



# One minute guide

## September Guarantee

No. 203, January 2025

### What is the September Guarantee?

Every young person of school Year 11 and Year 12 is entitled to have an appropriate offer of education, employment or training. This offer needs to be in place by the end of the September when they would enter Year 12 or Year 13. This is called the September Guarantee.

The law requires all young people in England to participate in education or training until at least their 18th birthday; this is why 18 is sometimes referred to as the participation age. The participation age was raised from 16 in 2015 and is different from the school leaving age, which remains 16 years old.

The definition of an appropriate offer of education, employment or training must include working towards an accredited qualification. For example, a young person who has an offer of employment at a hairdressing salon does not have an appropriate offer in relation to the September Guarantee unless this employment also includes working towards a relevant apprenticeship or other accredited qualification.

### What are the responsibilities of the local authority?

The local authority is required to lead the September Guarantee process for 16 year olds who are educated in their area and 17 year olds who are resident in their area. Local authorities have a statutory duty to record the destinations of 16 and 17 year olds and to track and support young people, whilst schools and post-16 education institutions have a statutory duty to provide data to local authorities to support these duties.

In addition, the [Education and Skills Act 2008](#) placed two duties on local authorities that relate to raising the participation age to 18. These duties cover the promotion of the effective participation in education and training for 16 and 17 year olds within the local authority area, and identifying and tracking those young people covered by the duty to encourage them to find a suitable offer and provide support to those without an offer.

The local authority is required to work with schools and post-16 providers to identify those young people eligible for an offer, understand their post-16 plans and any offers they have received, and record this information on their systems. Young people who do not have post-16 plans or an offer of a place are at risk of becoming NEET (not in education, employment or training) in the following September. Identifying these young people enables services to provide additional support and advice about the options available to them, and this contributes the Leeds 'obsession' to reduce the number of young people not in education, employment and training, as set out in the [Children and Young People's Plan](#).

## How does the local authority get information about the September Guarantee?

For most young people entitled to the September Guarantee, the local authority receives information about their offers from their school, college or education providers at various points during the academic year. In March, providers are asked for the 'intended destinations' of Year 11 students for the following academic year; in July they are asked for 'offers' that students have for the following academic year; and in September they are asked for information about young people's destinations. At each point, the local authority shares this information with the Department for Education.

However, for a range of different reasons, there are young people for whom schools, settings and apprenticeship providers are not able to supply information about intended destinations, offers or actual post-16 destinations. Where this is the case, colleagues in the local authority need to identify these young people and try to find out the information directly from them or from practitioners working with them.

## How can practitioners support the September Guarantee process?

It is important that practitioners are aware of the September Guarantee, and are starting to have conversations with young people about their intended destinations several months prior to the September in which they would enter Year 12 or Year 13. This will help to identify any young people who may need support in order to secure an offer, as well as identifying those at risk of becoming NEET.

Young people can still access support from their school or college careers advisor after they have left, if they start a course or apprenticeship that isn't right for them. The local authority's Pathways Support Team can offer advice and guidance on applying for post-16 opportunities including apprenticeships, provide careers advice and guidance, and offer support with skills such as CV writing and job searching. If you are concerned that a young person you are working with is at risk of becoming NEET, please speak to the Pathways Support Team.

If you are contacted by local authority colleagues and asked for information about offers or intended destinations for one of the young people you work with or support, please respond to this request promptly. This will ensure that the young person's needs can be identified and responded to appropriately and that the local authority is able to fulfil its statutory duties in relation to the September Guarantee.

## Key contacts and further information

For further information or to discuss support for a young person, please contact the Pathways Support Team via [pathwayssupport@leeds.gov.uk](mailto:pathwayssupport@leeds.gov.uk) or by contacting the Youth Service on 0113 378 6840.

For young people over the age of 15, the Leeds City Council [Employment and Skills](#) team can also offer support, for example through [Support for Young People](#), the [Leeds Employment Hub](#) and [Start in Leeds website](#).

For more details of the statutory duties of the local authority, please see the statutory guidance on the [participation of young people in education, employment or training](#).