Post 16 education and training pathways for young people with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND)

Introduction

Children can legally leave school at the end of the school year where they turn 16 years of age. This would normally be when they finish the end of National Curriculum Year (NCY) 11. However, all young people must be in some kind of education or training until they reach the age of 18. This guidance document outlines the options available and the different processes involved to young people with Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) and an Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP) only.

> **Young people and their families have told us that it is difficult to understand the education system after secondary school.**
>
> **They want to see a clear pathway to education and independent living.**

This Post 16 Pathways Model seeks to give a clear direction for our families so young people can see the options available to them to move from Secondary education to Further Education and progress to Higher Education, Employment or Independent Living.

All young people need guidance to prepare for their future. A young person with SEND may face additional challenges to achieving their aspirations. The system of SEND support places significant importance on helping children and young people prepare for their future. This is referred to in the SEND Code of Practice 2025 as ‘Preparing for Adulthood’. Please note that this guidance is for young people with SEND and an EHCP only, opportunities for those without SEND will be found elsewhere on the Torbay Council website

Preparing for Adulthood

Preparing for adulthood means preparing for:

- Higher education and/or employment.
- Independent living.
- Participating in society: friendships and contributing to the local community.
- Being as healthy as possible in later life.

If a child has SEND and receives support via an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP), then those supporting the child will work with them, helping them to plan for when they leave school and the goals that they wish to achieve in order to ensure they have every opportunity to become a healthy and successful adult.

Further information and resources on supporting a child in preparing for adulthood can be found on the **Council for Disabled Children website**

Key Stage 4 – Current Provision

Children with SEND and an EHCP may be attending a variety of different types of settings based on their needs and their ability to access education provision. A breakdown of this is below:

School Setting

- Mainstream
- Special
- Independent
- Resource Provision
- Alternative Provision

EHE

- Electively Home Educated

NEET

- Not in education, employment or training

EOTAS

- Education other than at school

EBSA

- Emotionally based school avoidance

Section 19

- Medical Needs
- Exclusion
- Otherwise not in education

Children and young people in key stage 3 and 4 with SEND and in receipt of an EHCP in Torbay are supported via the local area partnership and statutory annual review processes, ensuring their voices are heard and they have influence on strategic planning in relation to on-going education, training or employment. In addition, effective communication and partnership working ensures children and young people in care have a full transition plan from the age of 14 years and that Care Leavers aged over 16 years are also supported. As a result of effective planning young people at risk of not in education, employment or training (NEET) can be monitored and mitigations put in place to support where needed.

Support for children and young people during this transitional stage is vital. It can be a challenging time for any young person, but for those with SEND, any challenges can be magnified and daunting. The need for additional support and resources is required to develop life skills, independent living skills, and transitional planning. An increased emphasis on co-production and creation of pathways will support all Torbay children and young people with SEND and their families by breaking down barriers to participation in education, training or employment opportunities.

By planning for pre- to post-16 transition, Torbay have identified various pathways for development that explore lifelong learning opportunities; education, employment and training; preparation for independent living and managing health needs; promoting awareness and involvement in community; promoting transition opportunities for children and young people with SEND into further and higher education, adult health services and adult social care.

During this phase of a child/young person's educational career, a renewed focus is required during annual review with an emphasis put on next steps. Transition packages require discussion from Year 9 onwards with the inclusion of careers services, social care, health and education present at

that academic year's annual review. During the Year 10 annual review, a formal careers advice report will be created with input from all active agencies, including health and social care, and where necessary housing and plans for independent living and travel training.

Strategic co-design is effective, and the post-16 pathway planning is clearly influenced by service users and their families.

Post-16 and post-19 outcomes should be a priority at this crucial stage in transition, with clear focus on working towards supporting young people to achieve qualifications in line with their aspirations, including vocational education, training and employment. This will continue to be managed via the annual review process and working alongside the local area SEND Partnership, young people and families.

Employment

- Career advice and guidance
- Work experience opportunities
- Supported Internships
- Voluntary work

Independent Living

- Supported living
- Independent travel
- Community inclusion
- Short Breaks
- Housing
- Financial management support

Further Education

- University
- Employment with training (leading to formal qualifications)

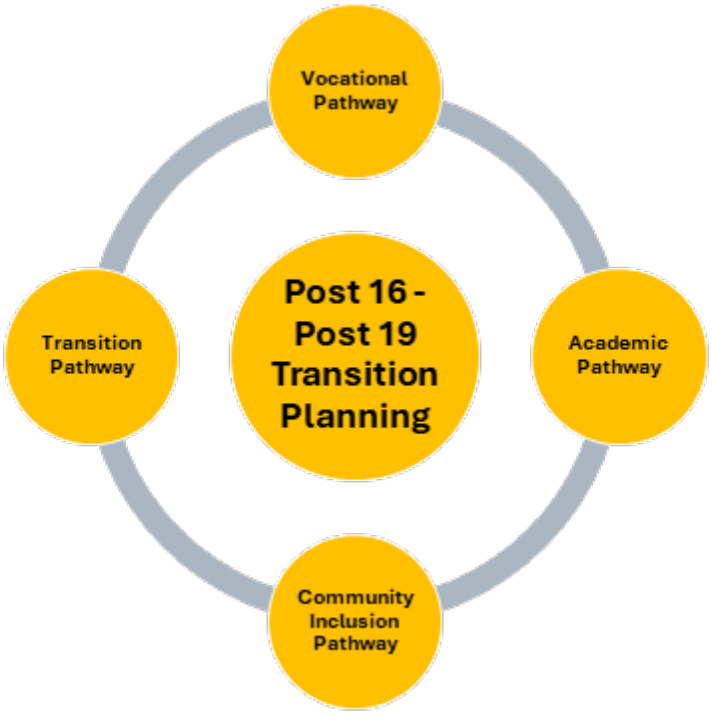
Torbay's Post-16 Pathways

Pathways are required to showcase a range of opportunities for all Torbay children and young people with SEND. Local and national initiatives will build on long-term outcomes and deliver both long and short-term benefits for local communities. Provision will include support for adolescents

and young adults, both community based and with links to education providers and local businesses, with a focus on the prevention of NEET. The various pathways will work to improve and widen networks that support interventions for families.

The Pathways available for those entering Post 16 Education or Training are:

- learning and training in preparation for a preferred job (Vocational Job-related)
- continued learning and studying (Academic i.e. College or University)
- becoming successful in adulthood (Community Inclusion)
- and support to start something new (Transition) Pathways.



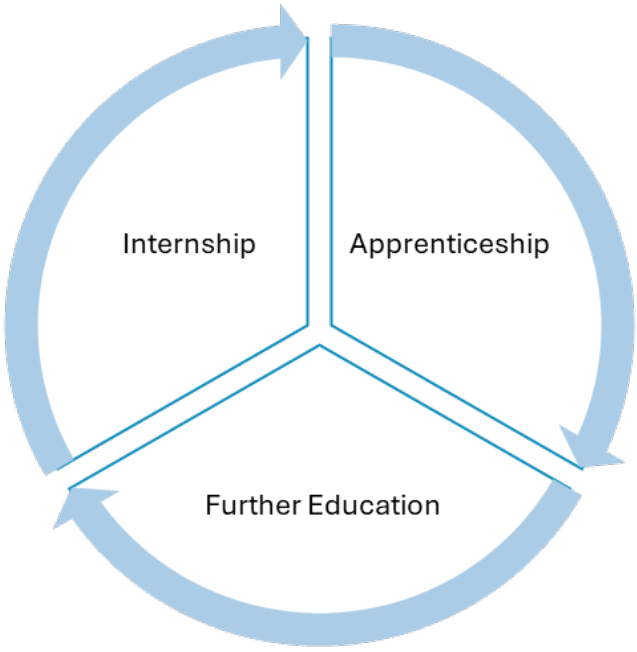
Torbay's Post 19 Pathways and destinations

Vocational Pathway – learning and training in preparation for a preferred job

A Vocational Pathway includes courses and qualifications which are linked specifically to a particular area of work which a young person is interested in.

They are designed to give young people the skills and experience needed for a certain job.

These courses will generally offer a mix of classroom-based learning, with access to the practical elements of learning the particular job which the young person is interested in. This experience could be based at the area of classroom-based learning or directly within a work environment.



The settings who can support young people on a Vocational Pathway are:

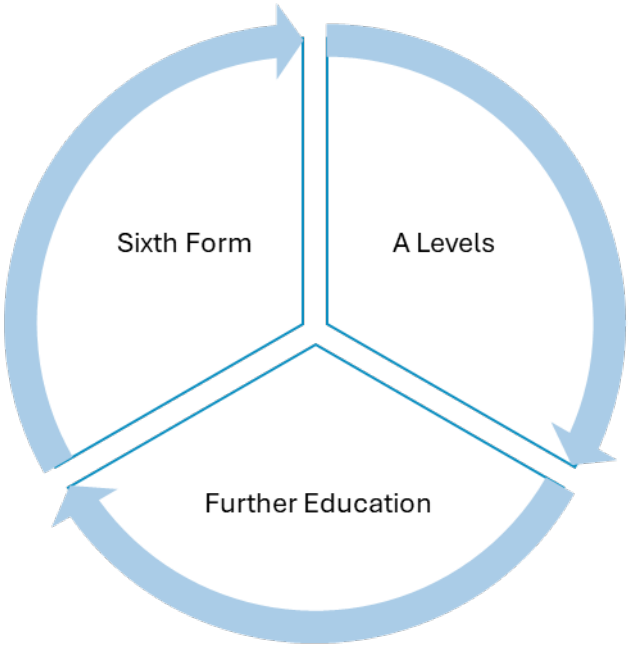
South Devon College: Mainstream – South Devon College: Learning Opportunities Programme – South Devon College: Supported Internships – Brunel Special School: Supported Internships – Combe Pafford School and College – Mayfield College – Exeter College – Plymouth City College – Eat That Frog –Alternative Training Providers

Academic Pathway – continued learning and studying

An Academic Pathway focuses on the continued learning experience which may include access to a structured series of academic programs and courses.

This includes focusing on the aspirations of gaining A-Levels or attending university.

The Academic Pathway acts as a bridge from one educational level to the next, helping students to progress in a specific career goal by building on previous learning.



The settings who can support young people on an Academic Pathway are:

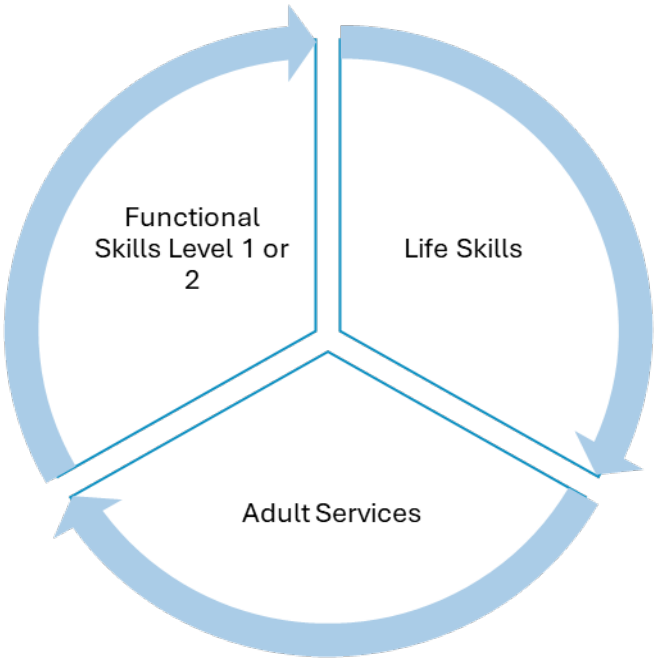
Brixham College: 6th Form – Churston Ferrers: 6th Form – St Cuthbert Mayne: 6th Form – The Spires: 6th Form – Torquay Academy: 6th Form – South Devon College: Mainstream – Exeter College – Plymouth City College

Community Inclusion Pathway – becoming successful in adulthood

Some young people may have the aspiration to be successful in their local community and develop the skills to be able to live as independently as they can.

The Community Inclusion Pathway supports young people whose onward journey after pre-16 education may not result in full employment opportunities, yet enables them to live a fulfilled life and contribute where they can.

Some young people accessing this Pathway may have the ability to access further education to enhance their skills, and some may utilise this Pathway to gain skills to become more independent in their lives.



The settings who can support young people on a Community Inclusion Pathway are:

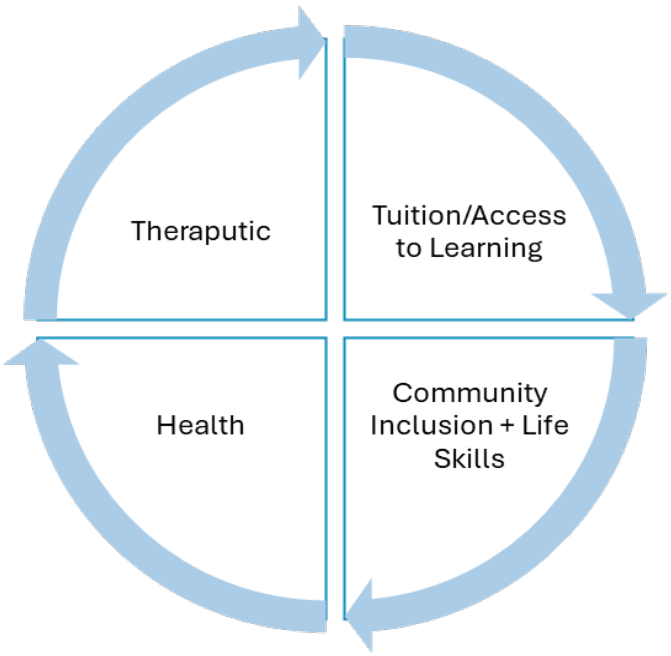
Mayfield College – Youth Services – Adult Services – Alternative Provider

Transition Pathway – support to start something new

A Transition Pathway is an option that may be available to young people who have the aspiration and future ability to access the Vocational and Academic Pathways, however, require some interim support and intervention to enable them to achieve this.

This support could be a more bespoke timetable of support for a short, agreed period of time, to work on breaking down current barriers that they have in accessing the provision as outlined in the Vocational and Academic Pathways.

Access to this Pathway may not necessarily result in achieving accreditation and qualifications whilst accessing this provision, however it will provide a stepping stone for the young people to build up the ability at attend the provision which will see them achieve their future employment aspirations.



The settings who can support young people on a Transition Pathway are:

South Devon College: EPP – Eat That Frog – Alternative Provider

Torbay's Pathway Map

Mainstream School (incl. SDHS and ERPs)

- 1-year Bridging Course
- South Devon College / Other FE College or Sixth Form
- Supported Internship / Apprenticeship → Employment

Combe Pafford Special School

- Combe Pafford Sixth Form
- Supported Internship → Employment & Independent Living

Mayfield Special School

- Mayfield Sixth Form → Learning Opportunities & Adult Social Care
- Mayfield Bespoke Sixth Form → Independent Living & Adult Social Care

Brunel Special School

- Brunel Supported Internship → Employment

Education Other Than At School (EOTAS)

- Core / Enhanced Offer → Employment

Not in Education, Employment and Training (NEET)

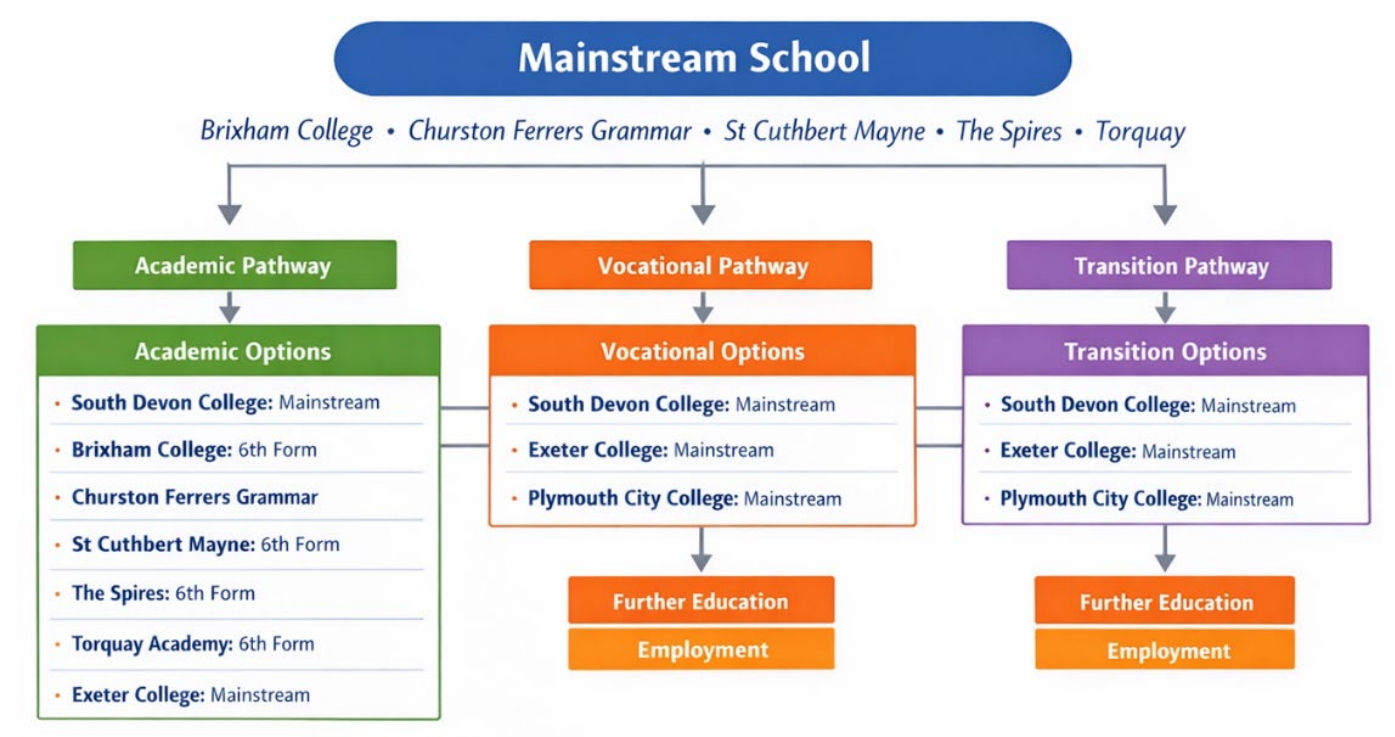
Emotionally Based School Avoidance (EBSA)

Independent Specialist Provision (ISP) or Out-of-Area Special School

- Core / Enhanced Offer or ISEP

Torbay's Post 16 Pathway Map

The below offers examples of the Pathway options that may be available to young people based on their pre-16 education provision.



Students attending a mainstream school can progress through one of three broad pathways: academic, vocational or transition. The diagram shows the post-16 options available from mainstream secondary schools including Brixham College, Churston Ferrers Grammar School, St Cuthbert Mayne, The Spires and Torquay Academy.

Academic pathway

The academic pathway leads to sixth form or mainstream college study.

Academic options

- South Devon College (mainstream provision)
- Brixham College Sixth Form
- Churston Ferrers Grammar School Sixth Form
- St Cuthbert Mayne Sixth Form
- The Spires Sixth Form
- Torquay Academy Sixth Form
- Exeter College (mainstream provision)

Vocational pathway

The vocational pathway focuses on practical and career-related learning.

Vocational options

- South Devon College (mainstream provision)
- Exeter College (mainstream provision)
- Plymouth City College (mainstream provision)

Typical outcomes

- Further education
- Employment

Transition pathway

The transition pathway supports students who may need additional preparation for adult life, learning or work.

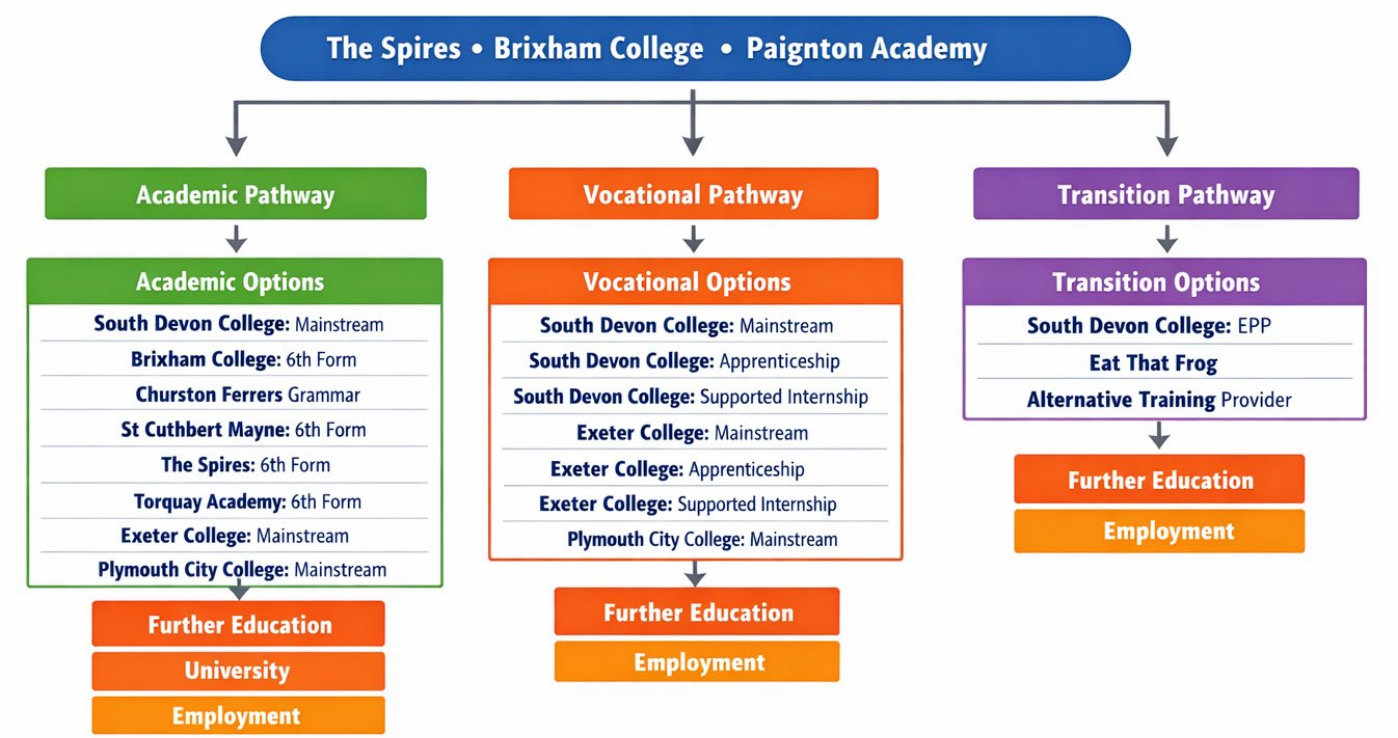
Transition options

- South Devon College (mainstream provision)
- Exeter College (mainstream provision)
- Plymouth City College (mainstream provision)

Typical outcomes

- Further education
- Employment

Mainstream School: Enhanced Resource Provision



Students attending The Spires, Brixham College or Paignton Academy can progress through one of three broad pathways: academic, vocational or transition. The diagram shows the post-16 options available from these schools.

Academic pathway

The academic pathway leads to sixth form, college study, higher education and employment.

Academic options

- South Devon College (mainstream provision)
- Brixham College Sixth Form
- Churston Ferrers Grammar School Sixth Form
- St Cuthbert Mayne Sixth Form
- The Spires Sixth Form
- Torquay Academy Sixth Form
- Exeter College (mainstream provision)
- Plymouth City College (mainstream provision)

Typical outcomes

- Further education
- University

- Employment

Vocational pathway

The vocational pathway focuses on practical, work-related and skills-based learning.

Vocational options

- South Devon College (mainstream provision)
- South Devon College Apprenticeships
- South Devon College Supported Internships
- Exeter College (mainstream provision)
- Exeter College Apprenticeships
- Exeter College Supported Internships
- Plymouth City College (mainstream provision)

Typical outcomes

- Further education
- Employment
- Transition pathway

The transition pathway supports students who may need additional preparation for adulthood, learning or work.

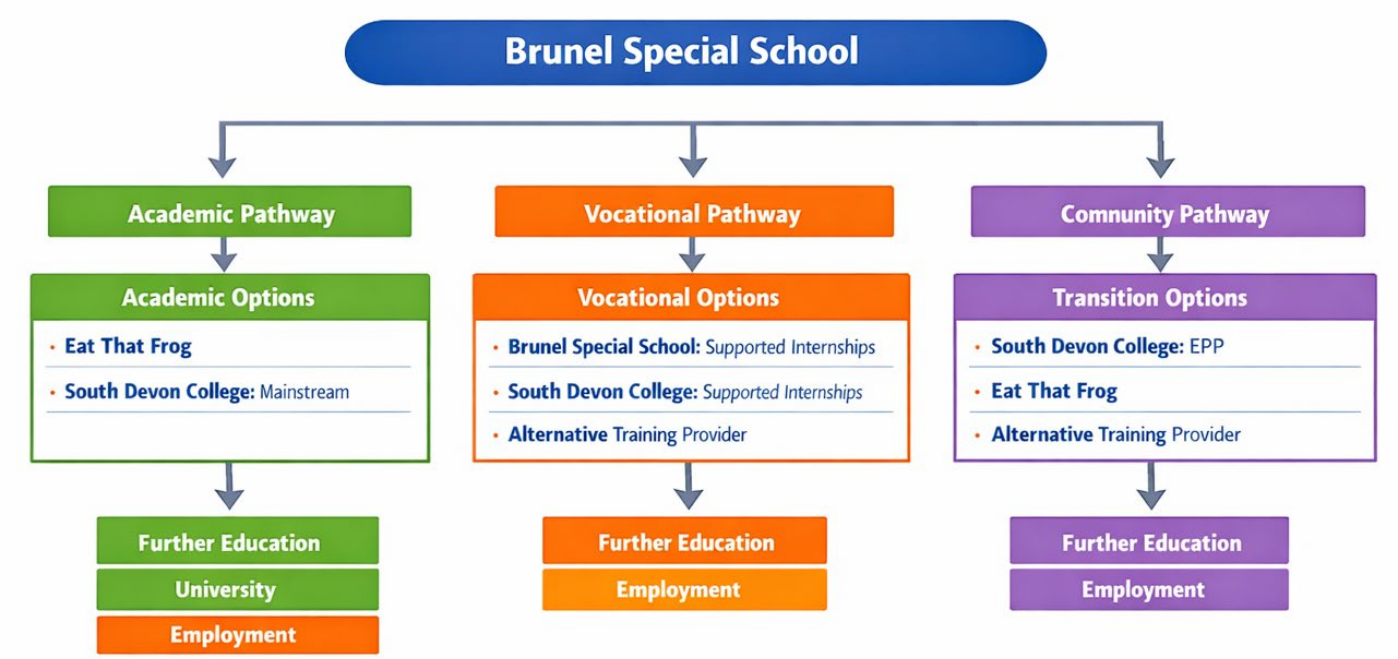
Transition options

- South Devon College EPP
- Eat That Frog
- Alternative training providers

Typical outcomes

- Further education
- Employment

Brunel Special School



Students attending Brunel Special School can progress through one of three broad pathways: academic, vocational or community. The diagram shows the post-16 options available from Brunel Special School.

Academic pathway

The academic pathway focuses on progression into further education, higher education and employment.

Academic options

- Eat That Frog
- South Devon College (mainstream provision)

Typical outcomes

- Further education
- University
- Employment

Vocational pathway

The vocational pathway focuses on practical learning, workplace skills and employment preparation.

Vocational options

- Brunel Special School Supported Internships
- South Devon College Supported Internships
- Alternative training providers

Typical outcomes

- Further education
- Employment

Community pathway

The community pathway supports students to develop independence, life skills and participation in their local community.

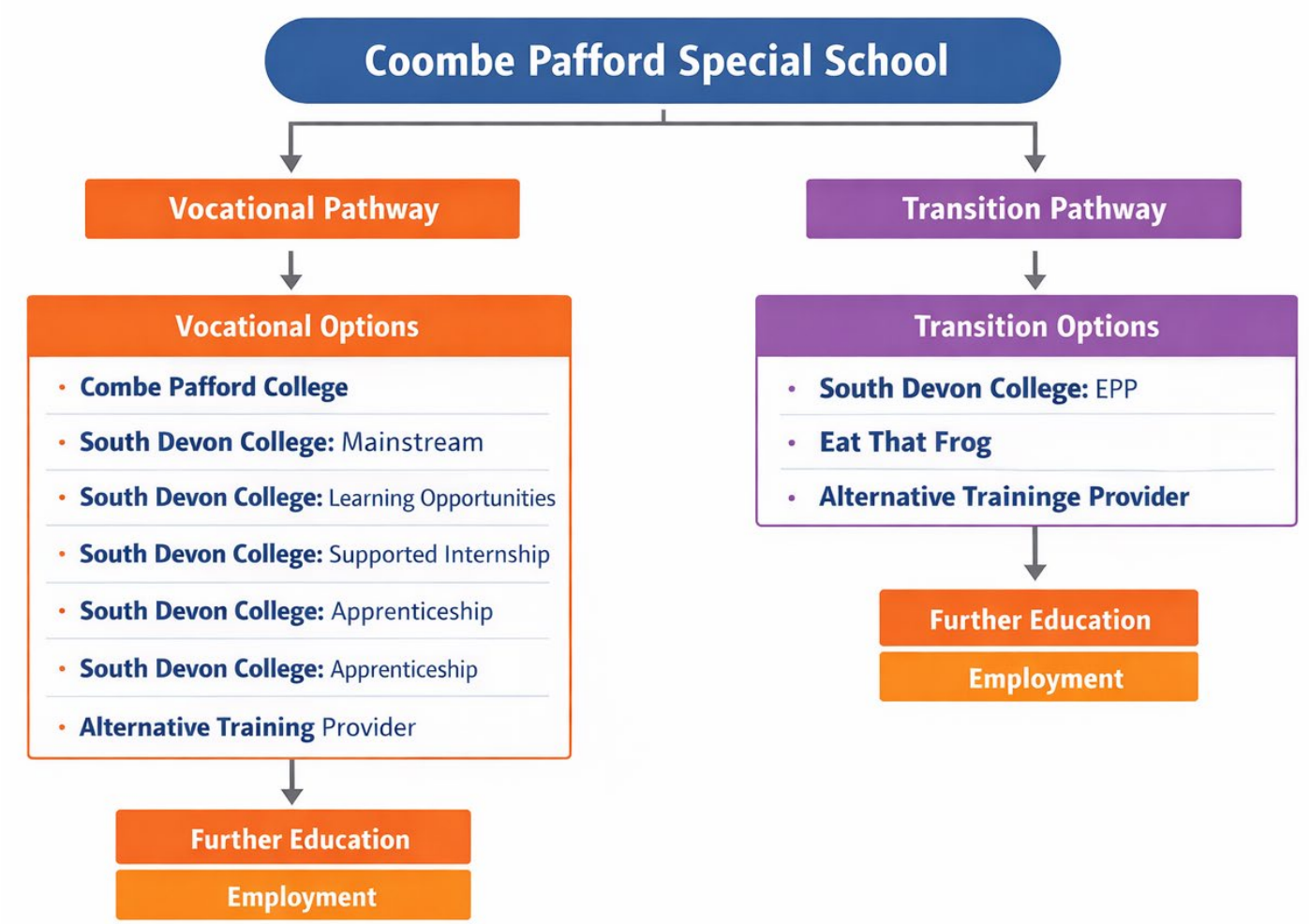
Transition options

- South Devon College EPP
- Eat That Frog
- Alternative training providers

Typical outcomes

- Further education
- Employment

Combe Pafford Special School



Students attending Coombe Pafford Special School can progress through one of two broad pathways: vocational or transition. The diagram shows the post-16 options available from Coombe Pafford Special School.

Vocational pathway

The vocational pathway focuses on developing practical skills, workplace experience and preparation for employment.

Vocational options

- Coombe Pafford College
- South Devon College (mainstream provision)
- South Devon College Learning Opportunities
- South Devon College Supported Internship
- South Devon College Apprenticeships
- Alternative training providers

Typical outcomes

- Further education
- Employment
- Transition pathway

The transition pathway supports students who may need additional preparation for adulthood, independent living, learning or work.

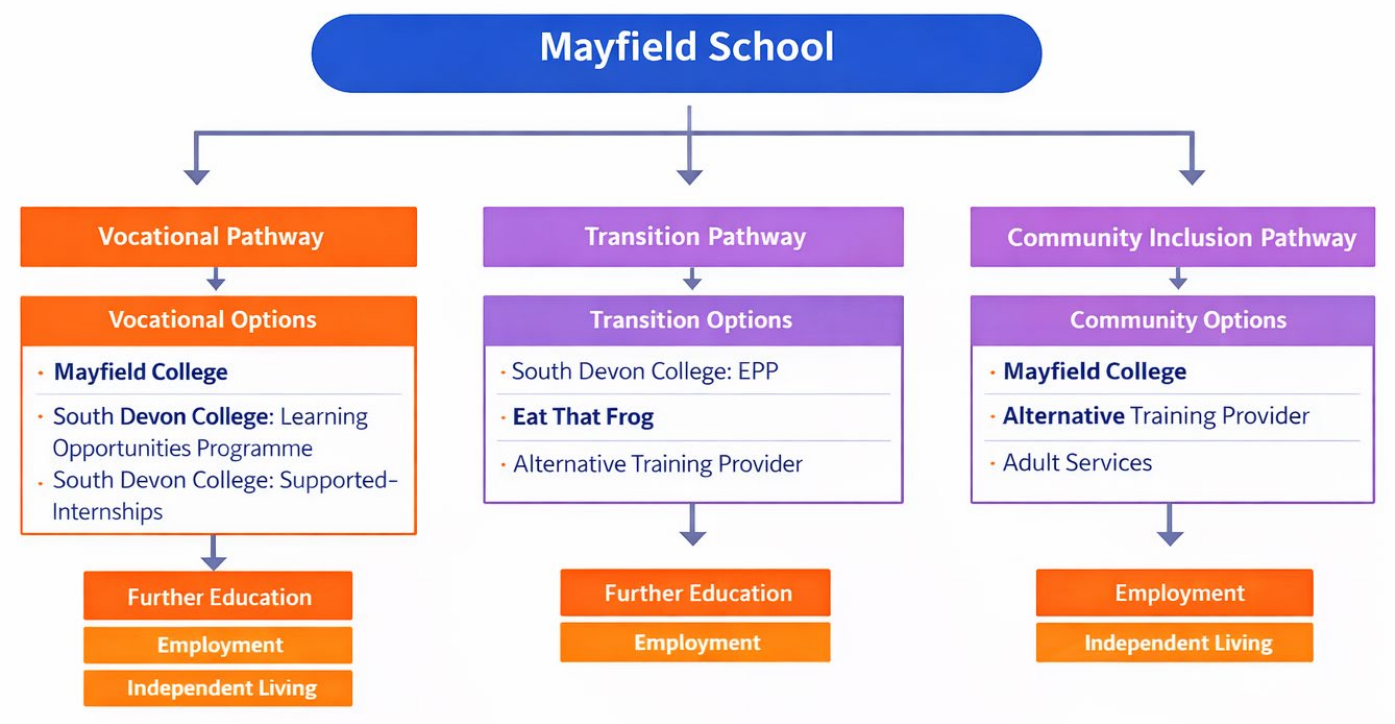
Transition options

- South Devon College EPP
- Eat That Frog
- Alternative training providers

Typical outcomes

- Further education
- Employment

Mayfield School



Students attending Mayfield School can progress through one of three broad pathways: vocational, transition or community inclusion. The diagram shows the post-16 options available from Mayfield School.

Vocational pathway

The vocational pathway focuses on developing practical skills, work experience and preparation for employment and independent living.

Vocational options

- Mayfield College
- South Devon College Learning Opportunities Programme
- South Devon College Supported Internships

Typical outcomes

- Further education
- Employment
- Independent living

Transition pathway

The transition pathway supports students who need additional preparation for adult life, education, training or work.

Transition options

- South Devon College EPP
- Eat That Frog
- Alternative training providers

Typical outcomes

- Further education
- Employment

Community inclusion pathway

The community inclusion pathway focuses on developing life skills, independence and participation in the local community.

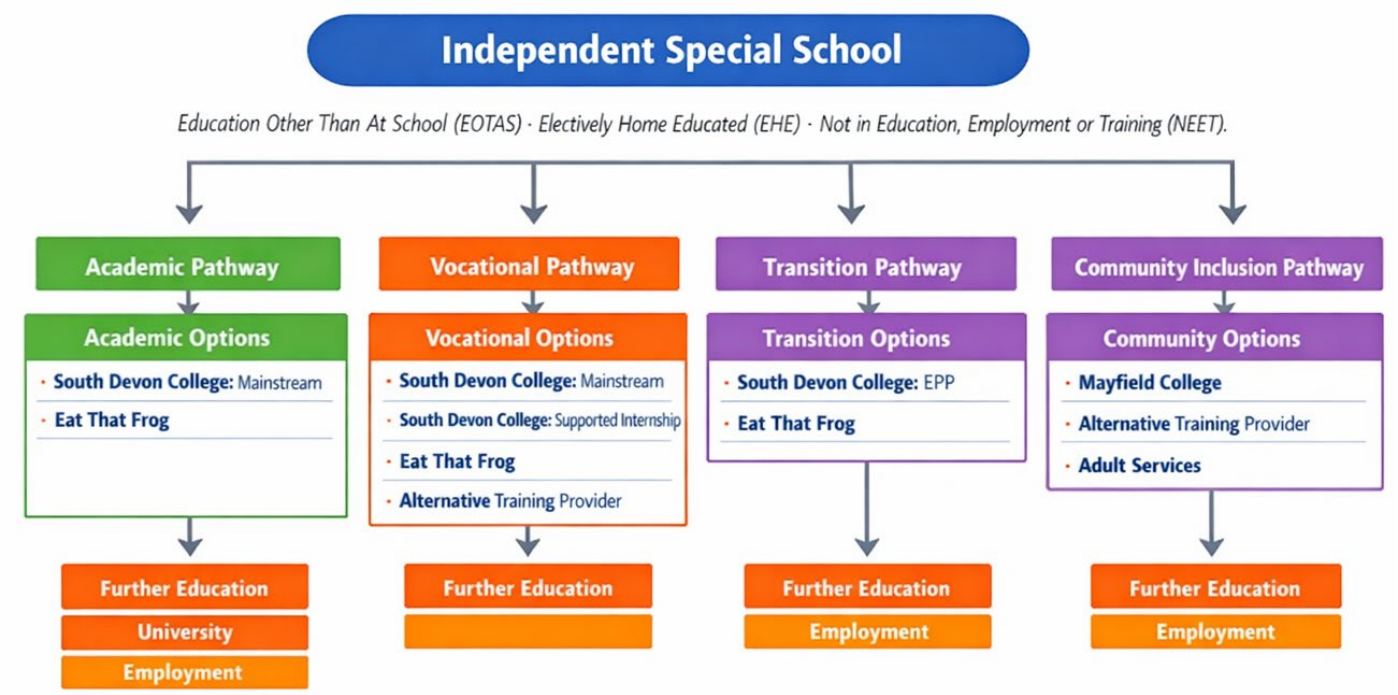
Community options

- Mayfield College
- Alternative training providers
- Adult Services

Typical outcomes

- Employment
- Independent living

Independent Special School



Students attending an independent special school, or those who are receiving Education Other Than At School (EOTAS), are Electively Home Educated (EHE), or are Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET), can progress through one of four broad pathways: academic, vocational, transition or community inclusion.

Academic pathway

The academic pathway focuses on progression into further education, higher education and employment.

Academic options

- South Devon College (mainstream provision)
- Eat That Frog

Typical outcomes

- Further education
- University
- Employment

Vocational pathway

The vocational pathway focuses on practical learning, workplace skills and employment preparation.

Vocational options

- South Devon College (mainstream provision)
- South Devon College Supported Internship
- Eat That Frog
- Alternative training providers

Typical outcomes

- Further education
- Employment

Transition pathway

The transition pathway supports students who need additional preparation for adult life, education, training or work.

Transition options

- South Devon College EPP
- Eat That Frog

Typical outcomes

- Further education
- Employment

Community inclusion pathway

The community inclusion pathway focuses on developing independence, life skills and participation in the local community.

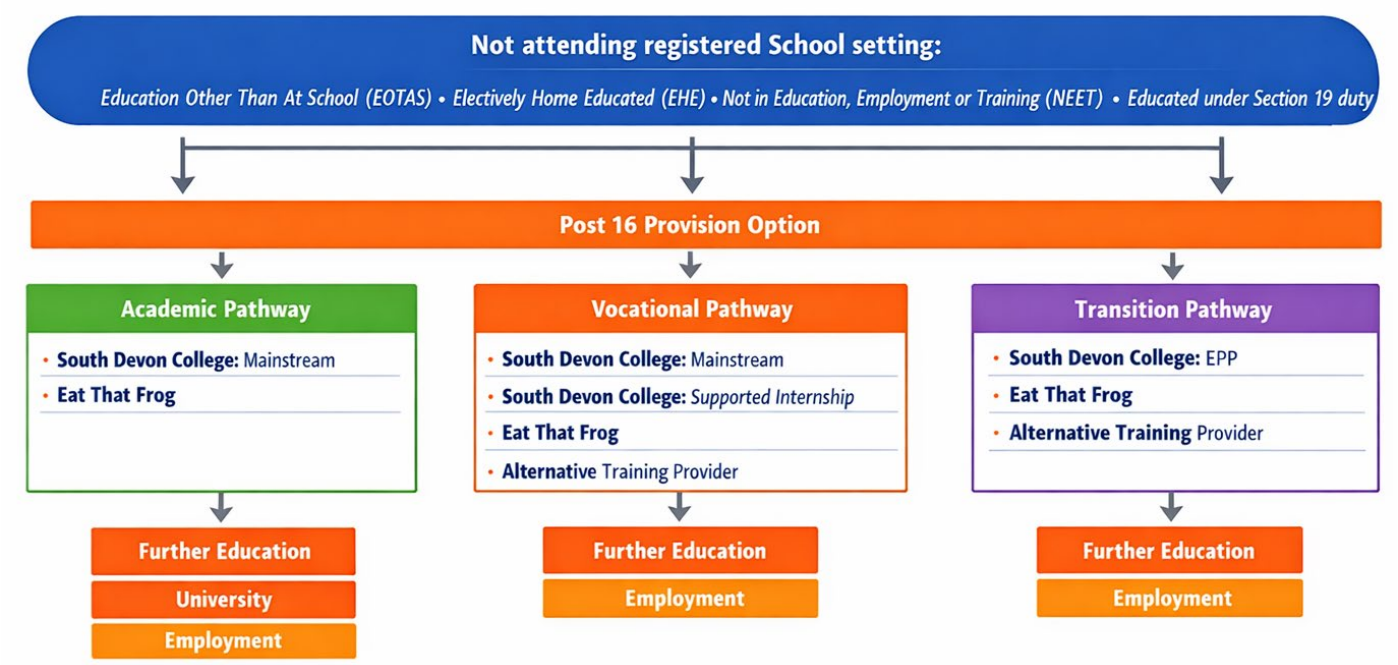
Community options

- Mayfield College
- Alternative training providers
- Adult Services

Typical outcomes

- Further education
- Employment

Non attending registered School setting



This pathway applies to young people who are:

- Receiving Education Other Than At School (EOTAS)
- Electively Home Educated (EHE)
- Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET)
- Educated under the Section 19 duty

These young people can access post-16 provision through an academic, vocational or transition pathway.

Academic pathway

The academic pathway focuses on progression into further education, higher education and employment.

Academic options

- South Devon College (mainstream provision)
- Eat That Frog

Typical outcomes

- Further education
- University
- Employment

Vocational pathway

The vocational pathway focuses on practical learning, workplace skills and preparation for employment.

Vocational options

- South Devon College (mainstream provision)
- South Devon College Supported Internship
- Eat That Frog
- Alternative training providers

Typical outcomes

- Further education
- Employment

Transition pathway

The transition pathway supports young people who need additional preparation for adult life, education, training or work.

Transition options

- South Devon College EPP
- Eat That Frog
- Alternative training providers

Typical outcomes

- Further education
- Employment

South Devon College: Mainstream

South Devon College is Torbay's Further Education (FE) College and can offer a wide range of courses and qualifications. This ranges from Level 1 Foundation Courses through to Higer Education including Foundation Degrees and honours degrees.

Any young person can access these courses at South Devon College if they achieve the course eligibility outlined by the college.

South Devon College: Apprenticeship

South Devon College is an apprenticeship training provider and work closely with local and national employers to enable students to have real world experience whilst gaining a qualification.

Any young person can access apprenticeships at South Devon College if they achieve the eligibility criteria set out by the college.

South Devon College: Supported Internship

South Devon College is a supported internship provider and work with students by offering more intense support with their learning, whilst also enhancing support within a work placement.

Students are only able to access this provision if they continue to receive support via an EHCP, and if this is recognised as the best step for the student. Most supported internship programmes at South Devon College start at aged 18.

South Devon College: Learning Opportunities

South Devon College offers a supportive learning provision for students who require additional support in areas such as Maths and English, independence skills and access to interest based learning such as animal care, catering and media.

Students can access this provision if they continue to receive support via an EHCP, and if it has been identified that this programme suits the needs of the student.

South Devon College: EPP

South Devon College offer a more bespoke learning environment for students who require support to transition into the main FE college. This provision is separate from other elements of the college and supports with the transition into college, access to learning, gaining independence and enhancing their ability to increase attendance within the main college campus.

Students can access this provision if they continue to receive support via an EHCP, and if it has been identified that this programme suits the needs of the student.

Brixham College: 6th Form

Brixham College 6th Form is part of the secondary school and offers a range of academic pathways to prepare students for university or employment, following a structured learning environment.

Students can access this provision if they are already students at Brixham College and meet the eligibility criteria for attending 6th form. If students are not already on roll at Brixham College, they are still able to apply for a place.

Churston Ferrers Grammar

Churston Ferrers Grammar 6th Form is separate from the main school site and offers a range of academic pathways to prepare students for university or employment, following a structured learning environment.

Students can access this provision if they meet the eligibility requirements for attending a Grammar school.

St Cuthbert Mayne: 6th Form

St Cuthbert Mayne 6th Form is part of the secondary school and offers a range of academic and vocational pathways to prepare for higher education or employment.

Students can access this provision if they are already students at St Cuthbert Mayne and meet the eligibility criteria for attending 6th form. If students are already not on roll at St Cuthbert Mayne, then they are still able to apply for a place via their admissions process.

The Spires: 6th Form

The Spires 6th Form is part of the secondary school and offers a range of academic pathways to prepare students for university or employment, following a structured learning environment.

Students can access this provision if they are already students at The Spires and meet the eligibility criteria for attending 6th form. If students are not already on roll at The Spires, they are able to express an interest to the 6th Form.

Torquay Academy: 6th Form

Torquay Academy 6th Form is part of the secondary school and offers a range of academic and vocational pathways to prepare students for university or employment, following a structured learning environment.

Students can access this provision if they are already students at Torquay Academy and meet the eligibility criteria for attending 6th form. If students are not already on roll at Torquay Academy, they are able to express an interest to the 6th Form.

Exeter College: Mainstream

Exeter College is a Further Education (FE) College based in Exeter Devon and can offer a wide range of courses and qualifications. This ranges from Entry Level through to some Level 6 university level qualifications.

Any young person can access these courses at Exeter College if they achieve the course eligibility outlined by the college. Consideration should be given to the distance to travel to ensure that this appropriate for the young person.

Exeter College: Apprenticeships

Exeter College is an apprenticeship training provider and work closely with local and national employers to enable students to have real world experience whilst gaining a qualification.

Any young person can access apprenticeships at Exeter if they achieve the eligibility criteria set out by the college. Consideration should be given to the distance to travel to ensure that this appropriate for the young person.

Exeter College: Supported Internship (18+ only)

Exeter College is a supported internship provider and work with students by offering more intense support with their learning, whilst also enhancing support within a work placement.

Students are only able to access this provision if they continue to receive support via an EHCP, and if this is recognised as the best step for the student. Young people must be aged 18 or over to access this course. Consideration should be given to the distance to travel to ensure that this appropriate for the young person.

City College Plymouth: Mainstream

City College Plymouth is a Further Education (FE) College based in Plymouth Devon and can offer a wide range of courses and qualifications. This ranges from pre-entry level through to university level courses.

Any young person can access these courses at City College Plymouth if they achieve the course eligibility outlined by the college. Consideration should be given to the distance to travel to ensure that this appropriate for the young person.

City College Plymouth: Apprenticeships

City College Plymouth is an apprenticeship training provider and works closely with local and national employers to enable students to have real world experience whilst gaining a qualification.

Any young person can access apprenticeships at City College Plymouth if they achieve the eligibility criteria set out by the college. Consideration should be given to the distance to travel to ensure that this appropriate for the young person.

City College Plymouth: Supported Internship

City College Plymouth is a supported internship provider and work with students by offering more intense support with their learning, whilst also enhancing support within a work placement.

Students are only able to access this provision if they continue to receive support via an EHCP, and if this is recognised as the best step for the student. Young people must be aged 16 or over to access this course. Consideration should be given to the distance to travel to ensure that this appropriate for the young person.

Eat That Frog

A specialist post-16 institution based in Paignton who supports students with complex learning needs.

Brunel Special School: Supported Internships

This provision is only currently available for pupils who attended Brunel School and completed year 11.

Combe Pafford Special College

A special school in Torbay which has a 6th form to support learners to improve their work readiness by offering work-based curriculum and a range of vocational pathways. This 6th form

provision is currently for those who have moderate learning difficulties and is for those already attending the school.

Mayfield Special College

A special school in Torbay which has a 6th form to support learners as a stepping stone between their school journey and into adult life. The 6th form provision is for those who have either severe learning difficulties or profound and multiple learning difficulties.

Torbay Adults Social Care Services

Training Provider

Alternative educational provision