

Context Matters	Learners in alternative provision may have experienced: • Disrupted or inconsistent education. • SEND and/or SEMH needs. • Low confidence or limited trust in systems. As a result, careers education is often less about immediate decision making and more about rebuilding belief, confidence and aspiration. For many learners, simply engaging positively with ideas about the future is a significant and meaningful step.	Take time to understand the learner's context and experiences before exploring options. Progress may be emotional or attitudinal, not just practical or outcome focused.
Relationships Come First	Strong, trusting relationships are central to effective careers education in alternative provision. Staff often already have established relationships with learners, this is a key strength to build on. Effective practice prioritises: • Trust and consistency. • Patience and reassurance. • Informal, everyday interactions.	Careers conversations do not always need to be formal or planned. They often work best when they grow naturally from existing relationships and day to day learning experiences and interactions.
Small Steps = Success	In alternative provision, progress may look different. Success might include: • Attending or staying engaged in a session. • Identifying a skill or strength. • Expressing interest or curiosity about the future. These small steps matter. They build confidence and help learners begin to see themselves as capable of progressing.	Avoid rushing towards outcomes. Value small shifts in thinking, confidence or engagement as meaningful progress within careers education.
Realistic and Flexible Pathways	Learners benefit from seeing a wide range of pathways that feel achievable and relevant, including: • Vocational routes. • Re engagement programmes. • Supported internships. • Local or employer led opportunities. Non linear pathways are common and valid. There is no single "right" route.	Present options clearly and flexibly. Focus on what is realistic and accessible for the learner now, rather than distant or idealised outcomes.

High-quality careers education in AP is learner-centred, relational, flexible and confidence-building. Small, consistent actions make a big difference.