



Raising the Participation Age (RPA) - Information for Parents

What is RPA?

The Government has changed the law so that all young people will be required to continue in education or training on reaching the end of Year 11:

- Until the end of the academic year in which they turn 17 from summer 2013; and
- Until their 18th birthday from summer 2015.

The information here will help you to understand what this means for you. If your child is currently in Year 11 or below, they will be affected.

When the participation age increases, young people will need to continue to study or train in one of several ways:

- Study full-time in a school, college or with a training provider.
- Full-time work or volunteering combined with part-time education or training.
- An apprenticeship (www.apprenticeships.org.uk).

Why are things changing?

The Government wants to give all young people the opportunity to develop skills and qualifications that will open doors to future employment, help them make the most of their potential, and earn more over their lifetime.

Evidence shows that achieving qualifications at this age can help to boost a young person's prospects for life – for instance, young people with 2 or more A-Levels earn around 14% more than those without.

What does this mean for me?

The legal requirement to participate will be on your son or daughter. This is because we know that, at 16, young people are starting to make – and take responsibility for – the decisions that affect their future. The Government is investing more than ever to provide fully-funded education and training places for all 16-19 year olds who want to take them. We know that you will be providing support and guidance to your child as they make these important decisions about their future, but there are also other sources of help.

Schools are responsible for making sure **all pupils in school years 9-11 have access to independent careers guidance**. This careers guidance must:

- Be presented in an impartial manner;
- Include information on the full range of post-16 education or training options, including apprenticeships; and
- Promote the best interests of the pupils to whom it is given.

What happens if my child doesn't participate?

Leaving education early with few or no qualifications can severely limit a young person's choices later in life. There is a wealth of evidence which shows how staying in education longer can benefit your child. Not only are they more likely to get a job and earn more over their lifetime, they are less likely to suffer from a range of health and social problems as well. Your local authority is responsible for tracking 16-17 year olds who are not participating and will take steps to try and ensure that everyone is enrolled in a suitable education or training place or has a job with training.

Is financial support available for my child?

The Government has committed to fully-funding education and training places for all 16-19 year olds, and there is also financial help available for young people who are struggling with additional costs. The 16–19 Bursary Fund can provide up to £1,200 a year to young people from poorer backgrounds. Under the scheme, schools and colleges can also offer bursaries to any young person who is finding it difficult to pay costs like transport, meals or books and equipment. You can find more information here: www.gov.uk/1619-bursary-fund.

In addition Tower Hamlets residents can also apply for a Mayor's Education Award (MEA). The Council is taking steps to extend the MEA scheme by a further year, up to the end of August 2014. This scheme allows students in schools and colleges to apply for a grant of £400 where they come from a low income family. The grant is paid in two instalments of £200 and is linked to attendance and behaviour. As a general rule students are expected to achieve 95% attendance, allowing for a period of authorised absence. To find out more about the MEA scheme visit www.towerhamlets.gov.uk and search for MEA.

Where can my son/daughter get help or advice on their options post 16?

They need to speak to their link Careers adviser in school or teacher to set up an appointment with the Careers Adviser

Contact **Tower Hamlets Careers service**, 35 Bow Road, London E3 2AD

Telephone: **020 7364 1401**

Web: www.towerhamlets.gov.uk/careers-service

Email: careers.service@towerhamlets.gov.uk

The National Careers Service website makes it easy for both adults and young people to access information and advice about education, training and work. The website is at: <https://nationalcareersservice.direct.gov.uk>.

Young people and their parents can speak to an appropriately qualified adviser by contacting the helpline which is available from 8am to 10pm, seven days a week on 0800 100 900, or for text messages on 07766 413 219.

The Council is also responsible for finding suitable education and training places for all 16 to 17 year olds through the **September Guarantee** and you can contact them directly for more information.

You can find contact details for Tower Hamlets Council through the Gov.uk website here; http://www.towerhamlets.gov.uk/lgnl/jobs_and_careers/careers_service.aspx

Are young people with special educational needs exempt from RPA duties?

The duty to participate applies to all young people, and there is a wealth of evidence to suggest that young people can benefit from staying in education or training beyond the age of 16.

In September 2012 the Government published proposals to improve the support provided to children and young people with SEN, and to their parents. These proposals are being debated as part of new children and families legislation.

Under proposed reforms to SEN support, parents and young people will also be entitled for the first time to have a personal budget, extending their choice and control over the support they receive.

More information on the SEN reform proposals can be found here:

<http://www.education.gov.uk/childrenandyoungpeople/send/changingsen>

Where can I find out more?

More information on RPA is available here:

www.education.gov.uk/rpa

More information on the SEN reform proposals can be found here:

<http://www.education.gov.uk/childrenandyoungpeople/send/changingsen>

More information on the September Guarantee is available here:

<http://www.education.gov.uk/childrenandyoungpeople/youngpeople/participation/transitionintoeducationandtraining>

The National Careers Service website can be found here:

<https://nationalcareersservice.direct.gov.uk>.

You can also speak to a qualified adviser from 8am to 10pm, seven days a week on **0800 100 900**, or for text messages on **07766 413 219**.

More information about the 16 to 19 year olds Bursary Fund is available here:

www.gov.uk/1619-bursary-fund

The Tower Hamlets Family Information Service provides impartial advice and information about services for children and young people.

You can speak to an Information Officer 9am to 5.30pm on:

Telephone: 020 7364 6495

Information can be found here:

www.towerhamlets.gov.uk/FIS

The Tower Hamlets Parents Advice Centre provides advice and information for parents and carers of children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities.

You can visit or call the Parent Advice Centre 9am to 5.30pm.

Parents Advice Centre

30 Greatorex Street

London

E1 5NP

Telephone: 020 7364 6489