Enterprise College Bexley, to provide free work-related learning to Bexley residents in lower-paying jobs and help them progress with their current employer or help them to find a better-paying job.



Learning & Enterprise College Bexley

Changing futures

Image: Adult maths study at the Learning & Enterprise College Bexley

Goals of the Learning, Skills and Employment Board

What we hope to achieve by 2023

Bexley's Learning, Skills and Employment Board met in May 2017 and set out 3 goals that it would like to achieve by August 2023. They are:

1. **One event for Bexley**
2. **A one-stop-shop for employers and learning providers**
3. **Improved communication of outcomes**

One event for Bexley

To deliver this goal, **the Learning, Skills and Employment Board would need to run a large event where Bexley students can meet with employers and learning providers in one place.** This would enable students to speak to employers from a range of areas so that they can find out what skills and qualifications they would need to work there, and speak to learning providers about the training available to them to gain those skills and qualifications.

The event would help students, and their parents, to learn about the local opportunities, decide what they would like to do and how to get there.

There are big challenges to delivering this type of event. Bexley has around 21,000 students in secondary school and so finding somewhere they could all come to, along with the employers and training providers, will be a challenge. We would also need to make sure there is enough time for students to speak to the employers and learning providers and get their questions answered.

The Learning, Skills and Employment Board will continue to discuss how it can achieve this goal and make sure it meets the needs of all Bexley students.

A one-stop-shop for employers and learning providers

To deliver this goal, **the Learning, Skills and Employment Board would need to create a website where employers and learning providers (schools, colleges and apprenticeship training providers) could communicate to provide opportunities for Bexley's students.**

This could include work experience opportunities, apprenticeship opportunities and opportunities for employers to support schools with their careers days and activities.

In doing so, the number of opportunities for Bexley's young people to meet with employers while still at school or college would increase. It would also support Bexley's employers to find training for the people who work for them,

Goals of the Learning, Skills and Employment Board

Improved communication of outcomes

The Learning, Skills and Employment Board would like to better share good news when its members work well with other employers and learning providers and Bexley's students or residents benefit from it.

The Board hopes that by setting a good example other employers and learning providers will want to do the same and further increase the opportunities in Bexley.

The Board will bring good news stories to its meeting so that they can be shared using the @bexleyskills social media accounts. Board members will also tag @bexleyskills in their own good news stories on social media so that they can be shared.



The challenge - Employment



33,300 economically inactive working age residents

7,600 due to long-term sickness

889 residents receiving Employment and Support Allowance (ESA) and assessed as able to undertake activities to return to work

Long-term sickness is making the biggest change to economic inactivity, up by **61.7%** compared to 2016

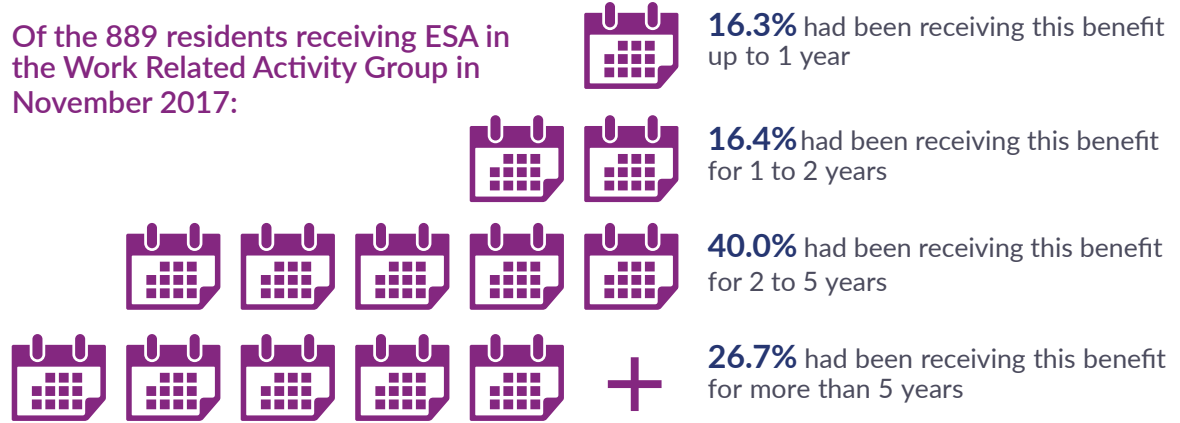


More than **one in four** of Bexley's economically inactive residents want a job.

If they were all in work Bexley could have the second highest employment rate in London for those aged 16 to 64



Of the 889 residents receiving ESA in the Work Related Activity Group in November 2017:



Responding to the challenge - Employment

Information suggests that Bexley's residents are leaving work and that many are not actively looking to go back into employment due to long-term sickness. Bexley will aim to reduce the number of people leaving work due to their health and to provide support to help people back into work when their Doctor or other medical professionals say they are ready:

Helping people to stay in work

Schemes such as Access to Work help employers to make changes to enable a person with a health need to remain in employment and be able to do their job.

The "Supporting Apprentices Services" provides 6-months of support to any apprentice experiencing mental health difficulties at work.

We believe that many businesses do not know about these schemes, or think they are only available to help some start a job and not to help someone stay in their job. This could be a bigger challenge in Bexley as many of our businesses are small and may not have a human resources person or team that would know about this support.

To make sure more businesses are aware of the support available to them, and the people who work for them, **the Learning, Skills and Employment Board will work with local organisations who provide businesses with this type of help to raise their profile and increase the number of businesses and individuals with health needs to access support and remain in work.**

£57,000

The maximum amount available per year through Access to Work to help a workplace to make changes that could help a person to start / remain in employment



Early help to return to work

Research shows that an increasing number of residents who leave work and claim health-related benefits do not return to work and are still claiming benefits 5-years later.

While this may be right for some people, there is a risk that others could develop further health problems due to not taking part in their community or from not being in work.

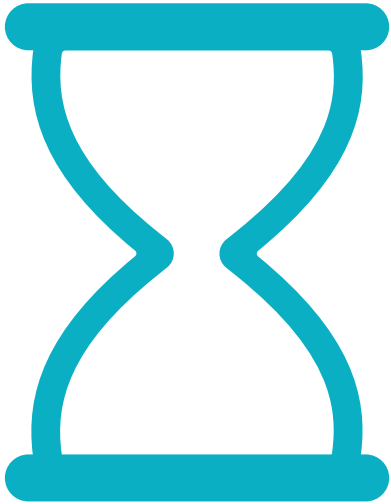
The Learning & Enterprise College Bexley will aim to strengthen its links with Bexley's public health services to deliver courses that will help residents to improve or manage their health and provide support to find work.



210

The number of Bexley residents who took part in programmes with the Learning & Enterprise College to help them find work and said that they have a long-term health need or mental health need

The challenge - The hourglass job market



70% of Bexley's jobs in 2016 were middle-skilled. In 2017, this fell to 66%.

The loss of middle-skilled jobs from Bexley creates a bigger challenge to move up from low-skilled (and typically lower-paying) jobs by creating an 'hourglass job market'

Almost **1 in 4** Bexley jobs is considered as 'high skilled', typically requiring degree-level qualifications



One in three

Nearly a **third** of Bexley's year 11 students did not get both their English and Maths GCSE's in 2017

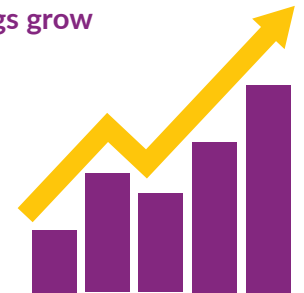
The qualification change needed to move up in Bexley's jobs is increasingly like going from GCSEs to a degree-level

Employed **Bexley residents** saw their typical **earnings grow** by **1.0%** between 2017 and 2018.

In **London** this was **2.3%**.

This could be due to a **10.3% decrease** in the number of Bexley residents working in high and upper-middle skilled jobs compared to 2016.

London saw a **2.4% increase**



Responding to the challenge - The hourglass job market

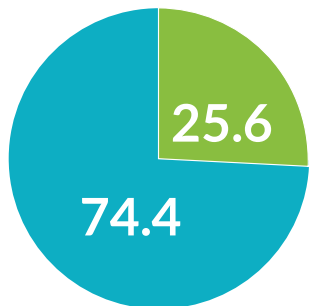
An hourglass job market appears when there are lots of lower-skilled jobs, lots of higher skilled jobs and less middle-skilled jobs. This makes it hard for those working in lower-skilled jobs to move up as there are fewer middle-skilled jobs for them to move into. Bexley's job market is turning into this shape and it could make it harder for people in lower-skilled, lower-paying jobs to progress and earn a salary that allows them to live well.

To respond to this challenge, the Learning, Skills and Employment Board will work to achieve two things:

Increased opportunities and training

The Board will continue to support Bexley's Growth Strategy. This will promote Bexley as a place where businesses will want to start and, in doing so, create a wider range of jobs in the borough. This could mean more middle-skilled jobs that would allow people in lower-skilled jobs to move up.

To make sure residents have the skills they need to move up into those jobs, **the Board will ask for the Council to provide updates on what skills and qualifications new businesses are looking for.** This will help the learning providers who are part of the Board to put on courses that will help people to get the skills and qualifications needed to move into the new jobs.



Over a quarter of Bexley residents aged 16 to 64 are qualified below NVQ level 2 (including no qualifications)

40,100
people in 2017

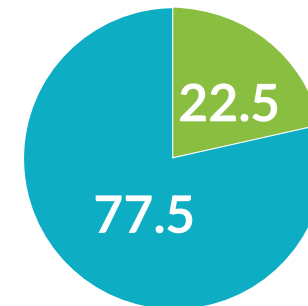
Making training affordable

The Board will support calls for local-level decisions on how training money is spent to better ensure the training is what employers in the Bexley area need.

The Council will look to be a lead example of how it uses apprenticeships to provide new jobs, provide training for its workers and support local businesses with apprenticeships.

The Learning & Enterprise College Bexley will use funding to support those in lower-paying jobs with free work-related training that will help them gain the skills and qualifications employers want and help them to progress. They will also **work with Bexley's businesses to find out how they can make training more affordable** when it cannot be delivered for free.

We see a similar percentage for Bexley residents in employment with **over 1 in 5** qualified below NVQ level 2



The challenge - Ready for the future



At the end of November 2018 there were:

- 657** apprenticeship standards
- 207** standards in development
- 379** approved for delivery
 - 145** at level 4 and above
 - 137** at level 3
 - 97** at level 2



Fewer than **1** in **5** apprenticeship standards in development are at level 2



101

Young people in Bexley across years 12 and 13 recorded as not in education, employment or training (NEET) in July 2018.

Of the 101:

- 12 were young offenders
- 4 were looked after / in care
- 8 had an Education, Health and Care Plan

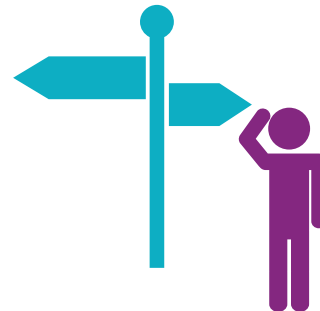
101 young people was just 1.7% of the total year 12 and 13 population. Bexley continues to be among the London boroughs with the lowest NEET levels



8

Gatsby Benchmarks that schools will need to achieve by 2020 to demonstrate good quality careers and education information, advice and guidance

To achieve them, students will need **yearly encounters with employers** from the age of **11**



4% of Bexley's year 11 students from 2015/16 did not stay in their year 12 place of study for more than 2 terms.

This suggests that 128 Bexley students may have made a wrong choice about what they wanted to do.

Likewise, 5% of the year 13 students did not stay in their place of study for more than 2 terms.

This suggests that a further 80 Bexley students may have made **the wrong choice.**

Responding to the challenge - Ready for the future

We know that Bexley's young people do not feel as though their futures will be based in Bexley. We also know that just one in three of the young people we spoke to had seen their careers and education information, advice and guidance service at their school that year. We need to make sure that Bexley's young people are aware of the education and employment opportunities available to them and know what they need to do to get there.

To respond to this challenge, the Learning Skills and Employment Board aims to:

Enhance guidance

The Learning, Skills and Employment Board provides an opportunity for schools, colleges, apprenticeship and other training providers, employers and Council staff to talk about the challenges in giving good quality guidance to Bexley's young people and come up with ideas to overcome those challenges. This will remain a key part of the Board meetings so that education providers are able to deliver the best quality careers and education information, advice and guidance they can.



The Council will look to continue the Children's University. This will help children aged 7 to 14 to develop their skills and knowledge by completing activities like meeting with local employers, which helps students to improve their knowledge of what jobs may be available to them in the future.

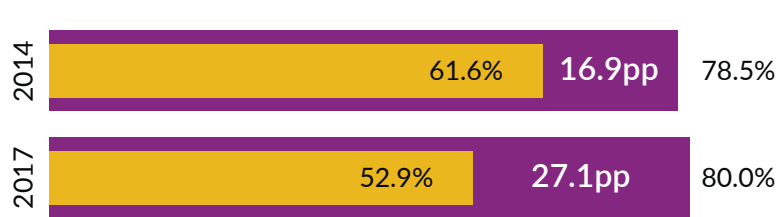
Create pathways

If a young person does not get their English and maths GCSEs the number of courses they could then go on to study may reduce because of changes in post-16 learning. Most of the new courses are like studying for an A-level and so someone without their GCSE's may find this hard or not be able to do the course. **The Learning, Skills and Employment Board will continue to ask providers and those who fund learning to ensure that courses remain available for students of all levels.**

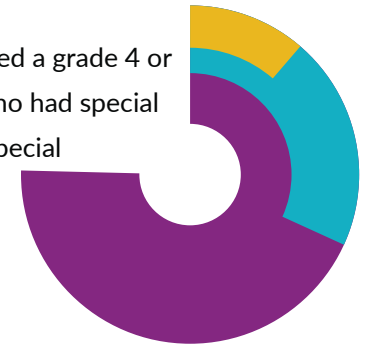
To help those who don't get their English and maths GCSEs, and those who need to know what their other learning options are after the age of 16, **we will expand the post-16 directory to include courses at GCSE level and below.** This will also help the Board and education providers identify what courses are not being run that could help young people with no or lower-level qualifications to study and move into work.

The Council will continue to work with Peabody Housing Association and London South East Colleges to move forward plans to create a 'Place and Making Institute'. This will be a brand new site for education providers to deliver construction and built environment learning and join other education providers in offering degree-level learning.

The challenge - Opportunity for all



11.3% of Bexley's pupils with an Education, Health and Care Plan achieved a grade 4 or higher in their English and maths GCSE's in 2017, compared to **31.8%** who had special educational needs support and **75.4%** for those who had no identified special educational needs



Between 2014 and 2017 the employment rate gap between residents aged 16 to 64 with a disability or work-limiting health need and those without a disability increased by **10.2 percentage points**

Responding to the challenge

Bexley's young people with special educational needs and disabilities are significantly less likely to achieve a pass in their English and maths GCSEs than young people who do not.

Later in life, information shows that residents aged 16 to 64 with a disability are less likely to be in employment than those who do not have a disability, and that the gap between the two groups is getting wider.

To respond to this challenge:

The Council will **explore a skills and employment service for residents with autism and or / learning needs who do not qualify for support that is already available**. This may be similar to the service currently offered by Bexley Twofold which provides support for adults with learning disabilities.

The Learning & Enterprise College Bexley and London South East Colleges will start to offer supported internships for adults with special educational needs and disabilities.

Supported internships will provide work-related skills and supported work experience and aim to be a stepping-stone into paid employment.

The Learning & Enterprise College Bexley and London South East Colleges will look at how they could **deliver more of the Local Colleges First offer** that provides supported learning for residents with significant learning disabilities.

And we will **expand the post-16 directory to include courses at GCSE level and below** so it better helps those who don't get their English and maths GCSEs to see what courses are available to them to continue their studies.

16.8% of Bexley's working age population have an equalities act identified or work-limiting disability

Working towards #BrilliantBexley

Helping the bigger picture

By completing the actions on the next 2 pages, the Learning Skills and Employment Board will support the Council's #BrilliantBexley corporate plan to deliver a strong future for Bexley's residents and businesses.

The actions will best help the Council to provide for residents and businesses in the following priority areas:

- 1: Growth that benefits all
- 3a: Strong and resilient communities
- 3b: Strong and resilient families
- 4: Living well

The corporate plan document can be found by searching the internet for #BrilliantBexley



The challenge - Employment (pages 13 and 14)

Action	By Who and By When
We will work with local organisations who provide business support, such as Access to Work and the Supporting Apprenticeship Services, to help raise their profile and increase the number of businesses and individuals with health needs to access support and remain in work	The Learning Skills and Employment Board will aim to complete this action and increase the number of businesses and individuals accessing this support by August 2023
We will strengthen links with Bexley's public health services to deliver courses that will help residents to improve or manage their health and provide support to find work	The Learning & Enterprise College Bexley will aim to complete this action by July 2022 so that courses and support to find work can be provided in the 2022/23 academic year

The challenge - The hourglass job market (pages 15 and 16)

We will ask for a person from the Council to provide updates on what skills and qualifications businesses are looking for so that residents can gain the right skills to find or move up in work	The Learning Skills and Employment Board will ask for a person from the Council to attend meetings from September 2019 and provide updates at least once per year
We will support calls for local-level decisions on how training money is spent to better ensure training is what employers in Bexley need	The Learning Skills and Employment Board will do this whenever opportunities arise between now and August 2023
We will look to be a lead example of how we use apprenticeships to provide new jobs, provide training for workers and support local businesses	The Council will do this on an ongoing basis whenever apprenticeship recruitment or training opportunities are needed between now and August 2023
We will use funding to support people in lower-paying jobs with free work-related training and work with Bexley's businesses to find out how training can be made more affordable if it cannot be provided for free	The Learning & Enterprise College Bexley will use the new funding rules for adult education to start delivering free training by July 2020 and speak to businesses about how other training could be made affordable

Summary of actions

The challenge - Ready for the future (pages 17 and 18)

Action	By Who and By When
We will look to continue the Children's University so that young people aged 7 to 14 can develop skills, meet local employers and improve their knowledge of what jobs may be available to them in the future	The Council will work with London South East Colleges and local employers to continue the Children's University in the 2019/20 academic year and review progress in July 2020
We will continue to ask local education providers and those who fund learning to make sure courses remain available for students of all levels so that those who need to do level 2 or below learning after the age of 16 have the opportunity to do it	The Council will do this on an ongoing basis through to August 2023, especially when local education providers change what courses they plan to offer
We will expand the post-16 directory of learning to includes courses at GCSE level and below so that those who do not get their English and maths GCSEs at age 16 have a better idea of what they can go on to study post-16	The Council's 14 to 19 services team will ask Bexley's education providers for this information and include it with the 2020/21 post-16 directory expected in September 2019
We will continue to move forward plans to create a 'Place and Making Institute' which will provide a new site for education providers to deliver construction and built environment learning	The Council will continue to work with Peabody Housing Association and London South East Colleges to move forward plans before August 2023

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We will explore a skills and employment service for residents with autism and / or learning needs who do not qualify for the support that is already available	The Council will look at this service and start such a service as soon as money to pay for such a service is available
We will start to deliver supported internships to provide adults with special educational needs and disabilities with work-related skills and supported work experience	The Learning & Enterprise College Bexley and London South East Colleges will aim to start delivering supported internships in the 2019/20 academic year
We will look at how we can deliver more of the Local Colleges First offer that provides supported learning for residents with significant learning disabilities	The Learning & Enterprise College Bexley and London South East Colleges will look at how more spaces can be made for this learning and how it can be paid for and start delivery as soon as this is possible

