



Durham Trinity School & Sports College

Nurture, Believe, Thrive, Succeed



DTS Post 16 Options

2025-2026



Life After Durham Trinity School

Next Steps for Year 11 & Post 16 Leavers

As your young person prepares to take their next steps beyond school, we know this can be both an exciting and emotional time. This leaflet offers a starting point to help you explore the many pathways available. It's not a complete guide, but we hope it gives you confidence as you begin planning ahead. And remember—you're not alone in this journey.

Applications and College Visits

Families and learners are encouraged to take the lead in applying to colleges and arranging visits or transition activities. Most colleges offer easy-to-use online application forms, and many are happy to support you with any questions. If you're unsure where to begin, don't hesitate to contact the college directly—they're there to help.



Planning the Week: College and Beyond

Typical college placements at Post-16 and Post-19 run for three days a week. This leaves two additional days that can be filled with meaningful, enriching experiences. These might include further education, supported employment, volunteering, or community-based activities. Families play a key role in exploring and arranging these opportunities, and we're here to help signpost where we can.

Support from Social Workers

If your young person has a social worker from the Children with Disabilities Team, you may already be discussing transition options—including those available through adult social care. If you haven't yet had these conversations, we warmly encourage you to reach out to your social worker. They can help ensure all the right support is in place for a smooth and positive transition.



CHOICES COLLEGE
STEPS TO SUC



Thornbeck College

north east
autism society



Choosing the Right College Pathway



Mainstream

Mainstream colleges offer varied courses and are increasingly inclusive, with many supporting Entry Level learners. They provide SEND support and can suit young people who benefit from structured learning and extra help. For those with more complex needs—like intensive therapy, personalised teaching, or specialist communication—a Specialist or Independent Specialist College may be more appropriate.



Specialist

As young people prepare for life after school, some families may explore specialist Post-16 education options. While these can offer highly tailored support for learners with complex needs, it's important to understand that Durham County Council will only support a placement in a Specialist or Independent Specialist College if it's clearly shown that no mainstream Post-16 option can meet the young person's needs. This means that all local mainstream further education providers must be fully explored and ruled out before a specialist placement will be considered.



Other?

Some young people aged 18 and over may not move on to further education—especially if they're no longer making progress in their current setting. At this stage, the focus shifts from education to planning for adult life.

If your young person has a social worker and receives support from the Children with Disabilities Team, they'll guide you through the next steps. A Navigations Social Worker will be introduced to help explore your young adult's care and support needs.

Durham County Council's Adult Social Care team will carry out a Care Act assessment to see if your young person qualifies for adult services—such as supported living, day opportunities, or respite care.



Where to Look?

<https://tinyurl.com/4cwr8jc>

www.durham.gov.uk

Contact Social Care Direct



scd@durham.gov.uk



03000 267 979



New College

Post-16 Pathways for SEND Learners (Ages 16–24)

As your child prepares for life beyond school, New College Durham offers a welcoming and inclusive environment designed to support their growth, independence, and future aspirations.

Foundation Studies at New College Durham

New College Durham's Foundation Studies programme is specially designed for young people aged 16–24 with disabilities, learning difficulties, or challenges managing emotions or behaviour. The aim is to build confidence, independence, and readiness for adult life.

Each learner's journey is personalised, with support from a dedicated tutor and a curriculum tailored to their strengths and interests.

There are three specialist pathways to help learners progress at their own pace:

Pathway	Focus
Pathway 1	Preparing for Independent Living and Community Life
Pathway 2	Preparing for Further Learning or Employment
Pathway 3	Preparing for Working Life

EHCP and the Consultation Process

If your child has an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP), their transition to college will follow the statutory consultation process. This ensures that their needs are reviewed and matched with the right support and provision. The college works closely with families and local authorities to make this process smooth and transparent.



Open Campus & Life Skills Development

New College Durham is an open campus, which means students move independently between buildings and facilities. As learners grow older, it's important they develop:

- Personal responsibility for safety
- Confidence in navigating public spaces
- Skills for independent travel and time management

Staff support learners in building these skills gradually, with safety and wellbeing always a priority.



Visit the College:

New College, Durham warmly invite you and your child to attend one of our Information, Advice & Guidance (IAG) evenings to explore the campus, meet staff, and learn more about the Foundation Studies programme.

- 🕒 Time: 4:30–6:30pm
- 📍 Location: New College Durham
- 📝 **Pre-registration is advised**

Upcoming Dates

- Tuesday 7 October 2025
- Tuesday 4 November 2025
- Tuesday 2 December 2025
- Tuesday 3 March 2026
- Tuesday 5 May 2026
- Tuesday 2 June 2026



Where to Look?

<https://tinyurl.com/4camj88m>

<https://www.newcollegedurham.ac.uk/>

Post-16 Pathways for SEND Learners (Ages 16–24)

East Durham College offers a supportive and inclusive environment for young people with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND), helping them build confidence, independence, and skills for adulthood.

What's on Offer?

1. Foundation Studies Programme

- Tailored for learners with EHCPs and additional needs.
- Focuses on life skills, employability, and personal development.
- Includes practical learning in areas like catering, horticulture, and animal care.

2. Supported Internships

- Real-world work experience with job coaching.
- Designed for learners ready to transition into employment.
- Helps build confidence and workplace skills in a structured, supported setting.

3. Preparation for Adulthood

- Emphasis on independence, travel training, and community engagement.
- Learners develop skills for daily living and future planning.
- Encourages social interaction and personal growth.

4. Bespoke Learning Plans

- Each learner follows a personalised timetable based on their EHCP.
- Small class sizes and specialist staff ensure individual support.
- Progress is regularly reviewed with families and professionals.

Who Supports the Learners?

- Experienced tutors and support staff trained in SEND.
- Access to speech and language therapy, occupational therapy, and counselling.
- Strong multi-agency collaboration to meet holistic needs.

Campus Environment

- Safe, welcoming spaces with sensory-friendly areas.
- Purpose-built facilities for vocational learning.
- Opportunities to mix with peers across different pathways.

Entry Requirements

Most learners join with an EHCP.

The college works closely with schools and local authorities to ensure smooth transitions.



Visit the College:

Thinking about your next steps in education? Join us for one of our Foundation Studies Open Evenings and discover how East Durham College supports learners on the autism pathway and beyond. Meet our friendly staff, explore our inclusive learning environments, and find out how we personalise support to help every student thrive.

 Time: 5:00 PM – 6:30 PM

Upcoming Dates

Peterlee Campus

- Tuesday 4th November 2025
- Tuesday 6th January 2026
- Tuesday 10th March 2026
- Tuesday 5th May 2026

Houghall & Derwent Campus

- Thursday 6th November 2025
- Thursday 8th January 2026
- Thursday 12th March 2026
- Thursday 7th May 2026



Where to Look?

<https://edc.ac.uk/discover/events>



Post-16 College & Training Providers



 Provider	 Courses Offered	 Main Provision	 Specialist Support
East Durham College (<i>Peterlee & Houghall</i>)	Foundation, vocational, sixth form, supported internships, apprenticeships	East Durham College	Derwent provision (Houghall) for autistic students; 16–24 SEND
New College Durham	Foundation, vocational, sixth form, apprenticeships	New College Durham	16–24 SEND
Bishop Auckland College	Foundation, vocational, apprenticeships, supported internships	Bishop Auckland College	Aspire Centre (SEN specialist unit)
Derwentside College	Foundation, vocational, apprenticeships	Derwentside College	Learning support
Newcastle College	Foundation, vocational, sixth form, apprenticeships	Newcastle College	Support for additional needs
Gateshead College	Foundation, vocational, sixth form, apprenticeships	Gateshead College	Special Educational Needs support
Middlesbrough College	Foundation, vocational, sixth form, apprenticeships	Middlesbrough College	Additional learning support
Stockton Riverside College	Foundation, vocational, apprenticeships	Stockton Riverside College	—
Darlington College	Foundation, vocational, apprenticeships	Darlington College	“Next Steps” SEND support
DurhamLearn (<i>Durham, Newton Aycliffe, Peterlee</i>)	Foundation, full/part-time, employment routes	DurhamLearn	—
Northern Arts School (<i>Middlesbrough</i>)	Vocational arts learning	The Northern School of Art	—
Learning for Life (<i>Consett & South Gosforth</i>)	Foundational learning	Learning for Life	Embracing Diversity and Enriching Lives
UTC South Durham	Engineering vocational, A-levels	UTC South Durham	—



Post-16 College & Training Providers

Provider	Courses Offered	Main Provision	Specialist Support
Catch 22 (<i>Peterlee & Bishop Auckland</i>)	Foundation, vocational	Catch 22 Post-16	—
Springboard North East (<i>Peterlee, Sunderland, Hartlepool</i>)	Foundation, vocational	Springboard North East	—
Chameleon Vocational Training Ltd	Motor vehicle training, apprenticeships	Chameleon Vocational Training Ltd	—
Humankind Education Centre	Foundation learning	Humankind Education Centre	—



**Durham County Council
Contact Info**

**DCC SEND Caseworker
Jude Robinson**

**Children and Young Peoples Services
Durham County Council
County Hall, Durham DH1 5UJ**

**Telephone: 03000 268938
Email: jude.robinson@durham.gov.uk**



Where to Look?

<https://tinyurl.com/45t25s6u>

<https://natspec.org.uk/colleges/search/>