

## AET: Let's Talk Futures

### Project Title

Enabling Career Conversations between Parents and their Children

### Strategic Aim

- To develop a scalable and replicable approach that enables parents to confidently engage in informed career conversations with their children ahead of (and during) key decision making points throughout their child's educational journey.

### What we created and delivered

- **Central Webpage** - We created 21 webpages on each of our 21 secondary school websites dedicated to Let's Talk Futures Parental Resources, providing one 'sticky place' that parents can be directed to for key careers information. Each webpage contains the Let's Talk Futures branding but is customised to the school webpage style. Each page contains access to the digital Parent Guides, the KS3 / KS4 / KS5 'Do Together Tasks' and links to the Webinars
- **Access to Digital Parent Guides** - sourced at cost externally and made available to all AET parents through their school website, google drive and email. The guides are in digital magazine format and tailored specifically to parents. The guides cover 'a parent's guide to university', 'a parent's guide to apprenticeships', 'a parent's guide to post-18 options', 'a parent's guide to post-16 options', 'a parent's guide to T-levels' and 'a parent's guide to standing out from the crowd'
- **Do Together Tasks** - To inspire, scaffold and help parents to structure an ongoing careers conversation with their child at home we created 'Do Together Tasks' - a series of discussion starters, short activities and tasks that parents can use to initiate informed careers conversations with their child. Do Together Tasks were created by careers leaders and careers advisors and compiled into three downloadable booklets, one for each key stage (KS3, KS4 and KS5).
- **Live Webinars** - We delivered three live webinars for parents to attend alongside their children (1xKS3, 1xKS4 and 1xKS5). These webinars were made available to all parents in AET's 21 secondary schools across the country and were streamed live. Each webinar event included a panel of experts, career leaders and careers advisers and were timed ahead of (or during) key decision making points. Each webinar followed the format of a panel discussion and ran during the evening, 6:15pm-7:00pm, allowing parents to attend from home together with their children. Upon signing up for the webinar, parents were able to submit a question in advance and these questions were used to shape the facilitated discussion between panellists. There were additional opportunities for parents to actively engage by asking questions during the webinar through the chat feature and to participate in live polls.

## AET 'Let's Talk Futures': Parent Guides

Research shows that parents continue to be the biggest influencer of a young person's career decisions. However, many parents lack the confidence to talk with conviction and accuracy about the current range of pathways, providers and progression routes available to young people today. Our parents told us they wanted to access careers information in an easily accessible and engaging digital format that they could repeatedly go back to. We sourced an external provider and purchased (at cost) a series of parent guides. Each guide ensures that parents have 24/7 access to high quality careers and progression information that is reliable, consistent and independent. Each guide is presented in the format of a digital magazine, with each magazine having an overarching progression theme, with information broken down for parents into bite size chunks.

### Guides provided to AET Parents



### Top Tips when sourcing your solution

There are many different solutions that an educational establishment may choose to use when engaging parents. Here are some top tips that helped us to secure the solution that we needed:

1. **Talk to your parents** - what format do they want to receive information in and what do they want to be able to do with it?
2. **Consider your budget** - do you have any financial resources available and if so what opportunities / limitations does this provide when sourcing your solution?
3. **Do your research** - research all of the options. Use desk based research and speak to networks, such as Career Hubs, Multi Academy Trusts and Parent Associations. Then talk to providers.
4. **Be clear about your aims** - know what you are trying to achieve and speak to different providers to ensure they can meet your bespoke requirements.
5. **Communicate effectively** - so that once a solution is sourced and it adds value and compliments what you already offer, make sure career leaders and parents know about it and how to use it. Monitor uptake and review systematically.

## AET 'Let's Talk Futures': Do Together Tasks

Do Together Tasks are created by Career Leaders and Career Advisers to ensure high quality careers content. Each Booklet contains short tasks and activities that can be completed together by parents and their children at home. They are designed to be engaging and to both initiate and promote positive careers discussions.



A copy of each of our Do Together Tasks can be found below:

### Key Stage 3 Do Together Tasks:

[KS3 Do Together Tasks](#) - a series of tasks, activities and resources that parents with children in Years 7, 8 and 9 can explore together to support positive career conversations at home.

### Key Stage 4 Do Together Tasks:

[KS4 Do Together Tasks](#) - a series of tasks, activities and resources that parents with children in Years 10 and 11 can explore together to support positive career conversations at home.

### Sixth Form Do Together Tasks:

[KS5 Do Together Tasks](#) - a series of tasks, activities and resources that parents with children in Years 12 and 13 can explore together to support positive career conversations at home.

## AET 'Let's Talk Futures': Webinars

To enable parents to ask questions and benefit from expert input we delivered three live webinars, one for each Key Stage. Each webinar followed the format of a facilitated panel discussion. Parents were able to submit a question in advance and these questions were collated into themes ahead of each webinar and then addressed within it. Themes and questions were shared with panellists one week in advance of the webinar so that they could prepare. Parents were able to ask additional questions live during the webinar via the chat facility. Polls were used throughout the webinar to further engage parents and encourage active participation. All of the webinars were delivered using StreamYard and all took place in the evening between 6:15pm-7:00pm (the time parents told us they were most likely to be available).

Each webinar required parents to sign up in advance using their email address. To sign up, parents were given a link to their schools' 'Let's Talk Futures' webpage so that parents could see all of the resources available to parents whilst signing up. Sign up also required parents to provide the name of their child and the school that their child attended. This ensured that we knew who was attending and from which school and allows for greater analysis in the future. Webinars were promoted using centralised marketing materials that individual schools could customise. These were shared with career leaders in each school, customised and subsequently shared with parents. Joining links were emailed to parents on the day of sign up, again on the morning of the day of delivery and finally 15 minutes before the webinar was due to begin. All technical tests and a panellist briefing session took place 3-5 days in advance of each webinar to ensure everyone could technically access the webinar, check connectivity and sound.

### Webinar Themes:

- **KS3 webinar for parents and their children focusing on 'Thinking about the future':** The skills employers look for, the jobs market of tomorrow, the range of progression routes available and considerations when choosing KS4 options'. This webinar took place in March 2022.
- **KS4 webinar for parents and their children focusing on 'Preparing for Post 16 Pathways':** focussing on qualifications, progression routes and how to choose the right pathway'. This webinar took place in May 2022
- **KS5 webinar for parents and their children focusing on 'Standing out from the Crowd':** Post 18 options and how to secure the best possible destination'. This webinar took place in June 2022.

### 'How to Guide':

Questions submitted in advance by parents are available in the appendices along with an example of a panel briefing document, examples of communication materials and a series of slides explaining how we set up each webinar technically.

## Overview of Engagement and Evaluation Metrics:

The following stats relate to engagement of parents during the delivery phase of the project (February - June 2022)

### Engagement:

- 1328 parents were actively engaged throughout the project.
- 717 parents accessed the Digital Guides. The most popular guides were 'Post 16 Options' followed by 'Apprenticeships' followed by 'University'. Guides were accessed by parents in every school.
- 440 parents engaged with the live webinars. 186 parents actively engaged either by asking questions during the webinar or completing a poll within the webinar. The most popular webinar was the Key Stage 3 webinar, followed by the Key Stage Four webinar and then the Sixth Form webinar. The key stage 3 webinar was attended mainly by year 8 parents (40%), the key stage 4 webinar was attended mainly by year 10 parents (89%) and the key stage 5 webinar was attended mainly by year 12 parents (73%).
- 171 parents downloaded the 'Do Together Tasks'. The most popular tasks were the Key Stage 3 tasks, followed by key stage 4 and then key stage 5.

### Evaluation:

- 96% of parents found the resources useful
- 92% of parents now feel more informed
- 95% of parents now feel more confident to have careers conversations with their child
- 98% of parents found the webinar interesting

## **‘HOW TO’ GUIDE:**

### **Creating Successful Webinars for Parents:**

- **Top Tips for Creating a Successful Webinar**
- **Advance Questions from Parents**
- **Example Panel Briefing Document**
- **Technical Website Set-Up**
- **Communications Materials**

## 'HOW TO' GUIDE:

### Creating Successful Webinars for Parents:

#### Top Tips for creating a successful webinar

**Know what you are trying to achieve** - structure your content and delivery approach accordingly

**Decide your format** - each webinar followed the format of a facilitated panel discussion with an informal tone.

**Gather parents' questions in advance to structure your content** - parents were able to submit a question in advance and these questions were collated into themes ahead of each webinar and then addressed within it.

**Choose your panel carefully** - ensure there is balance, expertise and engaging delivery.

**Brief your panel** - share discussion questions and topics in advance and answer any queries they may have. Do this one week in advance.

**Complete a technical test** - all technical tests and a final panellist briefing session took place 3-5 days in advance of each webinar to ensure everyone could technically access the webinar, check connectivity and sound.

**Encourage active participation from parents** - parents were able to ask additional questions live during the webinar via the chat facility. Polls were used throughout the webinar to further engage parents.

**Choose a time that works for parents** - all of the webinars took place in the evening between 6:15pm-7:00pm (the time parents told us they were most likely to be available).

**Select the platform that meets your delivery needs** - we used StreamYard.

**Capture sign up information** - each webinar required parents to sign up in advance using their email address. Sign up also required parents to provide the name of their child and the school that their child attended. This ensured that we knew who was attending and from which school and allows for greater analysis in the future.

**Promote other materials and careers resources for parents throughout the sign up process** - to sign up, parents were given a link to their schools' 'Let's Talk Futures' webpage so that parents could see all of the resources available to parents whilst signing up.

**If delivering across multiple schools, create some customisable centralised promotional materials** - webinars were promoted using centralised marketing materials that individual schools could customise. These were shared with career leaders in each school, customised and subsequently shared with parents.

**Make it easy for parents to join** - joining links were emailed to parents on the day of sign up, again on the morning of the day of delivery and finally 15 minutes before the webinar was due to begin.

**Remind parents where they can go next for further support** - promote the careers section of the school website.

## Questions from Parents - Submitted in Advance of the Webinars

### Questions Submitted in Advance by Parents of Children in Key Stage 3

- What route should my child take to become an actress?
- What happens after GCSEs
- How do I help my child to develop IT skills that businesses want? Any ideas how to provide an early start in IT's Career for young people age 13?
- In an ever changing world where working from home is becoming the new norm, opening a world of job opportunities is it worth encouraging social and healthy/wellness activities to combat this stationery/isolated way of living?
- For a child with low academic attainment and GCSE's not necessarily achievable - what is the best route to follow to end with some formal qualifications?
- How can I get my child work experience with cars within a workshop environment when they are only 13? Rules around health and safety and insurance have made it virtually impossible in this day and age.
- What routes are available to my child that do not rely so heavily on exam assessments?
- How best do I advise a child on what options to take and what they should be considering, when they don't know what they might want to do as a job.
- What can/should kids do outside of school hours to improve their prospects?
- My daughter is 11 and trying to find any type of volunteer work, that firstly she enjoys but secondly will benefit her in the future in terms of gaining transferable skills. Where can she find these? What else can we do as parents now to encourage our children to obtain as many key transferable skills?
- Children are also so caught up in digital technology how do we get them to see beyond that. In reality we know that not everyone will be an "IT" expert, how do we get them to see what other opportunities are out there?
- Are there career fairs for children in years 7 & 8?
- Does the school help provide local work experience opportunities?
- I would like to learn how to help my son to be a doctor. How do I do this?
- Could you tell us more about apprenticeships? What areas are these offered in and if the school has any links with companies offering these?
- What should children in y7 be thinking about in terms of careers at this early stage in secondary life?
- What realistic options in the future can you offer someone who is academically challenged?
- Where is the best place to find out about less traditional courses online?
- How do I motivate my child to think about the future, when her interests are so different from my own?
- How do I support a child, when their interests are very different from my own?
- Where and how do pupils apply for apprenticeships? They seem hard to find!
- Advice on how to help my child to choose a career path?
- What sort of career opportunities can a year 7 expect to have both now and in the remainder of KS3?
- Where do I get information about the general education routes?
- What happens when he gets to 4th year for his exams?
- My child is in Year 9. How do we help her to explore her interests when choosing the optional subjects which might help her to develop in further study or career?
- Where can I find what local apprenticeships are available for girls?
- What kind of help is in hand or how to reach out if my child is not sure about what to do yet?
- What are the best subjects to pick at options to be a Zoo Keeper?
- There will be questions ahead - who can I ask them to after the webinar?



- How can a child access more learning for foreign languages inside and outside of the academy?
- How important are GCSE choices for the next stage of education?
- Are non GCSE qualifications accepted equally by higher education authorities and employers?
- Should a child go to engineering school when he shows interest in engineering?
- What apprenticeship options are available for carpentry please?
- My son would like to be a mechanic after leaving school. What route would be best for him, going to college or an apprenticeship? Also what sort of grades would he need?
- What are the key points to guide my child to go to university?
- University or apprenticeship, what do you think is better?
- Will there be careers advisors in school when the time comes to make big decisions?
- Will we have school meetings in the school in regards to our child's year 9/10 career path? Will we get information? Can we talk to teachers of subjects?
- What should my child be thinking about for careers in y7?
- What are the best options to train as a professional interior designer? What are the job prospects like and how can we find this out?
- What are the Options for a child wanting to go into computing/game designing?
- Can you drop a couple of GCSEs after you start in year 10 and do Btech instead?
- What are the options for future employment - where can I find this out so I can talk to my daughter?
- I would like to know the key topics/ subject focus areas / questions to ask when thinking about the year 9 options.

#### Questions Submitted in Advance by Parents of Children in Key Stage 4

- My question is about the student loan. For this we want to know what are terms and conditions. How it works and when we need to pay back. What are advantages and disadvantages? Please explain.
- How do we choose the correct sixth form provider for A levels?
- What advice do you give to a year 11 choosing a-level subjects who doesn't know which career he wants but does want to go to university?
- Joining to take part and listen to different options not got a question at present - but might have during the event
- Post 16 progression routes - what are the options?
- How to choose A-Level subjects when a child is a "generalist" and interested in a wide variety of subjects? Switch to IB?
- What is the difference between an apprenticeship or university for a future pathway in engineering?
- Work placements during the summer holidays - are these a good idea?
- Advice on choosing the right A-levels - what should I say to my child?
- What is a t level?
- Ideas to support the young adults who want to go into work straight from school
- We are new to the country, we need to understand options for our son next year and further
- How much time will the KS4 and KS5 children spend getting careers advice at the school and how does the careers service operate inside and outside of school?
- How do you help someone to choose A Levels when they do not know what career they want to pursue?
- Is my son capable to go to University? How will I know?
- What are the career options with Triple sciences and leadership combined?
- Non University options - what are they?
- He wants more help to make right choice when picking a College

- Where can i find out about Apprenticeships
- If my child has not made up her mind about her career or interests, what are the best ways to help or inspire her?
- If your child has ASD and doesn't make grades to stay on at sixth form but doesn't want to go to college through anxiety what options do they have after school finishes but are not ready for full time work
- Apprenticeships and how you go about getting one.
- How do I help my child to choose what's right for them? He has no idea what he wants to do as a job
- How to support your child to make a decision for their future career or educational journey after y11.
- What are the various career opportunities in triple science, other than Medical.
- Grades - why are they important when employers want skills?
- What happens if our child doesn't get the required grades for 6th Form?
- When will we know about revision sessions and what plans are in place for these
- If a levels aren't an option what other qualifications can help towards going to university
- Which are the best qualifications to have for university applications?
- How can you help guide your child if they are not sure what they want to study in further education?
- How do you know if an apprenticeship is a good one? Which apprentice course is the most demanding and are some more popular than others?
- A level subjects - how do you choose?
- How are vulnerable children supported in sixth form to stay safe and achieve.
- I would just like to listen in. Thank you for the chance to ask a question though.
- Can a child opt for direct admission to a university instead of the Sixth form and what are the odds and requirements in England?
- How can my child find out what they want to do after secondary school?
- How do scholarships work?

### Questions Submitted in Advance by Parents of Children in Sixth Form

- Could you please explain higher level apprenticeships and degree apprenticeships?
- What is the best website to use for aptitude tests?
- What is the best website to find out what careers are most suitable for my son?
- Is an extra year possible in sixth form if grades are not those needed to attend University?
- How do I help my child with getting an apprenticeship? How do I know what a good one is?
- How do student loans work?
- Are some universities more expensive than others?
- Can you apply any time for university or are there deadlines?
- Is it better to live at home or move away these days for university?
- Where will the jobs be when my daughter gets out of university?
- Are some universities better than others and how can we find out as parents?
- When are university open days?
- If you don't like your course when you start university can you change?
- How easy is it to get an apprenticeship?
- Do employers prefer a graduate or an apprentice?
- What is clearing and how does it work?
- What help is there after results days?
- Can you go to college after 6th form?

## Example Panellist Briefing Document

### Briefing Document used ahead of the Key Stage 4 Parents Webinar

**Date and Time:**

Wednesday 11th May, 6:15pm - 7:00pm

**Format:**

Expert Discussion Panel (with parents able to submit questions in advance, ask questions during the session through the chat facility and able to participate in live polls)

**Platform:**

We will be using StreamYard. Please join at 5:30pm using the link provided in the email.

**Expert Panel:**

R - National Lead for Careers (Chair)  
S - National Lead for Sixth Form  
C - Senior Policy Manager, Association of Colleges  
K - Careers Leader and Careers Adviser  
L - Careers Leader and Careers Adviser  
G - Managing Director, REED

**Topic:****Preparing for Post 16 Pathways**

The webinar will take the format of a panel discussion, where a range of experts, including sixth form experts, college experts, career leaders, career advisers and an employer will address qualifications, progression routes and 'choosing the right pathway for me'. The discussion is designed for Y10 and Y11 parents and will cover areas such as A-levels or T-levels, College or Sixth Form, Apprenticeships, what employers look for and important things to think about when helping your child make their Post 16 decisions.

**Themes:**

We will cover 3 broad themes (which have emerged from questions submitted by parents) and we will allocate approximately 13 minutes to each theme:

1. What are my child's options Post 16?
2. How do I help my child choose between the different Post 16 options?
3. The future and support available

Not all questions will necessarily be asked, please respond to points made by fellow panellists, refer to nationally available resources and school career leaders / careers section of school websites as parents are joining from AET schools throughout England.

## Running Order

### Welcome, Overview and Introductions (R - 6:15pm)

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#### POLL 1:

What Year Group is your child in?

Year 10

Year 11

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### THEME 1 - What are my Child's Options Post 16 (6:20pm)

Whether your child is in Y10 or Y11, as they move through Key Stage 4 they have to make some really important decisions about what they want to do next. These decisions can have a big impact on their future and whilst this can be really exciting it can also be daunting. We know that many parents had a range of questions about this.

**K** - You are a careers adviser. What are the progression options post 16?

(please mention ... choice of qualifications - A Levels, T Levels, BTECs / choice of place of study - sixth form, college, training provider / choice to work - an apprenticeship or traineeship

**S** - You lead 10 sixth forms - what is a sixth form? What can you study in a sixth form? What are the benefits of a sixth form?

**S** - A-levels are the main qualification offered in many sixth forms. What are A-levels and what do they involve? How are they examined? Are there certain academic entry requirements?

**C** - We have heard a lot about sixth forms and an academic offer. How does this compare to colleges? What can you do at College? Are there certain entry requirements? Why might a college appeal to a young person?

**C** - we heard K mention T-levels earlier. What are these?

**L** - We have heard about academic and vocational routes and what these can look like in sixth forms and in colleges. Another option is an apprenticeship. What is this and where can parents find out about these?

**G** - you are an employer, a managing director and a recruitment specialist. How important are qualifications when trying to get a job and do employers mind if you have been to college or sixth form - is one better than the other?

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**POLL 2:**

Does your child know what progression route they want to follow after Year 11?

My child wants to go to sixth form

My child wants to go to college

My child wants to get an apprenticeship

My child is unsure what route they want to take

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**THEME 2 - How do I help my child choose between the different options? (6:35pm)**

Many children have ideas about what they want to do in the future but many also have no idea what they might want to do. We've had lots of questions from parents wanting to know how they can support their child to make decisions about their Post 16 options

**S** - Do you have to apply to get into sixth form or college and when should you start doing this?

**L** - if a child isn't sure what they would like to do in the future, what can a parent do to support them in their thinking? Where should they start? What would you recommend?

**K** - if a child is 'generalist' and likes a wide range of subjects, how should they choose what to study - what advice can you give?

**S** - if my child wants to go to university, are there certain qualifications and certain subjects they should study? What advice would you give when considering subject and subject combinations?

**S** - we have also had a question about student loans. What are they, how do they work and do you have to pay it all back?

**C** - What should you look for when choosing a college? How can a parent identify a great college or sixth form?

**C** - Do colleges do apprenticeships? Aren't they just something that employers offer?

**K** - we've heard a lot about apprenticeships in the news recently. Aren't they an old fashioned thing and just for people who can't get into sixth form or university? - what is an apprenticeship, what are the benefits, what's a degree apprenticeship and where can we find out more about them and how to apply?

**G** - Why are qualifications important to employers? What else do employers look for in young people?

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**POLL 3:**

What skill do you think it is important that your child develops? (free text word cloud)

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**THEME 3 - Jobs Market and what employers are looking for (6:50pm)**

**K** - what kinds of things are happening in schools to help children explore their post 16 options?

**G** - How important is it that a child gains some form of work experience or takes part in extra curricular or enrichment activities.

**L** - what can parents do to help their children recognize and develop skills? What should / could children do outside of school hours to improve their prospects?

**G** - How are jobs changing? What are the jobs of the future likely to be?

**K** - you interview hundreds of children every year and support them to plan their next steps. What support can schools provide to parents? Who or where can parents go to for information in school? (School website, careers leader, careers programme, careers adviser, national )

**L** - where can parents go for information outside of school, any websites or services that you would recommend (including the AET resources, websites listed in the Do Together Tasks and the Talking Futures website).

**G** - there is lots of information freely available on the REED website about labour market information, job profiles etc isn't there that parents can access for free?

**C** - what would your final recommendation be to parents to help them support their child to make these important decisions about what they will do and where they will do it after Y11?

**FINAL TOP TIPS (6:55pm)**

**All** - as a parent it can be difficult to know where to start when talking about the future, options and careers with my child. What would you recommend? Any final top tips?

## Technical Set Up and Communication Materials

### Website set up

We created a dedicated page on each school website. This is where we uploaded resources and details on each webinar. We then created a bit.ly URL for each web address to help track hits. There was also a sign up form for the webinars where we asked parents to submit questions that we could answer in the webinar

### Technical set up for Webinars

Guidance on using StreamYard, Slido and YouTube for your live webinars can be found in a slide deck [here](#).

### Communications

#### **Social Media and Newsletter Adverts**

This featured a link directing to the Let's Talk Future's page on each school website.



#### **Flyer**

This featured unique short URLs directed to the Let's Talk Future's page on each school website.



## Letters & Emails to Parent

For each webinar we sent letters or emails to all parents. Below is an example of the Key Stage 3 letter



### AET 'Let's Talk Futures' - resources and live webinar for parents of KS3 pupils.

#### Dear Parent / Carer

We are delighted to share AET's Let's Talk Futures' careers education resources for parents with you.

**[Insert school link here]**

The link above will take you to:

- A range of **Parental Guides** - digital magazines containing key information for parents relating to your child's future choices, qualifications and progression routes.
- Access to **'Do Together Tasks'** - activities that you can use together with your children at home to begin to think and talk about career choices.
- A registration link for KS3 parents to sign up to attend an **AET 'Let's Talk Futures' Parents Webinar** - where an expert panel of career leaders, career advisers and employers will discuss qualification types, the range of progression routes available, what employers look for in young people, the jobs market of the future and how you can help children make informed decisions about their future study and career options. Parents will have an opportunity to submit a question in advance and will be able to ask questions live through the chat facility during the webinar.

The **'Thinking about the Future - A webinar for KS3 parents and their children'** will take place on **Monday 28th March, 6:15pm-7pm** and KS3 parents must register via the link provided above.

Enjoy the resources and we look forward to you joining us for the live webinar on Monday 28th March at 6:15pm.

Thank you