



WHAT NEXT? A GUIDE TO EDUCATION AFTER YEAR 11



Hello and welcome to your transition booklet.

Transition is just another way of saying 'moving on', you'll have heard your teachers and other professionals using it over the years.

As you know, due to the Coronavirus things are a bit different at the moment. The exams you have been working towards will not take place and your grades will be decided by looking at a combination of your work, teacher assessment and your mock results. You should have had some careers advice through school or from Andrea or Jo from the ESLAC team, and your social worker will have started a Pathway Plan for you which will include what you want to do after Year 11.

Some of you may want to go back to school to the sixth form, or you may have been looking at college courses or apprenticeship options. Your school and social worker should be keeping in touch with you and answering any questions you may have. You can also give your views and ask questions through the Mind of My Own app. If you haven't got an account just ask your social worker how to get set up. There is a list of people you can send your views to, including your social worker, IRO and ESLAC worker.

When we do come out of lock down, your school, social worker, carers and ESLAC will support you to make sure you can carry on with your education or journey into training and employment.

If you have any questions you can also contact ESLAC at vspupil@northumberland.gov.uk and we will try and answer them for you. We hope you find this booklet helpful. If you can think of anything that would make it better please let us know.

The ESLAC Team



Coming to terms with school changes linked to Covid-19



Making sense of it...

So, schools are closed or only open to students whose parents/carers are key workers, those who are vulnerable, have a social worker or have an EHCP. If you have been in school then you will have been supported by staff and hopefully have had your questions about your future answered. If you are not at school then you should have been completing the work set for you.

Either way things will feel different and you may be experiencing some of these feelings:

- Sad that you might not see your friends and teachers again.
- Worried about what this will mean for your qualifications
- Frustrated because you have already worked so hard
- Confused about what all this will mean for you

Let us assure you, you are not alone in these feelings and they are perfectly rational and normal things to feel.

What you are experiencing is the loss of something you were working towards. When people experience loss, they typically react in a particular way, this is called grief.

Because people are resilient, when difficult things happen, we often grow as individuals.

What might this grief look like to you?



DENIAL - “ I can’t believe this is happening to me”



ANGER - “ Why is this happening to me? It’s not fair!”



BARGAINING - “What can I do to change this, I’ll do anything!”



LOW MOOD - “ What was the point in coming into school at all?”



ACCEPTANCE - “Okay, maybe it will all work out Okay”

What you can do next:

All these feelings are normal, but you are not alone and there are people who can help you:

- Talk to friends they will probably be feeling the same. Keep in touch by phone or on social media. Have a look on your school website, there may be advice on there to help you.
- Talk to an adult you trust, you could use the examples above to help you do this. They can help you work through these feelings. If you don't feel you can talk to them then you could use the Mind of My Own app to give your views and start a conversation.
- Look after your mental wellbeing, exercise regularly e.g. jog, walk, practice mindfulness, listen to music, do some activities you may not have tried before such as baking or art, read a book.
- Try to keep a routine for your day



Time to reflect

Sometimes it is helpful to take time to reflect on our experiences. Everyone has such busy lives that this time gets lost in the whirlwind of school, activities, contact, friends and life in general. During this time we have the opportunity to take a moment and be still, to breathe and to reflect.

1. What has been the best experience you have had at school?
2. Think of three things you have learned you are good at
3. What has been your biggest achievement?



10 Practical things you need to know about what happens next

1	ESLAC has fully qualified careers advisers to support all students with their post-16 transition. In 2019/20, careers advisers have attempted to meet all year 9-11 students for initial careers interviews so most of you should have discussed your options with Andrea or Jo by now. For those who haven't, Andrea will be contacting all young people and carers to offer careers advice via telephone. Follow up calls to all year 11s will also be taking place to ensure young people have all the support they need with their transition.
2	Written careers action plans are completed after every careers interview and are shared with you and your carers. Working through the list of action points on these plans with your carer would be extremely beneficial. Please contact ESLAC if you need another copy sent to you. Following any substantial phone discussion, an updated action plan will be completed and shared so that you are fully aware of discussions and action points to be completed.
3	Colleges are currently looking at alternative ways to complete open events and interviews for courses. Northumberland College have already published dates of virtual open events and are offering virtual interviews so you should still go ahead with applications to ensure you get a place on the course of your choice.
4	Once a place on a course has been accepted, ask questions about uniform/dress policy, any equipment needed and the expectations for post-16 students (such as attendance in free periods). Even if you are staying in the same school, post-16 may be very different.

5	If you are concerned and are anxious contact ESLAC for support. We have team members who can offer support and guidance. We can also signpost you to some helpful resources to support your mental health and well being during these uncertain times.
6	If you accept a place at a college/ training provider, it is a good idea for you and your carer to make contact with your tutor to introduce yourselves and to share any concerns or information you feel is important. Post-16 providers have less formal contact with parents/ carers so sharing your carers contact details and welcoming communication will allow them to share any concerns or good news they have.
7	If you accept a place at college, spend time looking at the college website; being familiar with the layout and building names can be reassuring, especially if you have been unable to visit in person. You might like to do this with your carer, so they can get to know where you are going and be able to talk about it with you.
8	It might be a good idea to plan your route if you will be travelling to a new provider especially if it is a new bus route and walk from the bus stop. Nearer the time, if it is possible to practice the route this can be extremely useful and one less thing to worry about. Your carer can help you with this.
9	If you have an EHCP, this will be sent to your new education provider so that appropriate support can be put in place. If you would like to discuss your support needs with the new provider, ask your carer to help you with this. The SEND team or ESLAC can give you the contact details to do so.
10	Post-16 students aged 16-18 who are children in care or care leavers are entitled to a bursary (attendance dependent). The bursary is not the same at each provider and only some involve cash payments to you. If you are a young person living in Northumberland you may be eligible for a travel pass to attend education. Andrea will discuss this in telephone discussions but please contact ESLAC for details of this or any of the above if you would like details in the meantime. You can ask your carer to if you don't want to

If there is anything you aren't sure about please ask, we are here to help you.



Managing Worries

Many of you will have worries about finishing school. It is natural to be a little worried, as it is a new experience, and you may have lots of questions. It is important that we know how to manage our worries and not let them become too big, spoiling what should be an exciting time for you.

You might be especially worried and uncertain at the moment when things are different and a bit weird. These are some of the ways your body might react:

Fight or Flight response

When we have scary thoughts and feelings, our bodies get ready to fight the danger or run away from it.

Thousands of years ago man was faced with many dangers such as big woolly mammoths and sabre-tooth tigers! They had two choices – either fight them or run away! Therefore, the body had to prepare them to do this.

This part of anxiety (or being 'scared') involves adrenaline flowing into the blood, to prepare the body to fight or run away. Several things may happen to our bodies such as:

- Your **heart rate** shoots up: it does this so it can pump blood to the muscles of your arms and legs much more quickly, because it will be your arms and legs which will get you out of danger;
- To keep your heart beating at this faster rate, you need extra oxygen to give the heart energy - so you **breathe much more quickly** as well to get this extra energy for the heart;
- Because of the extra energy being sent to your arms and legs, the muscles are more **tense**, more ready to spring into action;
- Because your arms and legs need this extra blood for the muscles, much of the blood which usually goes to the stomach area is redirected away from the stomach (which can cope with less during this emergency) and is sent to the arms and legs, this leads to the churning feeling in the stomach, the '**butterflies**';
- Just as your stomach can go on with a reduced blood supply so that your arms and legs get an extra supply, your brain can also temporarily cope with less blood. This leads to you feeling **light-headed and dizzy**;
- As your heart is pumping blood more quickly around your body, (especially to the

muscles) your temperature increases so to cool your body down, you perspire more.



That's why you feel **hot and sweaty**.

Today we do not have to worry about fighting or running away from woolly mammoths, but instead may have scary thoughts about other situations. These situations are not really dangerous, but because we think scary thoughts about them our bodies get us ready to fight or run away, just like in old times.

For example, if you worry about walking into a new college or classroom, your heart may start to pound and you may feel shaky, hot and sweaty. Your body thinks it is in danger and so is preparing you to run or fight! If you are scared of crossing bridges, you may feel just the same!

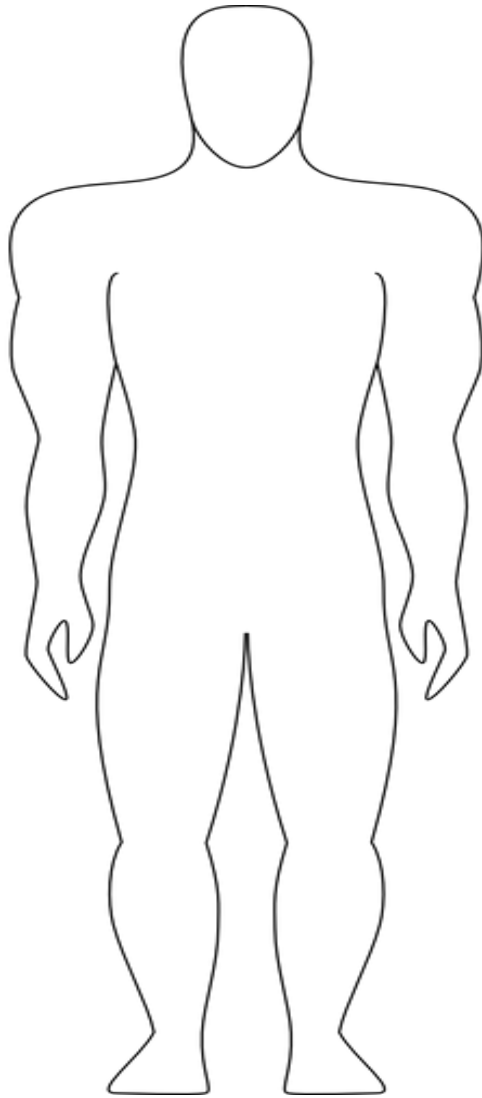
These changes in our bodies are not very nice and can make you feel even more scared, leading to more changes in the body.

What we do when we are scared

Being scared of something may make you want to run away, or avoid the situation. You may start to avoid the situation more and more or look out for danger. This can make you even more scared of it! What we need to do is to get into training so that we can cope with the anxiety and face up to frightening situations until you are no longer scared.

THE ONLY WAY TO BEAT IT IS TO FACE UP TO IT!





Physical symptoms

On the body shape opposite, choose a colour to represent anxiety and shade the areas affecting you when you feel anxious. Write some of the physical symptoms you experience, for example, feeling sick, headache, sweaty, tense.

It is important that you recognise these worry signs and physical feelings so you know what to do to reduce them.



Relaxation techniques to help you calm down, when you are feeling anxious:

Slow breathing - from your lower stomach (diaphragm) breathe in through the nose and out through the mouth. Breathe *in* two three...Breathe *out* two, three.

Deep muscle relaxation - holding tension for 10 seconds and then relaxing completely for 20 seconds. Take your time and work through different parts of your body from fists, forearms, biceps, shoulders and face, through to thighs (quads), and lower leg (calf).

Focus on a happy memory - Concentrate on a happy or calm image and think about it in detail, concentrating on what you can see, hear and feel in your body when you think about this situation.

Think calming thoughts - Remember that the way we think about something changes how we feel. So having worrying thoughts will make us feel worried and scared. If a worry thought pops into your head, you can fight it by swapping it for a calm thought. What calming thought you could concentrate on?

The idea of these techniques is to practice them when you are in a calm, relaxed environment. The more you can practice them when you are calm, the easier it will be to do them when you are feeling anxious. The goal is to be able to calm yourself down whenever and wherever you feel anxious. This will take a lot of practice, so don't worry if it doesn't work straight away, keep practicing!

My calming or happy thought:

Other things you can do that might help:

Positive self-talk

Keep reminding yourself that you can face your worries, that you are able to cope, and that you will be ok. You might start off feeling like you have to pretend to be confident, but the more you do, the more confident you will actually feel.

Support network

Think about your support network - who are the people you can go and talk to who will listen to you and help you. Don't forget you can use Mind of My Own to send your views, worries and questions to one of your workers, sometimes it is easier to write things down if you don't know what to say.

Stay in the “here and now”

Don't make your worries worse by thinking about what “might” happen. Stay in the present. Notice what really is and is not happening around you.

Go with it

It is normal to worry, everyone worries about things, accept that you will worry and when those waves of worry come allow them time to run their course without running away. They are scary and unpleasant for a while BUT they won't harm you.

When thinking about college, sixth form or an apprenticeship, try and remember the things you are looking forward to and focus on these instead.



AND FINALLY!

Don't forget, there are people out there who can help you if you are worried, answer your questions and support you to have a great transition to whatever you decide to do next.

If you feel you can't talk directly to someone but you want people to know you're worried or need to speak to someone in private, use your Mind of My Own account to put your feelings in writing. Someone will get back to you and help.

Stay in touch with your friends, they probably feel the same as you, you can support each other.

If you have other questions or something you think should be included let ESLAC know and we can help.

Good luck in this next exciting stage of your life and remember, work hard, dream big and never give up!

