The Parents' Guide to Green Careers

For Green Careers Week

2024 - 2025

HIGHLIGHTS:

- What are green careers?
- Why "green" matters to teens
- Routes to green careers
- Discussing next steps
- Examples of green careers

GCW
GREEN CAREERS WEEK

The Parents' Guide to

Green Careers Week

November 2024

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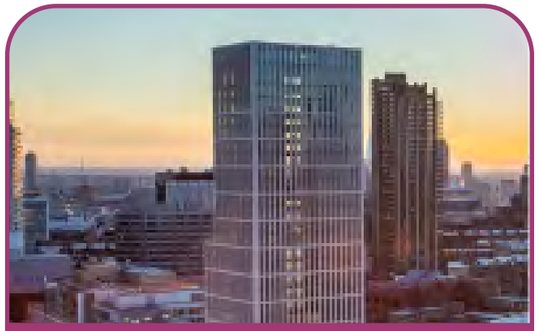
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IS YOUR TEEN IN YEARS 9-13?

If you're interested in regular updates about other ways you can help your teenage children, click here and join our online community.

Introduction

Now in its third year, Green Careers Week will take place between 4 and 9 November 2024 to provide young people with an insight into careers that protect the environment.

Led by Green Careers Week, in partnership with a wide range of organisations including the Department for Education, Green Careers Week is an inspiring week, with plenty of information on how young people can get involved with green careers.

Tackling climate change is a global effort. In 2019, the UK pledged to reach Net Zero by 2050. Everyone can play their part in contributing towards this goal and young people are especially important. As the future workforce, they need the right education and tools to support them in developing innovative ways of doing things better. We need to help them find rewarding and fulfilling career opportunities that positively impact the environment.

Use this guide to find out more about:

- why your teen might be interested in green careers
- how your teen can get into green careers, whether after GCSE or sixth form
- easy ways to talk to your teen about their future plans
- what green careers look like and why there's something for everyone
- a personal viewpoint from an engineer working on climate action
- helping them get work experience while they're at school

Get involved:

Check with their school or college to see what special events are planned

Chat to your teen about their future and what careers interest them. Use this guide to help with conversations.

Look out for **#GCW2024** and **#GreenCareersWeek** on social media to see what individuals, schools and organisations are doing throughout the week

Follow **@Green__Careers**, **@CareersWeek**, **@parentsguideto** and **@EducationGovUK** on X to explore the latest information, films and opportunities as they're released.

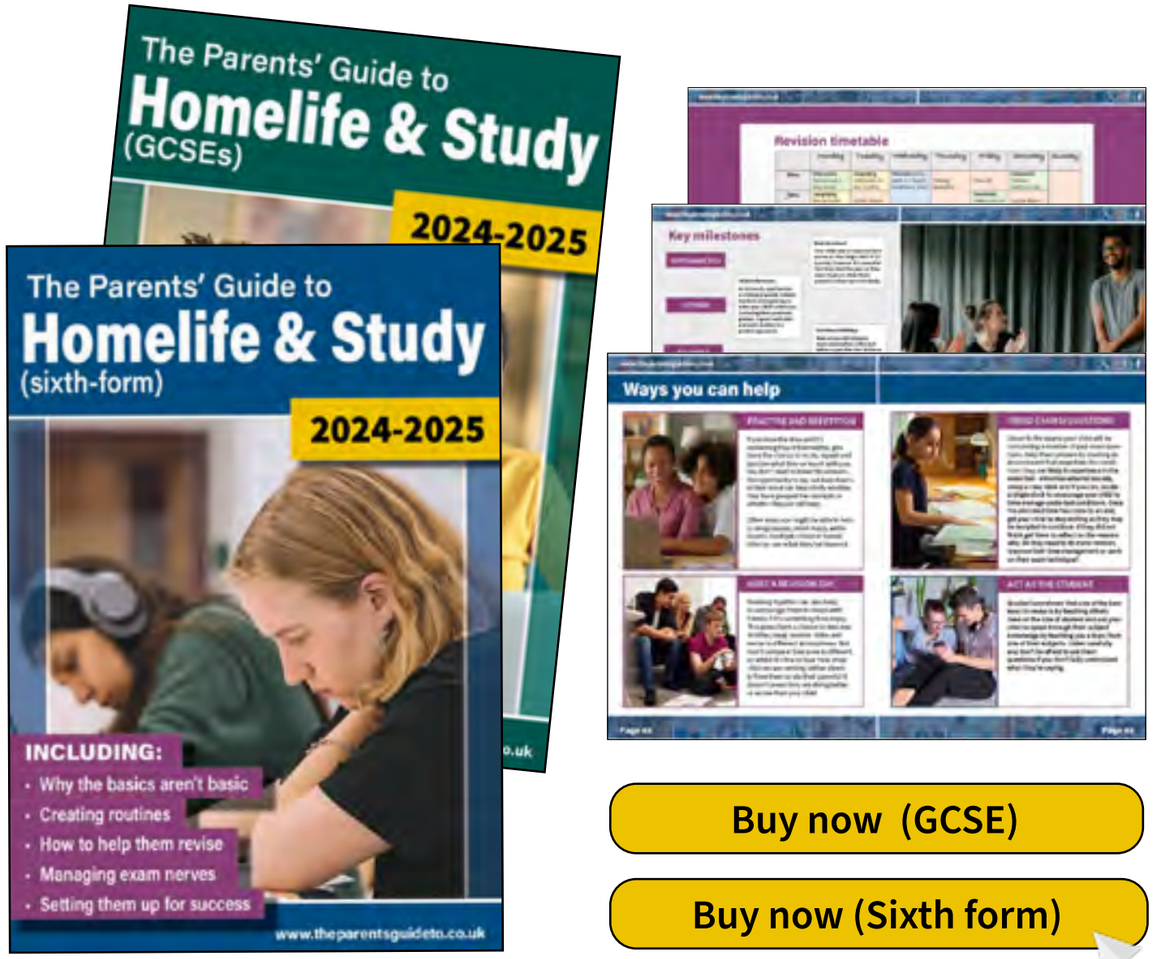
Visit **greencareersweek** and **greencareershub** to access the latest resources and information.

Your power at home

Don't underestimate the importance of what you do at home in helping your teen do well at school.

The Parents' Guide to Homelife & Study will make sure you're on the right track, with advice on:

- Keeping them healthy
- Why setting a routine is vital
- Simple steps to create a helpful study space
- Ways to help them revise
- How to make the most of study leave
- How to help them manage stress
- How to support them during exams



Buy now (GCSE)

Buy now (Sixth form)

If you work in a school or college, click here to see our school membership options

Jargon Busting

Every movement loves its own language, and sustainability is no exception. As it becomes more important in business and everyday life, the key terms and phrases can be a barrier to understanding what's at the heart of the matter. Here's a quick summary, so you don't get caught out by tricky terms.

Sustainability

Meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.

Global warming

The increase in temperature of the earth and changes in weather as a result of human activities

Greenhouse gases

Gases that help to control the earth's temperature. Producing too much of these gases traps heat in the earth's atmosphere, raising the temperature. As humans have developed, increasing in numbers, travelling around the world, building cities and products, we've used up natural resources and released a lot of these gases

Net Zero

When the amount of greenhouse gases produced equals the amount removed – so we are not adding extra gases to the atmosphere. The UK has pledged to reach net zero by 2050 (so by 2050, the UK will not add any more greenhouse gases to the atmosphere than we take away).

Eco-friendly

Having no (or little) damaging effect on the environment

Carbon footprint

The amount of greenhouse gases produced by an individual (or organization)

Greenwashing

Companies who present information to give the impression they are taking more action against climate change than they are

Carbon offset

Using a different way to remove greenhouse gases that we've added from an activity – i.e. paying a company to plant trees to balance the amount of greenhouse gases produced from flying abroad on holiday

Why GREEN is a Priority for Teens

Over the last few years, there's been a variety of polls asking young people about their thoughts on climate change and whether they're learning enough about it at school.

The results in these polls are consistent: high numbers of 16-25 year olds are worried about climate change, many feel the future is frightening and a significant number don't feel they have a voice when discussing solutions.

At school

Young people recognize that climate change will affect their lives and are passionate about doing something about it; however, they don't feel their getting enough information and education about it at school.

Climate change is only covered in a small number of subjects (such as in geography or science), making it hard for students to understand climate change as a whole and link topics together.

Classroom discussions centre around learning the answers to exam questions, without enough time to have meaningful conversations and explore ideas outside the curriculum.

Addressing the concerns of young people

The Department for Education recognizes its role in giving young people hope that they can be agents of change. This includes providing hands-on activity, guidance and programmes so teens can follow a green career pathway in their chosen field. The government plans to expand climate education within schools for students, and provide teachers, school leaders and support staff with training on carbon literacy.

Bath University is leading the way in educating young people on climate change by introducing carbon literacy training as part of their freshers' induction month, covering carbon impact in everyday activities.

Empowering your teen

Young people want to be involved in finding solutions to our environmental challenges. It's vital that we provide opportunities to show them how they can play an active role both in their personal lives and within the world of work. Showing them how they can contribute should help restore their confidence in a positive and sustainable future.

Over the next few pages, we'll take a look into different routes towards green careers, depending on how your teen learns best.

Sources:

British Science Association Climate Change Education 14-18 year olds - 2023

Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health: children and youn people's perspective on how to tackle climate change -2023

The Prince's Trust and Public First: Generation Green Jobs - 2023

DofE: Sustainability and climate change, a strategy for the education and children's services system

Children's Commissioner Big Ask – 2021

Bath University Carbon Literacy

FIND YOUR NEAREST T LEVEL

Search for colleges and schools who start delivering T Levels in 2020 and 2021

Enter your postcode

All T Level courses

Search

T Levels and Green Careers

T Levels are a sixth form option that provide a recognized qualification tailored to industry needs. It's a great choice for students that want to learn practical skills relevant to certain jobs, regardless of whether they want to go on to study for a degree, take alternative further education or go straight into the workplace.

What's involved?

One T Level is equivalent to three A levels and the course lasts for two years. T Levels involve a mix of classroom learning (about 80% of the course time) and practical experience (about 20% of the course time) including a 45 day on-the-job placement in a genuine business.

Students receive a nationally recognised grade and a breakdown of their achievements on the course, including how they did on their work placement.

Where can they lead?

T Levels offer a broad range of further opportunities after sixth form, including job from their placement, jobs from related industries, apprenticeships, university or an alternative further education.

This means that students with a T Level qualification can go on to study for a degree, a related higher level apprenticeship, take a different course or go straight into a job. Alternatively, they can go on to a higher level education or work in a non-related field if, during the course of study, they didn't enjoy their industry specialism and want to take a different path.

Green options

Students have the option to choose T Levels in various subjects, some of which have a strong focus on the environment. These include courses in "Agriculture, Land Management and Production" and "Manufacturing, Processing, and Control". These exciting choices provide students with a clear pathway to pursue green careers and open doors to work with environmentally-conscious organisations.

Find out more:

Apprenticeships and Green Careers

Apprenticeships are a fantastic choice for many students, either straight after GCSE or after sixth form. They provide a way of getting qualifications while doing a real job and are a great alternative to full-time study for those students that prefer practical experience over classroom learning.

Apprenticeships help build solid, professional skills transferable from one organisation to another. Employers pay a salary and tuition fees are covered by the employer and the government.

Apprenticeships offer students versatility. Depending on their age, experience and qualifications already achieved, there are different entry levels for apprenticeships, starting at Level 2 (straight after GCSE for those that have few or no GCSE passes) through Level 6/7 (degree level). The qualifications obtained at each level range from GCSE/BTEC equivalent, A/T Level, diploma/foundation right through to masters degree. Qualifications are nationally recognized.

Length of study

Apprenticeships can last for just one year or as long as seven (or more) depending on the final qualification. If your teen isn't comfortable with committing to several years of further study, they can take one- or two-year options and still gain recognised, valuable qualifications. Better still, if they change their mind later on and decide they wish to extend the apprenticeship to gain higher level qualifications, this is often possible.

Green options

Every apprenticeship has the potential to teach skills that support Net Zero efforts, but a green apprenticeship goes a step further by involving tasks directly contributing to achieving Net Zero. Numerous apprenticeships, including roles like Waste Management Specialists, Climate Change Policy Advisors, Electric Vehicle Technicians and Greenhouse Gas Analysts align with this goal.

Find out more:

THE NATIONAL

Apprenticeships

APPRENTICESHIP & EDUCATION EVENTS

The National Apprenticeship & Education Events are designed to inspire School & College leavers as well as young adults to discover more about career and FE opportunities.

> Before the event, a lot of the pupils had shown an interest in apprenticeships but didn't know the path they wanted to take. We are now going to go through their options. Events like this, where they can get all the information in one go is really useful to us.
>
> Teacher

Our inspirational careers events take place in Edinburgh, Newcastle, Manchester, Birmingham, Cardiff, North London and South London every year.

Our events bring together thousands of Students aged 15+ from schools, sixth forms & colleges, parents, guardians & individuals together with Top UK Employers, Universities, Colleges & Training Providers.

> It's been absolutely brilliant. It's been informative and its been really fun as well.
>
> Student

Book online today or call the events team on **0800 023 5407** for more information.

nationalapprenticeshipevents.co.uk/group-bookings/

THE NATIONAL APPRENTICESHIP EVENT EDUCATION NETWORK

share with us nationalapprenticeshipevents @careersevent nationalapprenticeshipevents

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Finding the Right Apprenticeship

There's a wide range of ways to seek out apprenticeships and we recommend using a selection of options rather than relying on one.

Government website

Most apprenticeships are posted on the Government's website. By creating an account, your child can set up alerts and filters to see opportunities that are of most interest to them and to be emailed when new opportunities arise. However, not all apprenticeships will appear.

Industry sector

It's smart to check apprenticeships directly on company, university or college websites. If your child doesn't know which of these sites to select, then they should first do some research on which industry sector may be of interest, and then find companies within this sector.

School careers advisor

If your child is still at school or college, then getting them to speak with their careers adviser is a good move. Careers advisors are often the first to hear from companies advertising new apprenticeships

Companies direct

Another alternative is for them to identify companies that are of interest and check those websites for apprenticeships.

Be warned! Applications to well-known international companies (such as Amazon, Coca-Cola, Facebook, Google, Virgin) will be highly competitive; however, it might be a good starting point for identifying what's included in the apprenticeship and seeking out other companies that provide similar content. The descriptor names can then be used in search functions on the government website or job boards. Not all companies offer apprenticeships.

Job boards

National job agencies will also advertise apprenticeships and options can be narrowed to review within local distances from home or specific job types. This might be a particularly good way to seek out apprenticeships in level 3-5 range.

Reviews

To find out what other students have thought about an apprenticeship and how they rate them, there are reviews on Rate my Apprenticeship.

Other Routes to Green Careers

However your teen studies best, they will be able to find a route to green careers. As well as apprenticeships and T Levels, there are routes via more popular sixth form qualifications (such as A Level, BTEC and International Baccalaureate) and straight after GCSEs.

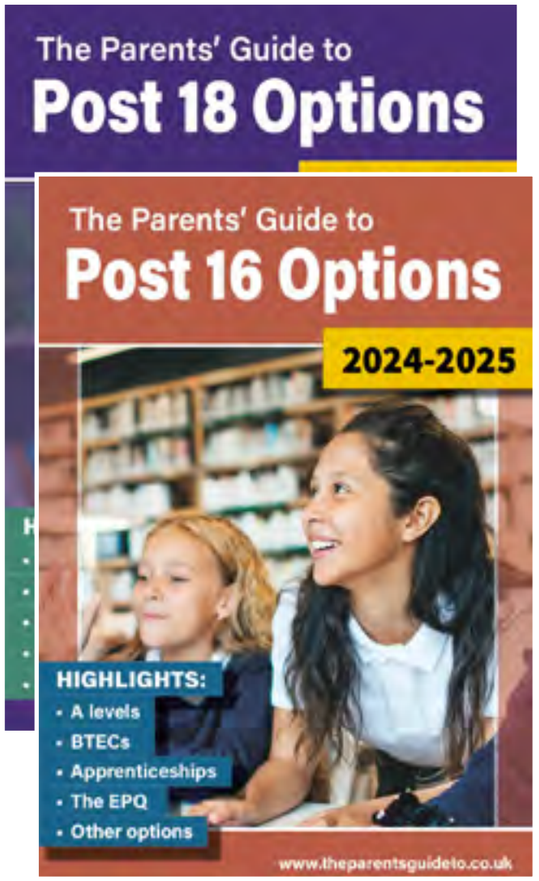
Technical Qualifications

Teens that don't want to commit to long-term study can take professional qualifications in green technology. Examples include Vocational Technical Qualifications (VTQs), Higher Technical Qualifications (HTQs), City & Guilds, Cambridge Technicals/Nationals. These are offered by colleges and some schools.

University

There are thousands of undergraduate courses related to the environment or with modules focusing on sustainability. Some degrees are specialist such as Anglia Ruskin University's course on Sustainable Tourism Development, Bangor's Sustainable Development degree or Stirling's MSc in Environmental Management. Others include modules on sustainable design, environmental management and environmental sustainability.

There are also many courses with relevance to environmental issues including agriculture, biodiversity, biology and biological sciences, botany, horticulture, forestry and geography.



Buy now - Post 16

Buy now - Post 18

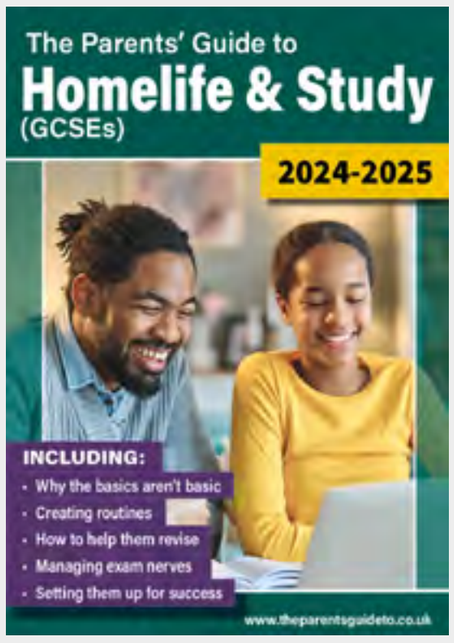
Action at home:

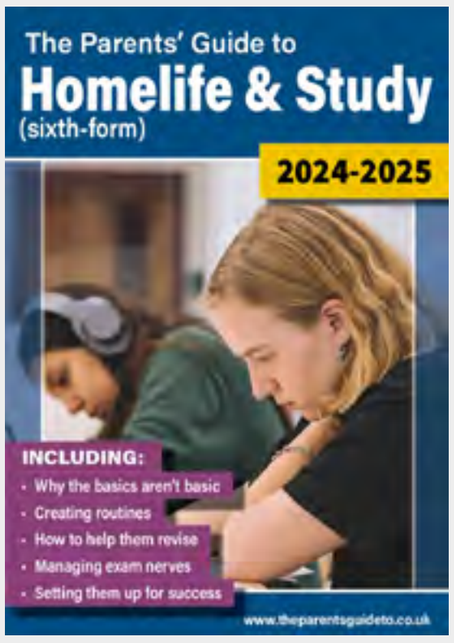
Individual action may seem like a drop in the ocean when it comes to solving the green challenges we face today, but if we all work together our efforts add up.

Importantly, personal action restores feelings of control over our own life and can contribute to improving mental wellbeing. So how can your teen boost their green credentials?

- **Buy less.** Avoid fast fashion. Choose local, seasonal foods instead of those imported
- **Recycle** –never throw litter in an inappropriate place
- **Walk** or take public transport when possible
- **Turn off lights** in empty rooms
- **Join environmental groups**, such as helping community clear-ups
- Use their **gap year** to take part in voluntary projects that involve green initiatives
- Students can take part in the **Green Impact Programme** and get a discount on membership to IMEA (Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment)

Browse the full collection:





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Learn more

Talking to Your Teen

It can be tricky to get teens to talk about anything, especially what they might want to do next. It's important they think about their future, what they might like to achieve and what they need to do now so they can get themselves on the right track.

You don't have to have all the answers! Just listening is often enough.

Here's our favourite tips on what to bear in mind when having these chats.

1

Accept their idea of success may be different to yours

Their dreams and ambitions might not align with your ambitions for them. This can be disappointing, but let them walk their own path.

2

It's OK if they're not sure on a career route yet

They don't need to make that decision right now. They do need to develop skills that will help them progress, and that should be their focus.

3

Encourage them to turn passions into money -makers

They're more likely to be successful (and happier) pursuing a career in something they enjoy.

4

Help them navigate their limitations

Not being academic should not be a barrier to success and there is usually more than one way to reach a destination.

5

Help them if they are struggling to look far ahead

Setting short-term, achievable goals will help them strive towards a long-term ambition.

6

It's OK if they change their mind!

Reassure them that if they tell you they have their heart set on one direction, then later change their minds, you won't berate them for it.

7

Encourage them to explore all their options

Help them plan out a route that focuses on their strengths. Different educational routes can often provide entry points into the same industry.

8

Empower them: they have control over their future

The decisions they take and what they do matters.

Exploring “Green Careers”

In the simplest terms, green careers include roles within businesses that benefit the environment and conserve natural resources. These roles have been growing over recent years and are bound to increase further as the necessity for greater energy efficiency becomes more urgent.

Let’s take a closer look at which industries focus on particular aspects of climate change, and explore examples of job roles.

These job roles are not niche – they cover all aspects of working life.

The Built Environment

Building and construction accounts for nearly 40% of global CO2 emissions according to the World Green Building Council. Whether it’s creating new structures or modifying existing ones, there’s no doubt that any role within the built environment will need to look at ways of improving environmental impact.

This reaches across architects, civil and structural engineers, procurement and transportation managers and site workers to name a few. Each will have a significant part to play.

Think outside the box for different careers:

1. **Building performance analyst** - identifying performance issues with energy, maintenance and comfort in buildings
2. **Recruitment consultant** - specialising in permanent or temporary assignments within environment, planning, energy or civils
3. **Waste Operations manager** - implementing best practices and ensuring compliance

Energy

Energy is crucial to climate change, not least because many greenhouse gases are generated through energy production. Renewable energy (where resources are replenished faster than they are consumed) will play an important role in moving towards a green Britain.

Renewable energy sources include hydropower, bio, solar and wind energy. Roles can include project managers, solar power technicians, tidal power developers and wind energy engineers.

Less obvious ways to be involved include:

1. **Energy project officer** - Supporting project managers in managing project budgets, monitoring expenditure and costs, realising project outputs and looking after technical equipment
2. **Offshore consent manager** - supporting the development of offshore renewable energy projects
3. **Greenhouse Gas Analyst** - Assisting in analysing and tracking greenhouse gas emissions to help organisations reduce their carbon footprint
4. **Recycling Coordinator** - Managing recycling programs for cities and businesses
5. **Water Resource Manager** - Overseeing the sustainable management of water resources, including water conservation and quality

The great outdoors

When thinking about the environment it seems natural to consider the great outdoors and there are plenty of roles that focus on protecting the land and wildlife around us. There are 15 national parks in the UK, covering over 10% of the land mass and welcoming 100 million visitors each year. They need looking after! Then there's local parks and commons, a myriad of stately homes with public access, and 100s of nature reserves.

Roles to consider:

1. **Forestry creation officer** - Increase tree cover to 30% in the country's largest environmental regeneration initiative
2. **Gardening assistant** - Traineeship to develop sustainable gardens in public access country estates

Consultancy

Not everyone is practical and hands-on, but that doesn't mean there aren't roles for people with business and project management skills to contribute to helping businesses go green. Sustainability consultants advise how companies can lower their carbon footprint through assessing and evaluating the business. What's interesting here is that virtually all large companies have sustainability teams. This means for students keen on certain industries but without the relevant skills, it's possible to get a role in that sector looking at their sustainability impact.

Likewise, choosing to work for a company that has a reputation for ethical practices won't tie them into a job role, but will enable them to pursue work with companies that are aligned with their values.

Farming, food production & distribution

We can't live without food! There may be variances in the impact of meat or meat free diets, but all our food has a significant environmental impact. It's not just in growing/producing it. Take a stroll round the supermarket to see first hand what's involved.

Food has to be harvested, processed, packaged and transported. Any role within the food industry has the potential to be 'green', including educating people to eat local, natural and in-season produce. You need only look at what sells in s/ markets to know that for many consumers convenience often trumps good intentions.

1. **AgriTech Specialist** – develops and implements technology solutions to improve crop yields, reduce environmental impact, and enhance food production processes
2. **Environmental lawyer** - specialising in environmental regulations and advocate for clients in cases related to environmental issues
3. **Farm-to-Table Coordinator** – builds partnerships between local farms and restaurants, promoting sustainable, locally-sourced food.
4. **Food Security Consultant** – advises governments and organisations on strategies to ensure a stable, accessible food supply, especially in vulnerable regions.
5. **Sustainable Packaging Designer** – creates eco-friendly packaging for food

And some surprises...

Your teen doesn't have to go mainstream to find a role they love. If they have interest, passion and the curiosity to find out more, they can find a job that's rewarding and satisfying - it might just need a little imagination and investigation!

How about:

1. **Biofabrication Specialist** – develops materials like leather or silk from living organisms such as fungi or bacteria.
2. **Digital Detox Consultant** – Helps individuals and companies reduce screen time and improve mental health through tech-free strategies.
3. **Eco-Tourism Planner** – designs sustainable travel experiences that minimise environmental impact.
4. **Sustainable Fashion Designer** – creates clothing and accessories using environmentally friendly materials and production methods.
5. **Upcycling Furniture Designer** – creates new furniture from old or discarded materials.
6. **Urban Grower** – farms to produce pesticide-free food using less water and fertiliser than traditional methods.
7. **Wildlife Corridor Designer** – plans and builds pathways for wildlife to safely migrate through urban or developed areas.
8. **Zero-Waste Chef** – Creates meals with a focus on minimising food waste, using every part of ingredients and promoting sustainable cooking practices.

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- Helping our clients achieve net zero carbon

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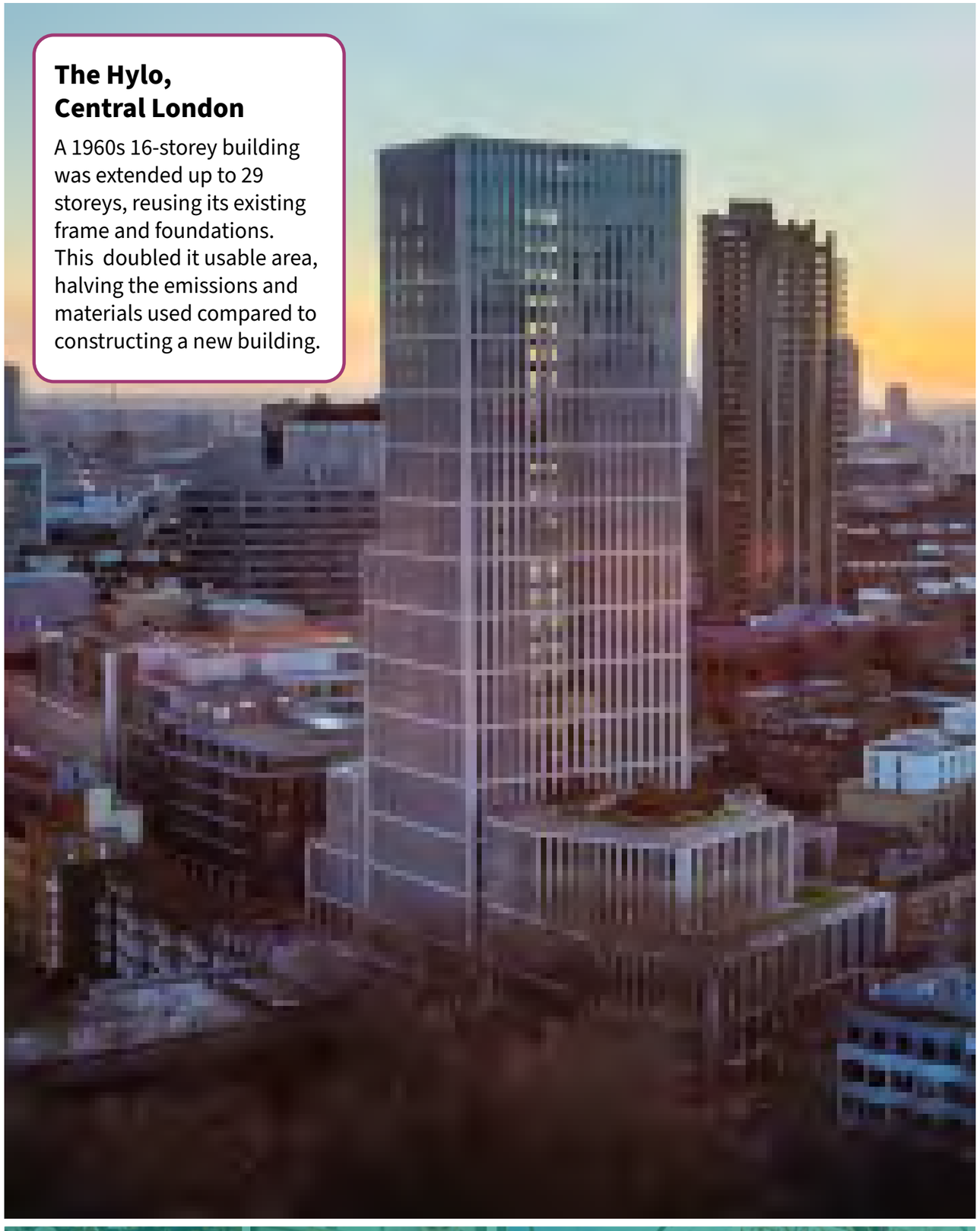


The Hylo, Central London

A 1960s 16-storey building was extended up to 29 storeys, reusing its existing frame and foundations. This doubled it usable area, halving the emissions and materials used compared to constructing a new building.

Building a Greener Future

VIEWPOINT BY WILL ARNOLD, ENGINEER

The future of humanity is endangered by the dual threat of climate breakdown and biodiversity loss from across the globe. Weather systems are changing, leading to more extreme floods and droughts, threatening people's safety, homes, and global food supplies. Nature loss continues to reach new highs, endangering fragile ecosystems.

This breakdown is happening primarily because of the ways in which we make stuff, create energy, grow food, and provide transportation. All four of these industries have engineers at their heart, and so we must transform them if we're going to better protect nature and return our climate to the sweet spot that enables humanity to thrive.

I work in the building industry, and our main impacts on the climate and biodiversity emergency come from two things:

1. Heating and powering our buildings, to keep us at a comfortable temperature and allow us to turn on the lights/TV/kettle.
2. Using construction materials (concrete, steel, bricks, and so on) to create and maintain our buildings.

To engineer buildings that will secure the future of humanity, we need to reduce the heat and power used by our buildings and ensure that all of that power is provided by renewables such as solar panels and wind turbines. We need to stop demolishing existing buildings, upcycling them instead, and then inventing new manufacturing methods to create zero-carbon materials that we can use where we really need to build something new.

We need a revolution

The problem is that most of our plans are based on improvements in efficiency. We aim to use less power and less material. But there are two problems with this.

Firstly, it's not quick enough. If you look at how rapidly the world needs to decrease carbon emissions and nature loss, you see that we're not talking about small gains year-on-year – we need something far more powerful than that.

Secondly, whenever we've found an improvement in efficiency in the past, studies show that we've actually increased our consumption as a result! When the chainsaw was invented, lumberjacks didn't start to work two-day weeks, rather, they cut down more trees.

So instead of efficiency increases, we need breakthroughs, game-changers, and transformations. Design evolution just isn't enough. We need a revolution.

The Arc, Bali, Indonesia

The Arc - a bamboo gymnasium for The Green School in Bali. It's awe-inspiring roof was built entirely from locally sourced 14-metre-tall bamboo arches. The design was inspired by the human ribcage, resulting in a unique shape and an unprecedentedly low carbon footprint .

Diverse and creative teamwork

Today, engineering teams around the world are looking for new minds and new ideas.

We need enthusiasm, intelligence, and imagination. We need people who are mathematically talented, others who are wonderfully creative, and others who are skilled communicators. We need those who love to solve problems, and others who are driven by a desire to see people all over the world live a comfortable, enjoyable life. We need people from different backgrounds, cultures, with different interests and different opinions.

Where teams have this diversity, they thrive.

Becoming an engineer of the future

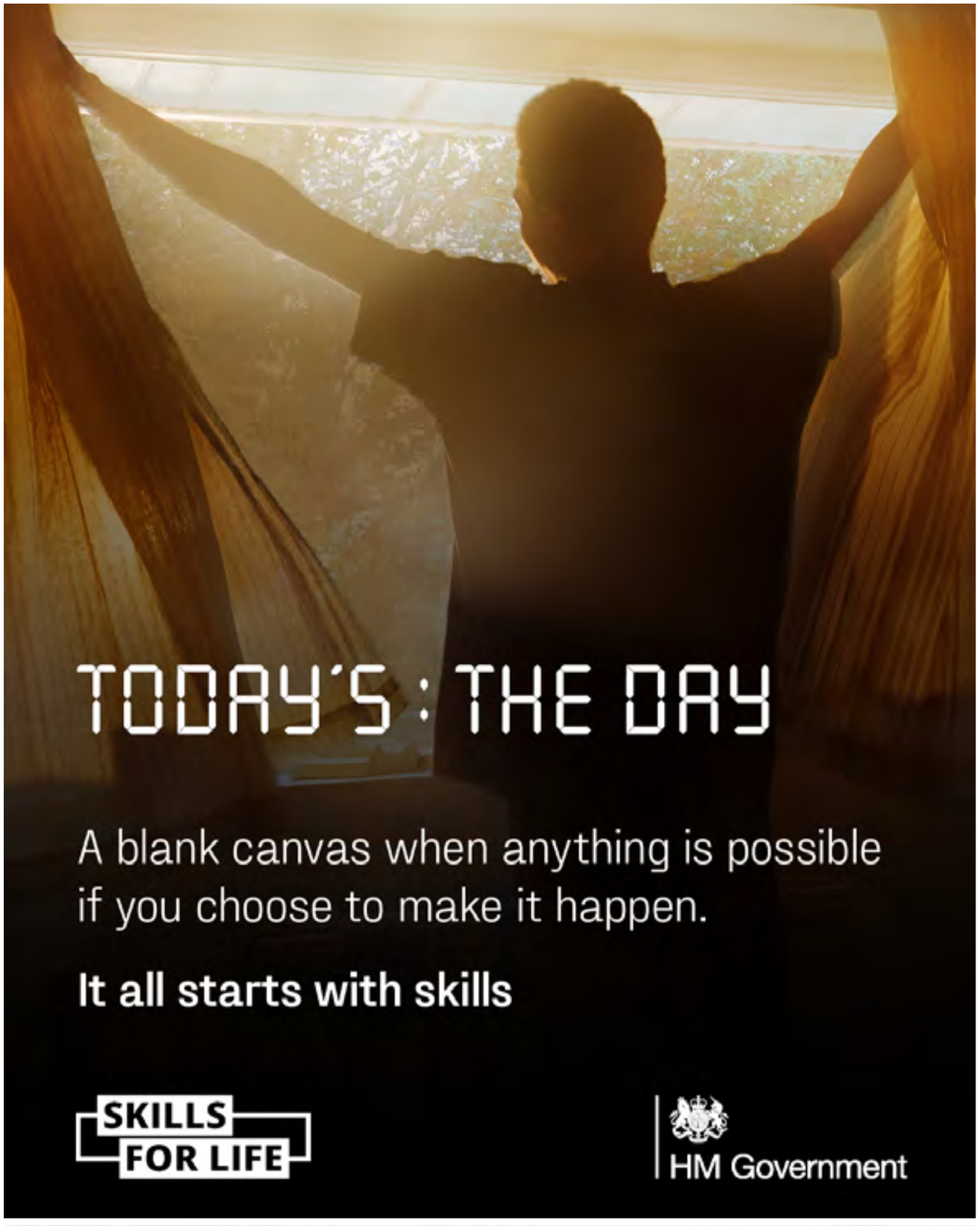
Many engineering courses and apprenticeships now put climate and sustainability at their heart, aiming to produce young engineers who understand the challenges facing humanity even better than their future employers do.

This means that when it comes to climate, new engineers entering the industry are often the most informed members of any given design team. The more senior members of those teams are looking to the next generation to bring their views and ideas for new ways of doing all of this.

To tackle the climate and biodiversity crisis, we need to develop the most extraordinary solutions to it.

This article is an extract from an original printed in [Ingenia magazine.]

Will is a Chartered Structural Engineer and Chartered Environmentalist and works as Head of Climate Action at The Institution of Structural Engineers.



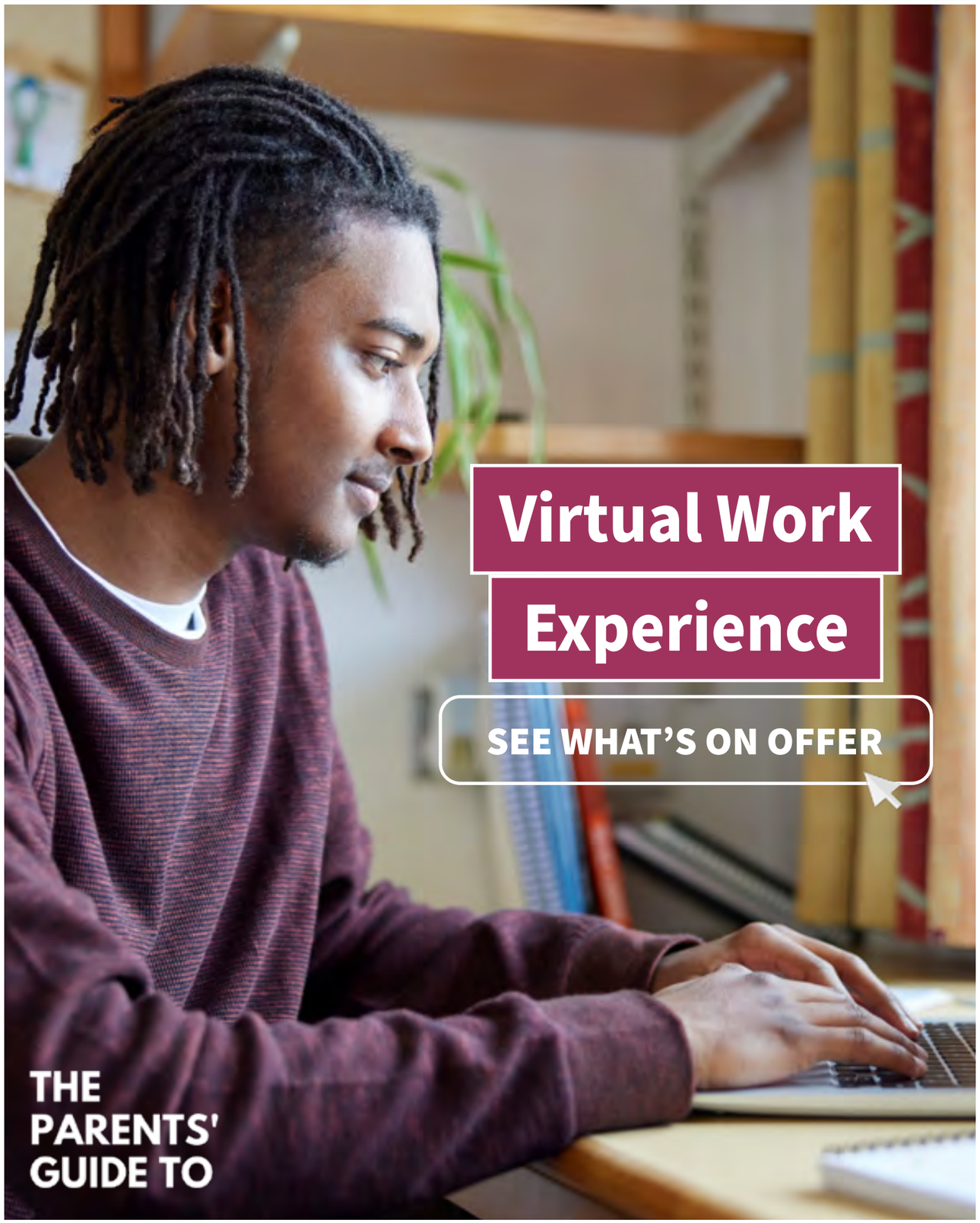
Work Experience

Work experience is important for getting into any career. It provides your teen with first-hand experience of what it's like to work; dealing with colleagues and the public; working to deadlines and how it feels to do things "for real".

If they're lucky, they might find work experience within an industry that is related to their course or ultimate job goal. If this is the case, it can help your child discover more about the industry and may help them realise whether it is or isn't for them. A lesson much better learned sooner than later!

How to find work experience

1. Speak to the careers team at school. They have excellent connections with local and national employers.
2. Do you have any contacts, through your own work, friends or family that could help and take on your child?
3. Contact employers directly and ask.
4. Apply for a job (Saturdays, evenings, holidays) – it may not be their aspirational job, but they'll learn a lot from it.
5. Search green volunteering opportunities at Environment Job



Virtual work experience

Virtual work experience, also referred to as online, remote or digital, is a broad term that includes any opportunity which provides young people with an insight into what it's like to work in an industry or job role while at home.

Opportunities expanded during lockdown and proved so successful they look set to stay. Most virtual work experiences range from half a day to one week, but some may last longer depending on the nature of the work experience and the age of your child.

Not all virtual work experience is the same. Some are open to everyone and provide a platform for students to discover more about the job, view pre-recorded videos on what it's like to work with the organisation and go on virtual tours. Others may require your child to go through an application process and offer regular online meetings with a supervisor, individual project work, networking sessions, training opportunities and video tutorials.

What are the benefits?

Think global

Virtual work placements are open to everyone and locationdoes not need to be a limiting factor.

This opens many possibilities for your child to explore new jobs and industries in areas that may not be possible face to face.

It's free

The majority of virtual work placements are free and working from home will also mean your child will not incur any travel related costs.

Future proof

Remote working is likely to be important to many businesses in the future and learning how to conduct business and work online will develop extremely valuable skills for the modern workplace.

Transferable skills

It's not always easy working from home and taking part in virtual work experience placements will help your child develop those soft skills that all employers are seeking, such as self-motivation and time-management.

Knowing what's right (or what isn't)

Understanding what a job or a career entails might help your child make decisions about whether or not that role is right for them in the future.

3 - 8 March 2025

National Careers Week provides a focus for careers guidance at an important time in the academic year, helping support young people by bringing together students, local employers and advisers through careers events, activities and free resources.

Parent membership

If you want your teen to get the most out of GCSE and sixth form, we'll help you make that happen.

Just £4.99 a month

A fortnightly newsletter so you know what to do when

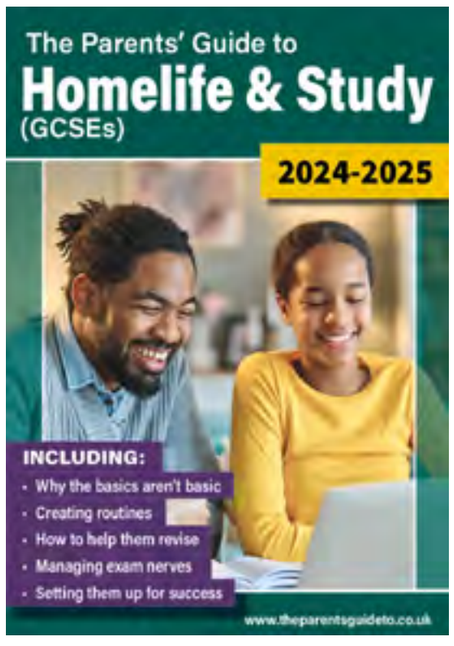
Six specialist guides shared during the year

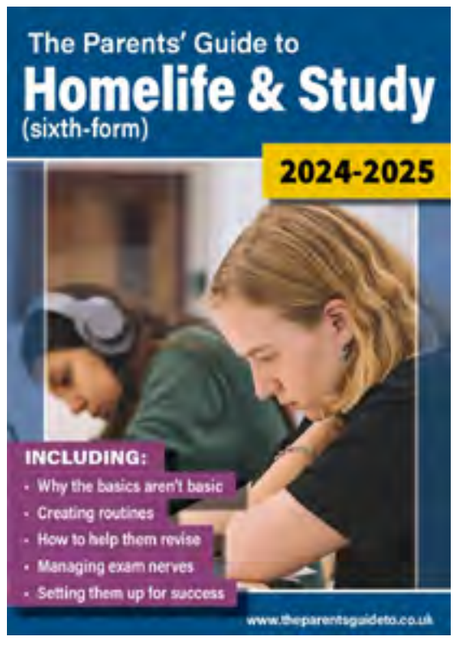
Articles to let you know what's what

2 video calls each term, with a chance to ask questions

Sign up

Browse the full collection:





Parent Guides:

Our range of interactive guides provide you with easy to follow advice, hyperlinks to reliable sources and the most up-to-date information.

Shop now

The Parents' Guide to Green Careers

For Green Careers Week

2024 - 2025

HIGHLIGHTS:

- What are green careers?
- Why "green" matters to teens
- Routes to green careers
- Discussing next steps
- Examples of green careers

GCW
GREEN CAREERS WEEK