

Aimhigher Sussex

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www.aimhighersussex.org

Sports and fitness

Information and advice for those interested in
opportunities within the sports and fitness industries



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Sports and fitness

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Whether you're in the first few years of secondary school or coming to the end of your school or college years, you will already have or soon be making decisions about your future. This leaflet is for those interested in the sports and fitness industries and will give you an idea of opportunities in these areas, and advice about what to do next.

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Sports and fitness

The overview

Are you an aspiring sports person or interested in the science of the body? Maybe you want to be involved in big gaming events or work as an outdoor activities teacher? Perhaps you are keen to study sports or fitness but are unsure where they can lead? This leaflet provides an overview of the sports and fitness industries and the opportunities within them as well as recommendations for your next steps.

So what's attracting you to working in the sports and fitness industries? And how much do you know?

For example, do you know the answers to these questions:

How much do you think you'll earn?

What kind of places might you work and who with?

What kind of hours might you have to put in?

How hard is it to get a job - are you the kind of person that suits this kind of work?

These are all important questions to answer! And this leaflet will help. You also need to consider what's important to you.

For starters did you know?

- The industry overall has much younger employees than other industries.
- While there are many jobs that require only low level qualifications, there's a need for more highly qualified people for example those with management and business skills.
- This sector depends a lot on volunteers. There are over 5 million of them in sport and fitness. Many others earn low salaries. Consequently many people working in sport and fitness may work part time and have more than one job.
- While some jobs will be outdoors away from a desk some will be office based. You might find yourself working anywhere from stables to a sports stadia or leisure centre.
- Some jobs will need a high level of fitness and lots of physical activity; others require no physical input at all.
- Working hours can be very varied and may involve long unsociable hours, work during holidays, it can also be busier at different times of the year.
- You need to like people as many jobs will have contact with the public.

* Source: The National Guidance Research Forum (www.guidance-research.org).

Sports and fitness

What can I do?

There is much more to sports and fitness than being a professional sports player. Perhaps you are keen to be in the sports and fitness industries but are not so keen on specialising on sports related subjects in higher education. Or you may want to do a sports or fitness qualification but are not sure where it might lead. The following information offers some advice to get you thinking!

Sport and Fitness

Working in sports and fitness can be divided into active (such as professional player, coach or fitness instructor) and support roles (for example a sports therapist, higher education lecturer, agent, analyst, or marketing and public relations). Consider whether it is participating in sports that interests you, or working in a sports related environment. The following is not a finite list of jobs available in the sports and fitness industry but it will give you an idea of the variety. You may also like to visit www.careers-in-sport.co.uk and www.u-xplore.com/online/dsl/skillsactive-2.5/ue.asp for further information. Also visit the www.skillsactive.com website and go to 'national occupational standards' under the sport and fitness tabs to find out more about the different qualifications and levels of learning available.

Active roles

Professional player From football to horse-racing, becoming a professional sports player requires years of training and it can often be a short lived career. Career routes vary but usually you would be put forward by your coach for competitions or scouted by a team.

Sports Coach For every type of sport there exist coaches whose job it is to get the most out of players. Sometimes they will have previously been professional players themselves. Coaching roles are often part-time or seasonal. Further qualifications are necessary.

Personal trainer/Fitness instructor

Unlike sports coaches who generally specialise professionally in a specific activity fitness instructors may offer training to a group in a variety of classes, (such as yoga or aerobics) or provide one to one

support with unique fitness programmes. You may also find instructors who specialise in a particular sport - for example, outdoor activities like windsurfing, diving or archery.

Leisure centre work From management positions to lifeguards there is a variety of work available in leisure centres, some are more active than others.

Outdoor pursuits manager They often run centres with residential facilities for people to visit and take part in sports and other activities.

Support Roles

Media

Sports journalist and photographer Write for newspapers, magazines, websites and specialist publications focussing on sports news. See www.nctj.com for more information. The website www.journalism.co.uk also has advice on work experience and jobs and is local to Brighton. Photographers specialise in capturing key moments in sports. See www.skillset.org/photo for more information.

Sports presenter/commentator They report on games and offer insights and observations before, during and after play.

Health

Sport and exercise psychologist Help athletes perform to the best of their abilities. Exercise psychologists work with the general public get the most out of exercise though their knowledge of psychology. This requires a degree and further study. Visit www.bps.org.uk for further information

Sports therapist Help injured athletes to recover. This requires a degree and further study.

Management, Promotion and Administration

Sports development officer Promote sports in the community through organising activities.

Leisure/Fitness centre manager Look after the running of a centre, including taking care of finances, recruitment and health and safety.

Sports administrator They organise sports activities and events including marketing and funding.

Sports agent Gain the best deal for an athlete for any product endorsements and employment.

Sports marketing and public relations Work may include a variety of tasks, such as helping a company sell a product through associating it with a well known athlete.

Teaching and law

Sports law Some lawyers will specialise in the law surrounding professional playing. Remember, you have to primarily be interested in law before you can move into the area of sports law. This requires a degree and further study.

Sports teacher Teachers deliver the physical education curriculum in schools. In order to do this you need a Postgraduate Certificate in Education (PGCE) which you study after a university degree. You can also lecture at higher education institutions in subjects such as sports science. It's important to have a passion for teaching as well as an interest in sport.

Where Might You Work?

For most people the idea of working in sports and fitness means being active and spending time outside. While this is true of some jobs there are also many that are office based. There are a range of employers for the sports and fitness industries from leisure companies, local councils, health authorities to public relations companies. There are plenty of opportunities to work abroad and in some jobs it is possible to become self-employed (where you work for yourself).

TIP

The sports industry, especially community sports, relies on volunteering – this is often how people enter this industry. It also provides you with skills and experience in sports, and helps you to decide whether it is the right career path for you.

Q. I like Sports – what can I do other than train as a PE teacher?

A. Sometimes it's hard to see what school subjects can lead to. One thing to do is to think about the skills you learn whilst studying. For example studying Physical Education means you have both a theoretical and physical understanding of performance. When you are researching jobs look at jobs that have this element. You may also like to visit the website www.prospects.ac.uk and go to the 'options with your subject' section under the careers advice tab. Here you can look at different subjects and the job options they might lead to.

Having said that, if you have the aptitude and flair for teaching, it can be a hugely rewarding job and you can specialise in sports if you teach at secondary school – there can be even more variety if you teach in a college, university, or in the community. For information on careers in teaching visit the schools' Training and Development Agency website www.tda.gov.uk.



Job title: Communications Account Director

What do you do: I work in sport's PR for sports marketing agency Fast Track to promote and get coverage for Olympic and Paralympic athletes in the media. I also work with newspapers and television news channels to promote brands that are associated with the athletes, as well as generate news stories around the London 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games

What's the best and worst thing about what you do? I get to work with the world's most famous athletes (including Usain Bolt, Chris Hoy, Rebecca Adlington and Jessica Ennis). I uncovered diver Tom Daley when he was aged ten in a news feature for the Daily Mail which has since helped him become famous. I also attend some of the best sporting events in the world and will be in the thick of it at the London 2012 Olympics. The most challenging thing is that the sporting landscape has changed so much over the past decade – it's not just about the athlete training and competing now but there is a complicated landscape involving sponsors and stakeholders around athletes and major sporting events. An example is that any brand who wants to be associated with the Olympics has a minefield to go through to have any kind of recognition and they are all fighting for space in the media to tell their story.

University course studied and where: BA Journalism degree at the Surrey Institute of Art & Design

A-Levels/equivalent: A Levels in PE, Business Studies and Theatre Studies

Were the subjects you studied relevant to what you do now? My university degree was imperative to understand the media, but it was my background as a swimmer (previous national level) and coaching career in America aged 18-21 that actually got me my first role, doing PR for Speedo and swimmers, which led me on to my role at Fast Track.

How did you decide what you wanted to do? I always knew I wanted to be involved in sport and when I came back from America I decided to study for something I was really interested in, which was journalism. When I first left university I wanted to work directly for a newspaper but I found that PR – the 'other side of the fence' – was an opportunity to work with media at the same time as working with athletes and working at sports events. I very much fell into my job and didn't know what it was at first but it's a job I now see myself doing for life.

What do you recommend for someone interested in this career? To get into PR generally you have to have an organised, creative, ambitious personality and have attention to detail. There are many different avenues you can go down in PR – from sport, arts, entertainment, music, tv and business PR. It's all about being able to work with brands and people and having creative ways of promoting them to the media.

You also need a sound knowledge of the media – getting into the habit of reading newspapers every day is a must and getting to know which journalists you like reading and where you see brands starting to promote themselves in news and sport pages.

Watch a football game on tv and count how many brands you can see, from the shirts the players wear to the type of ball they play with, the branding around the pitch, the sponsor of the competition – there is someone promoting every one of those brands.

Work experience is a must, either with a PR company or with media and keep an eye out for graduate programmes at agencies. And aim high! If it's sports PR in particular you are looking at, research the main sports marketing companies (there are around ten of them), look at their websites and get to know which sports, brands and athletes they work with. Sports recruitment companies exist and are there to link you with key jobs. Also read publications such as PR Week, Marketing magazine and Campaign as you start out in your career to learn more about the PR landscape.

Being open to the opportunity of travel is also a must – London is predominantly where PR companies are based but there are also opportunities abroad – the company I work for has offices in New Zealand, Abu Dhabi, Spain and Hong Kong for example and with the Olympics moving to Rio in 2016 there will be a new office opening soon.

What would you have done differently if anything? When I was in school, college and even university I didn't ever know that this kind of job existed – to be able to work in sport and work with athletes and get to attend the best sports events in the world. I would love to have done more research so I could have led my career onto this path – as it was I was very fortunate that having been a swimmer meant I fell into this role but I didn't have any idea of the PR world when I first started out and I would have liked to have prepared myself more for it when I started out in my career. I've now been working in sports PR for eight years and it is a fantastic job which I enjoy getting up to do every day – each day is different and I still learn something new every day.

What next? I have ambitions to stay within sports PR but after the 2012 Olympics I will give myself a new challenge and move into football, rugby or Formula 1. A challenge such as being the press officer for a Premiership football club (preferably Tottenham!). I see myself always involved in sport and I would also look at becoming a sports columnist in a national newspaper.

TIP 2

If you are interested in the sports industry the first thing to do is get involved! If you think you may want to go on to play or be involved in a support role then join your school team or one out of school. If you are interested in the media coverage of sport, how about being your school paper's sport's correspondent? You may also like to see the Creative and Media version of this pamphlet.

Q. I want to play sports professionally but everyone says there's no point because it's too competitive.

A. Being a professional sports player may not be a reliable career but there are success stories. Think about whether you want to play sports for enjoyment or as your career. Playing sports professionally does not require specific qualifications but does demand talent and a lot of hard work practising every day. Be honest with yourself and get advice from your coach as to whether you have what it takes. Remember, even professional players who have made it can have short lived careers, especially if they suffer an injury, so a back-up plan is essential.

Where does a sports qualification lead?

Perhaps you enjoy sports and would like to continue studying the subject but are unsure where it can lead. The skills someone gains through sports subjects can be used in various industries such as education and health. A sports science graduate may for example start as a fitness instructor but then move into management for example, either within a sports environment or not. Have a look at www.prospects.ac.uk in 'options with your subject' under the careers advice tab for further ideas of options with sports science.

So how do I become a...?

Now you have a bit more of an idea about some of the different roles in sports and leisure industries but you might wonder what you need to study to do them.

It can be hard while you are at school to think about which subjects are best for your future plans. You might ask how you can make decisions now, when you're not sure what you want to do. This is why it is a good idea to have a think about and do a bit of research into areas that you think might interest you so that you can make sure you keep as many options open as possible.

The sports and fitness industries have a very wide range of entry requirements from none at all to very specific high level qualifications. It's important to consider what qualifications might be relevant for your interest, such as lifeguard training, first aid or officiating. The industry qualifications framework for sports and fitness is currently being professionalised see www.skillsactive.com for more information.

Some people will learn while they are doing a job and you may be asked to work towards a qualification while at work such as a National Vocational Qualification. Some people will find on the job training results in promotion to supervisory or managerial levels. See www.skillsactive.com for more information.

Another route in is through an apprenticeship where you spend some of the week learning and some working in your chosen field, which you can do from 16. Visit www.apprenticeships.org.uk and the Sussex based one www.apprenticeships-in-sussex.com for more information. Be aware though that they are not often available and can be popular.

If you are interested in any sports science related roles then taking separate science subjects at GCSE is a sensible option, not many other roles demand specific subjects at school or particular courses. Check websites such as www.connexions-direct.com/jobs4u for different job roles and the courses they recommend. Some will require specific vocational courses while with others a more general degree might be appropriate.

It is also very important to combine your studies with as much relevant work experience as you can.

Fast forward to the future

Joseph enjoys sports as well as the sciences, particularly biology so he should: look through the professions under the heading of sports above particularly the health and active sections, visit the recommended websites throughout this pamphlet and see if there are particular jobs that stand out then find out more about them on www.connexions-direct.com/jobs4u

Higher Education

Websites such as www.connexions-direct.com/jobs4u and the recommended ones above will give you an idea of the type of qualifications necessary for the jobs that interest you. Joseph liked the look of physiotherapy. When he researched this from the sites above he discovered that students usually take a degree in physiotherapy recognised by the Chartered Society of Physiotherapy. The website www.ucas.com has all the higher education courses available in the UK which you can browse through for ideas. Remember, every university is different.

School years

Joseph is 13 so needs to think about GCSEs before his A-Levels and university. One way of checking which subjects are needed for specific university courses is on the www.ucas.com website. Checking the entry requirements of courses that interest you (these are listed in every course's entry profile) will help you choose the right subjects to study at A-Level or equivalent and help you be aware of what grades you need to aim for. For physiotherapy different universities have specific requirements such as biology, they may accept human biology, another science or P.E at A-Level. It's important to do well at GCSE and if possible take separate sciences.

Now!

Joseph now knows he needs to take separate sciences at GCSE and possibly biology at A-Level.

However, he should make sure he has explored his interests and options as much as possible and does this regularly as he may develop new interests. It is very important to do work experience in the area as this is often expected for entry to university courses.

If you are having trouble thinking about your future and the steps you need to take try working backwards!

For example Joseph is 13 and is just starting to consider what subjects he'd like to study at GCSE. He has had some thoughts about his future and knows that he really likes biology and playing sports.

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What qualifications do I need?

Taking your GCSE options?

If you are under 13/14 then you are probably thinking about or doing GCSEs or their equivalent. It is very important to make sure you gain key skills in maths, English and science as these will make sure any options you are interested in will stay open. Consider whether you might want to work in an active or support role and if the latter what kind as this will impact on which GCSEs would be suitable. For example health roles demand studying science preferably as separate subjects.

Considering college/6th form options?

For those interested in the sports and fitness industry it's important to consider which subjects will provide evidence of your ability. For some roles such as professional sports, qualifications may not be necessary but they are important as a professional career is not guaranteed and can be short lived. Gaining qualifications also shows you can work hard and apply yourself - qualities that are necessary for sports careers. For any job it is best to investigate whether formal qualifications are necessary. The website www.connexions-direct.co.uk/jobs4u can help and then check www.ucas.com for specific course details and recommendations for subjects at A-Level. For example, any science based sports career will require at least one science at A-Level. There are BTECs available in sports subjects which can help prepare you for certain career areas.

The following higher and further education providers are based in Sussex as well as the sixth forms based in schools.

University of Brighton www.brighton.ac.uk

University of Chichester www.chiuni.ac.uk

University of Sussex www.sussex.ac.uk

The Open University www.open.ac.uk

Bexhill College www.bexhillcollege.ac.uk

BHASVIC www.bhasvic.ac.uk

Central Sussex College www.centalsussex.ac.uk

Chichester College www.chichester.ac.uk

City College Brighton and Hove www.ccb.ac.uk

Northbrook College www.northbrook.ac.uk

Plumpton College www.plumpton.ac.uk

Sussex Coast College Hastings
www.sussexcoast.ac.uk

Sussex Downs College www.sussexdowns.ac.uk

Varndean College www.varndean.ac.uk

Worthing College www.worthing.ac.uk

Q. What about the diploma?

A. At your school they may be offering diplomas in a variety of subjects at both GCSE and A-Level age although it is not clear yet whether they will continue to be offered through the new government. For those interested in sports and fitness, the diploma in Sport and Active leisure may be appropriate however you should check with universities. The diploma helps you prepare for the skills and knowledge that is necessary for certain industries but you need to consider as well whether you want to specialise early on.

Have a look at www.keyroutes.org.uk and <http://saldiploma.skillsactive.com/> for further information.



Job title: Assistant Producer for Premier League Productions



What do you do: I make short TV features previewing the weekend's Premier League games. This involves writing a structure and script for the piece, researching video footage and facts, going out with a cameraman filming and interviewing footballers and working closely with an editor to make features, exciting, different and original.

What's the best and worst thing about what you do? Best thing: vibrant, exciting, young and friendly industry to work in. I get to work in and around what is already one of my big interests in life. Worst thing: unsociable hours (weekends), and the money isn't great.

University course studied and where: History at Liverpool University.

A-Levels/equivalent: A-levels: history, economics and maths.

Were the subjects you studied relevant to what you do now? Not particularly relevant. Essay writing helped with writing scripts.

How did you decide what you wanted to do? When I left uni I thought I had learnt to write well and was thinking about sports journalism perhaps. But soon after finishing I was given a contact of someone working at IMG sports agency by a friend who worked there already. I started off just doing bits of freelance logging work (menial data input watching sport) and soon made a few contacts. I then started to learn more about the TV industry just by being there and eventually applied for a full time job as librarian. Once I became full time at the company it was just a case of working hard and showing dedication to acquire new skills. It was not necessarily something I had always wanted to do but I don't believe you really know what you want to do until you work in an environment and actually see what people do all day.

What do you recommend for someone interested in this career? Most people in the industry have to slog it out doing more tedious jobs such as running or logging to start with. You have to be prepared for a year or two of hard work (making teas etc) for very little money if you want to get into the industry. Aside from that I think it definitely helps to be friendly and personable. In a funny way for me, to get into the football side of things it actually helped to be interested in and good at football. There was a work game every Friday that I started to play in and that helped me get to know a lot of people in the department. On the whole though, I do think it is an industry that rewards hard work and a positive attitude.

What would you have done differently if anything? I don't think I would have done anything differently. Perhaps I could have done a more career-specific degree but I know plenty of people at work who have media degrees and I don't think they are in a much better position than someone like me because of it. There are lots of people who studied a vast range of different subjects and plenty who didn't go to uni at all.

What next? I'm not sure. I am always trying to keep moving and learn new skills. I am currently learning directing skills which means working in live TV, directing the live presentation of Premier League games. I don't know if I want to work in TV for the rest of my life but for the meantime I very much enjoy what I do and never dread the thought of going in the next morning, which must be a good thing!

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What next?

After school or college it can be hard to know what the best next steps will be. If you are keen to stay in education there are around 50,000 courses to choose from in over 300 institutions. Some of these courses prepare you for a particular job (these are called vocational courses) while others provide a more general education.

Many jobs in the sports and fitness industries will not require higher education but work in health, teaching and law does demand specific degrees. Many people in other support roles will also have further qualifications.

Some people prefer a more vocational route into a profession, and take an apprenticeship after school age 16 or 18. This means rather than studying before you work you have a more hands on approach earlier on in your training. This type of learning can work well with sports and fitness professions. While it is possible to do apprenticeships that can lead into the sports and fitness industries they can still be quite difficult to get hold of. Have a look at the national website www.apprenticeships.org.uk and the Sussex based one www.apprenticeships-in-sussex.com.

All FE colleges in Sussex have access to a career website called www.talkingjobs.net currently until November 2012, so ask careers staff for the log in details. Here you have the opportunity to view video interviews of a range of professionals talking about their work and how they got into it.

Make sure that you are also aware of the UCAS points you need for courses that interest you as you may need to aim for particular grades in the subjects you are taking (see the UCAS points box for more information). Universities will also require personal statements where you write about why you are suitable for the course you are applying for. They will look for evidence of your interest and dedication to the course and where it may lead in both your academic studies and also evidence from out of school activities, such as work and volunteer experience. Think about your interests - for example budding photographers should be taking photos of sports matches and those interested in active roles should demonstrate active team membership,

evidence of skill level through competitions, and perhaps coach younger players.

The next steps section on the following page will help you in your decision making.

UCAS points – What on earth are they?

UCAS stands for the Universities and Colleges Admissions Service. The qualifications you study and the grades you achieve in those subjects at school or college are turned into points which allow you to enter higher education. Universities and higher education colleges will ask for a certain number of points and often specific grades in certain subjects in order for you to gain entry to the course of your choice.

It is worth getting to know the UCAS website at www.ucas.com. Click on the Student section to find out more about UCAS points and have a look at the courses available and the universities that offer them in the course search section. The entry profiles of each course will tell you what the course will cover, what career opportunities it may lead to and what kind of student it may suit; which will all help you decide if it is right for you. If in doubt contact the university direct.



Job title: Outdoor Education Instructor



What do you do: I teach multi-activities to children including sailing, windsurfing, rock climbing, abseiling, skiing, snowboarding, kayaking, canoeing, mountain biking, cycling in a velodrome, shooting, archery, orienteering and river crossings at an outdoor education residential centre.

What's the best and worst thing about what you do? Best is the variation of sports, participating with others and being at sea. You can't beat going from sailing or windsurfing in the morning to snowboarding in the afternoon! It's also rewarding as the kids really look up to you. It's also flexible work in terms of time off. The worst thing is the amount of commitment you have to give. The work becomes your life which in some ways is great as I really enjoy it but you are out in middle of nowhere, isolated.

Degree/equivalent: HND Sports Development and Coaching

A-Levels/equivalent: Sports science and Biology

Were the subjects you studied relevant to what you do now? Totally. At school I enjoyed sports and during my HND one of my modules was a work experience coaching placement. I arranged to go to an activities centre for six weeks which is where I ended up working.

How did you decide what you wanted to do? I knew I wanted to be in an environment where I can do what I enjoy! On the day I finished my HND the place I did my work experience rang me up to offer me work as a voluntary instructor. I didn't earn a salary but they paid for me to do courses while giving me board and lodgings. After that they recommended me to somewhere where there was a paid position and so I then went for that.

What do you recommend for someone interested in this career? Sport needs to be your passion. You also need to be a team player, good with kids and organised and with leadership skills and the confidence to give advice and instructions. Some of these skills you do learn or improve on the job. You need to be patient and not criticise when people make mistakes. It's a good idea to study sports and science at school. Getting a sports leadership award is a very good idea as a first step in. Also see if there are any out of schools activity groups or clubs you can help out with.

What would you have done differently if anything? I love my job but it's easy to get so involved in the fun side of it you forget to make the most of what you're doing in terms of gaining qualifications. I wish I had kept more of an eye on the 'paper chase' so I had more to show. I had to push and say look I've done 80 hours of velodrome work I need the paperwork that proves it. They won't necessarily encourage you as the less qualifications you have the cheaper you are! Even when you volunteer you can get the employer to pay for qualifications as the centre will get it cheap. Paying on your own is really expensive. So be proactive and look out for opportunities to gain vocational qualifications.

What next? I can stay with the company as a coordinator managing instructors, or if I go to university and get a degree in sports development I could work for the council as a sports development officer or become a teacher. The skills I have gained will set me up for a range of roles working in sports or with children.

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Next steps

OK, so now what?

Hopefully this pamphlet will have given you some ideas about the possibilities available in sports and fitness. But your job is not done yet! In order to discover the most suitable, satisfying and enjoyable path for you as an individual you need to open your eyes to opportunities and try out as many as possible. Try these next steps and see where they take you!

Explore possibilities through research

Think about the subjects you are studying now and which ones you enjoy most. Also research any possible ideas you may have for your future to check if there are particular subjects you should consider studying. There is a lot of information, advice and guidance out there to help you on your journey. Along with the websites mentioned throughout this pamphlet the following websites will start you off:

General Career Research, Tools and Information

www.connexions-direct.com/jobs4u

Great for finding out about different types of jobs, what they are like and qualifications needed. Check the Job Families section for career inspiration.

www.prospects.ac.uk

Another excellent job search website. It has a section that helps you think about what different subjects will lead to. Go to Careers Advice – Options With Your Subject.

www.guidance-research.org

Labour market intelligence (information and statistics) about sports and fitness.

Sports

www.activesussex.org

Lots of useful information on sports in Sussex. You can search for activities, clubs, coaches, disability sport, training, volunteering and more.

www.careers-in-sport.co.uk

Example case studies of people working in the sports industry and information such as which universities offer specific courses and work experience tips.

www.uksport.gov.uk

Contains a job shop to inspire you as to what sports careers are available.

www.sportengland.org

Information about volunteering. See ‘volunteers’ under the ‘support & advice tab’.

www.bases.org.uk

A website for sports and exercise sciences. Click on the careers guide on the main page for information about this career path and work experience tips.

www.paralympics.org.uk

Information on try outs for the Paralympics. Click on the ‘get into sport’ tab.

www.skillsactive.com

Information about different training routes and qualifications. See the information for students tab on the home page.

www.bst.org.uk

Information about volunteering as a sports leader.

These are just some of the websites that can help you in your research. There are many more but remember not all information online is correct.

Also there are people that can advise you such as teachers, your school Connexions adviser, school

careers adviser, Aimhigher representatives, parents and carers and friends, as well as those you meet in work experience. All will have valuable advice to contribute to help you in your decision making process but remember, some advice may be more impartial (for example your parents may have a more biased view of your future than a careers adviser).

Sample your ideas with work experience

One way of seeing if your dream job won’t actually turn out to be a nightmare is through work experience. Work experience is valuable for many reasons but perhaps most importantly it gives you the opportunity to see the reality of your dream.

Some other reasons why work experience is great:

- It helps you become industry ready. This means when you get your first job you are able to hit the ground running because you already have an understanding of the industry and what’s expected of you. Work experience will provide you with your first introduction to your area of interest.
- It helps you meet people in your area of interest. This means you have contacts (people that can help you) and are able to network (communicate and find more people to help you secure more work experience or your first job).

As we mentioned at the beginning of the pamphlet volunteering is a key part of the sports industry and there are many opportunities available. Check **www.do-it.org.uk** and **www.volunteering.org.uk** as well as the websites above. Also look out for community initiatives and the council website in your local area as well as short term events such as the 2012 Olympics. If you are offered a placement make sure you make the most of it: speak to as many people as possible, offer to help and get involved. If you are seen as someone who listens and wants to be as ‘hands on’ as possible you are likely to be asked back or at least gain excellent references.

Content created by Miranda Glavin.
Please visit **www.careerelevation.co.uk**.

