

Careers in Context 2020

A can-do guide for employers



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Introduction

During the Spring and Summer terms of 2019/2020 academic year, considerable adaptations were made to the way careers guidance took place due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

The context for the current academic year remains fluid. Many key sectors are facing economic challenges, flexible working continues to evolve for employees, schools are delivering recovery curriculums and we are all increasingly reliant on digital solutions to work and connect.

These factors continue to prompt questions about how employers can help ensure that every young person continues to receive quality careers guidance and opportunities at a time when it is arguably more crucial than at any point in living memory.

The Careers & Enterprise Company and the Gatsby Charitable Foundation have been listening carefully to the experiences of schools, colleges and employers during this period. This guide sets out examples from those who have already achieved impact and aims to give you confidence and inspiration as you plan your own activities.

Top tips for employers for 2020-21 academic year

1. **Keep engaging with schools and colleges** – Careers Leaders continue to have ambitious plans to ensure all young people can prepare for the world of work. Employer support is a vital part of making these plans a reality. [See the benchmark sections of this guide for inspiration.](#)
2. **Work with your local LEP team** to understand what schools and colleges need most now. Consider your activities in the context of individual school or college recovery plans. Connect with your local Enterprise Coordinator [here](#).
3. **Share up-to-date Local Market Information** about the opportunities available in your organisation and what skills are required, particularly in this fast-changing labour market. Look at ways to do this [here](#).
4. **Link your careers activities to the curriculum** to make them stick, and to support subject teachers to embed careers in their [planning](#).
5. **Work with your school or college** to identify the cohorts and students most in need of support and target activities to them.
6. **Encourage your networks to volunteer in schools** – talk to your suppliers and clients about the importance of supporting young people at this time. [They can sign up to get involved here.](#)
7. **Become an Enterprise Adviser**, and if you already are one, recruit someone in your network to do the [same](#).
8. **Consider delivering activity virtually** as a part of your school engagement. Ideally this would be combined with face-to-face activity. See [page 18](#) for suggestions on virtual delivery.
9. **Find resources or share your materials** via our [Resource Directory](#).
10. **Use our [Find an Activity Provider](#)** if you need expert support delivering activity in schools.

The Impact of Covid-19

A [June 2020 Teacher Tapp](#) poll for The Careers & Enterprise Company asked almost 5,000 teachers what they thought would best prepare students for the post-pandemic jobs market. 74% of the teachers said employability skills are now the most important way to improve pupils' career prospects, compared to 62% who said good academic grades. Almost three-quarters - 74% - of teachers say skills like teamwork and public speaking will equip pupils to secure a good job in these uncertain economic times.

Engineering UK's recent survey of young people found that as a result of Covid-19, concerns over future prospects were common, with 62% of young people surveyed agreeing that finding a job in the future has become more difficult.

Research by the Resolution Foundation estimates that an additional 640,000 18-24 year olds could find themselves unemployed this year alone, and that the current crisis may reduce the employment chances of lower-skilled young adults leaving education by more than a third.

A recent CEC poll of 250 senior business leaders shows that nearly four in five (77%) think that employers have a responsibility to ensure young people leaving school in the current environment do not become a lost generation.



Read more about education leavers in the current crisis in the [Resolution Foundation's 'Class of 2020'](#)



Read more about the views of young people in the recent [Engineering UK research report](#)



Read more about Covid-19 and the impact on social mobility in this [Sutton Trust Research Brief](#)

Employers continue to support schools and colleges

Employers have continued to engage young people about the world of work despite the business challenges they face. Many have transitioned 'in-person' activities to take place online and are communicating these opportunities to schools via our regular Careers Leader newsletters.

97% of employers responding to a survey carried out in June by The Careers & Enterprise Company about careers education said that 'online and virtual working will remain a significant feature of the way we work'. We anticipate more employer encounters and workplace experiences being delivered virtually, and in time a blended approach of virtual and face-to-face activity becoming more common.

The Careers & Enterprise Company has also been overwhelmed by the employer support to our initiatives during the Covid lockdown period:

- Employers have offered candidates for The Careers & Enterprise Company's '[Work it](#)' series of career talks. These talks feature young people not long into employment and are aimed at pupils in their transition years (Year 11-13).
- [My Week of Work](#) was developed by the CEC in partnership with Oak National Academy and Learn Live in June 2020. It provided a week of online lessons to replace Year 10 work experience and hosted more than 50 live broadcasts from employers including Microsoft, NHS, BAE Systems, Rolls Royce, Balfour Beatty and the Royal Air Force. More than 750 schools and nearly 120,000 young people took part.
- Employers are supporting [My Choices](#) national and regional events to help young people in transition years over the 2020-2021 academic year.

- Enterprise Advisers – business volunteers supporting a school or college's senior leadership team to develop their careers programme – continue to be recruited and matched around the country, and 30 new Cornerstone Employers joined our nation-wide community and committed to support Careers Hubs across England. They will work with other employers and LEP teams to address local need.
- Cornerstone Employers have continued supporting Careers Hubs and Opportunity Areas around the country, working collaboratively to address local need. In Birmingham, Aston Villa Football Club, Jacobs, Lendlease Construction, EY, EY Foundation, Birmingham Education Partnership and Birmingham and Solihull Mental Health NHS Foundation Trust have created '[Me Plc](#)', a short personal branding programme for young people in the area to help them identify their strengths and skills, and communicate these in a 29 second pitch.

[Cornerstone Employers](#) – check out your new [Roadmap and Working Together Kit](#).

These resources suggest ways to take action to support young people in your area, and provide tools for getting your networks involved.



A close-up photograph of a man with short dark hair and glasses, wearing a white shirt and a dark jacket. He is looking slightly to the right and appears to be speaking. The image is overlaid with a teal-to-green gradient. In the top left corner, there is a large white quote icon consisting of two opening quotation marks.

“

As an organisation, NNUH has always sought to help young people to understand the world of work. It is now more important than ever before that employers get involved and show young people the opportunities they have available to them. In lockdown, we converted our YR10 work experience to a virtual experience and have had great results. We also recently ran our first virtual careers week focusing on Midwifery. Employees benefit hugely from this kind of interaction with students and we are able to play our part in showing what job roles and progression routes are available right now. By working with The Careers & Enterprise Company we can work with more schools and help ensure no pupil is left behind.

**Clare Fox, Career Development Facilitator,
Norfolk and Norwich University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust**

Delivering the Gatsby Benchmarks

The Gatsby Benchmarks remain the framework for good career guidance and hold the same level of relevance in an online world. The benchmarks were developed to support schools and colleges in providing students with the best possible careers education, information, advice, and guidance.

In the following sections, we have picked out those benchmarks which require employer involvement and suggested ways to take action, taking into account current Covid circumstances.

You can find further guidance in the Gatsby Toolkit [here](#) and guidance for engaging SEND pupils [here](#)

If you need support with delivery, our [Find an Activity Provider](#) can help you find organisations delivering activities in schools or colleges near you. If volunteers are needed, you or your employees may be able to get involved in their programmes:

Our Investment team can provide more information about specific provider offers or connect you to providers:
investment@careersandenterprise.co.uk



Delivering the Gatsby Benchmarks

Employers have a role to play across all the benchmarks. In this guide we have focused on Benchmarks 2, 4, 5 and 6 where employers typically have a more significant role compared with other benchmarks. Here is a description of each of the benchmarks:



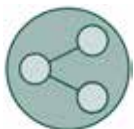
- 1 | A stable careers programme**
Every school and college should have an embedded programme of career education and guidance that is known and understood by pupils, parents, teachers and employers.



- 2 | Learning from career and labour market information**
Every pupil, and their parents, should have access to good-quality information about future study options and labour market opportunities. They will need the support of an informed adviser to make best use of available information.



- 3 | Addressing the needs of each pupil**
Pupils have different career guidance needs at different stages. Opportunities for advice and support need to be tailored to the needs of each pupil. A school's careers programme should embed equality and diversity considerations throughout.



- 4 | Linking curriculum learning to careers**
All teachers should link curriculum learning with careers. For example, STEM subject teachers should highlight the relevance of STEM subjects for a wide range of future career paths.



- 5 | Encounters with employers and employees**
Every pupil should have multiple opportunities to learn from employers about work, employment and the skills that are valued in the workplace. This can be through a range of enrichment activities including visiting speakers, mentoring and enterprise schemes.



- 6 | Experiences of workplace**
Every pupil should have first-hand experiences of the workplace through work visits, work shadowing and/or work experience to help their exploration of career opportunities and expand their networks.



- 7 | Encounters with further and higher education**
All pupils should understand the full range of learning opportunities that are available to them. This includes both academic and vocational routes and learning in schools, colleges, universities and in the workplace.



- 8 | Personal guidance**
Every pupil should have opportunities for guidance interviews with a Careers Adviser, who could be internal (a member of school staff) or external, provided they are trained to an appropriate level. These should be available whenever significant study or career choices are being made. They should be expected for all pupils but should be timed to meet their individual needs.

Benchmark 2: learning from labour market information

Labour Market Information (LMI) is key to ensuring students understand the realities and opportunities of the world of work they will be entering. It is critical this year that students are supported, particularly in key transition moments, to understand what opportunities are available and to have a picture of the changing labour market. LMI should help students and parents to feel confident that they are equipped with the information needed to make positive choices.

How can employers support this benchmark?

Employers have an important role to play in helping LEPs and young people in your local area to stay abreast of the latest information about jobs, career pathways and live opportunities. You may need to update information more frequently to account for the fast-changing landscape.

Ways to take action:

1. Ensure your local LEP team knows about the opportunities available in your workplace. As well as apprenticeships, internships and jobs available, make sure you include information about ways to explore the workplace such as work experience, work placements and work shadowing opportunities. Share information about the entry requirements, processes involved in recruitment, and progression routes once individuals are onboard.
2. Bring talks to life with concrete case studies that show diverse pathways and job opportunities in your organisation. Involve your apprentices and interns, or those at the start of their career, in the careers activities you are delivering. Ask them to share their journey and help students understand the pathways they took.
3. Share your insights about the local labour market and how the world of work is changing but encourage students to do their own research too.
4. Talk to your local LEP team to see if there are teacher CPD sessions you can join, to share information about opportunities and recruitment practices in your organisation and your sector. This can help to ensure that those working directly with students on a day-to-day basis are up-to-date.
5. Bring another employer along to activities you are delivering, to provide a wider perspective beyond your own organisation and sector.
6. Use the [Skills Builder Universal Framework](#) to identify the essential skills you need in your workplace and communicate these to young people.

What is LMI?

Career and Labour Market Information (LMI) helps young people to be informed about the realities of the world of work and can inform their decisions and study options. It includes:

- skills, career pathways and progression routes in the local labour market
- job applications and interviews
- educational institutions, courses, qualifications, entry requirements and costs
- professional bodies
- employment sectors, employers, jobs, salaries and employment trends
- jobs, training and apprenticeships
- job demands and working life
- financial planning

Get inspired by these examples from employers

The **Dorset Cornerstone Employer group** is working collaboratively to deliver a series of virtual progression events to showcase the range of opportunities available to young people. The Dorset Careers Live programme is for students in Years 10-12 and their parents and carers and started with the NHS in July 2020. The next event is planned for October and will be a 'Careers in finance' webinar led by JP Morgan. The series is being streamed online and hosted by Dorset employers providing introductions to apprenticeships, work experience schemes and graduate programmes within key sectors. The sessions are recorded and made available for schools and colleges to access retrospectively and will also be available nationally. Further information about the group is [here](#)



Capgemini ran a series of webinars in response to Covid-19. #Learnathon provided hints and insights throughout the summer, to help young people to progress their career. The webinars and online events covered topics such as '5 tips on gaining employment this summer', to what it is like to have a career in Cyber. Young people learnt how to stand out to employers online through developing their personal brand and found out more about apprenticeships in the industry. Future events [here](#)



PwC's regular **Business Insight Week** has been converted to an online experience and opened up to more applicants (PwC provides virtual events with their recruitment team about skills and development, open to all Year 10-13). Videos showcasing the programmes offered by PwC and insight into the life of an apprentice at PwC are available on YouTube: [PwC - Which programme is right for you?](#) and Life as a [PwC apprentice](#)



Network Rail has an Early Careers page to find out about apprenticeships, graduate placements and Year in Industry placements: [here](#)



Walsall Council has created a video on **Degree Level Apprenticeship** routes into teaching: [here](#)



HSBC provides a brochure showing entry routes into work, work experience, internships and apprenticeships: [here](#)



“Our findings suggest that some young people felt their career choices had been constrained because of the pandemic, whilst for others what they wanted to pursue had changed as a result”.

Read more about the views of young people in the recent [Engineering UK research report](#)

Babcock created an [Early Careers Booklet](#)



JP Morgan created videos including 'Four Myths About Being an Apprentice, Busted' as well as further videos outlining how to Get an Apprenticeship at J.P. Morgan, your first day and culture in the workplace at J.P.Morgan: [here](#)



Cornerstone Employers from Oxfordshire Careers Hub will be contributing to the local **"My Choices"** broadcast that will support the transition of young people in **Years 11,12 & 13 locally**. OxLEP will open the broadcast with an overview of the local LMI and employers will bring this to life by talking about their sector, routes into the industry and then will support this by highlighting one of the skills from the Skills Builder Universal Framework and how it is used in practice. The broadcast is in collaboration with Learn Live and will be aimed at young people and parents and carers.



New Anglia LEP's Enterprise Coordinator has been hosting Careers & Coffees chats on YouTube throughout lockdown. Young people are able to hear from a range of employees, business owners and other interviewees and have the opportunity to put forward questions they would like to ask about the range of industries, roles and experiences covered: [here](#)



DRP Group's SPARKS programme is a free educational outreach campaign to engage young people in the creative industry. DRPG crafted SPARKS to help pupils realise that their school skills can open the door to amazing careers in industries they love, such as music festivals, vlogging, branding or app building. Each of the six lesson plans, designed for pupils aged 11-16, is based around the work carried out at DRPG and how it uses Maths, English, Media, Business, Design and IT skills. More information: [here](#)



Black Country LEP has worked with local businesses to create a collection of videos. Employers have put together a career video providing insight into the roles within their organisation. This is aimed at providing essential information for schools and pupils to show some of the career paths available in various sectors: More information: [here](#)



Many employers contributed to CEC's My Week of Work. You can view their talks about their organisations and industries [here](#)

To find out more about any of these examples, please contact:
employers@careersandenterprise.co.uk



It is not as simple as just saying this sector has definitely done well [as a result of Covid-19] and that sector hasn't, because ultimately, at its core, every business exists to solve customers' problems. [Businesses have] changed what they were doing to respond to what the customer needed.

Remember that while this is a time that is difficult for many, there is also lots of opportunity. The economy will always go through peaks and troughs...it turns back around because businesses change...or people access new opportunities.

Aimee Higgins, Director of Employers and Partnerships at Careers and Enterprise Company.
[Watch the full video here](#)

Benchmark 4: linking curriculum learning to careers

Embedding careers within the curriculum and helping students to understand the relevance of their subjects to future careers, supports positive student outcomes and school/college priorities around destinations and attainment.

This is of even more critical importance this year, as the potential for discrete careers events and delivery may become limited.

What can employers do to support this benchmark?

Employers can build a progressive careers programme which delivers on key learning outcomes and helps schools and colleges to highlight the relevance of curriculum subjects to future career paths available to young people.

Ways to take action:

1. Think about materials you have that can be shared with schools and colleges – Benchmark 4 doesn't have to involve employers going into schools and colleges. Teachers can use materials that show the relevance of their subject to careers and this helps them achieve the benchmark.
2. Work with your Enterprise Coordinator or Careers Leader to understand the current priorities of school and colleges you are working with or want to work with.
3. Meet with heads of curriculum that relate to your industry and discuss how you might help to bring their specific modules to life.
4. Get involved in CPD sessions for subject teachers and offer the opportunity to visit your workplace in person or virtually if possible.
5. Take up invitations to participate in activities and events at options time. Students and their parents are particularly receptive to messages about careers around this time.
6. Work with subject teachers to develop problem-based challenges. These will show how the perspectives, methods and skills developed through subjects are used in working life to solve real problems.
7. Volunteer as a presenter, adviser or judge to help the school or college run curriculum enrichment activities, such as STEM clubs, Young Enterprise, Dragons Den and Apprentice of the Year competitions.
8. Get in touch with your professional body to find out what resources they have developed to support careers in the curriculum and share them with your local schools and colleges

Skills Builder have further enhanced their suite of resources and support in response to the fast-changing world of work. Use the [Toolkit for Employers](#) and help embed this common language for essential skills.

Get inspired by these examples from employers

In **Thames Valley Berkshire Careers Hub**, two of the Cornerstone Employers are working with the Lead School to develop Benchmark 4 projects, linking curriculum learning to careers. Once tested these will be shared with the rest of the schools in the hub alongside lessons learnt and top tips for other employers. For example John Lewis Partnership has partnered with Sandhurst school to develop a project on music in advertising. The project will see students learn from the classic John Lewis Christmas adverts and go on to compose their own piece of music for an advert. The top six from the year will be recorded and presented to the John Lewis Music society who will choose a winner.



Hertfordshire Cornerstone group is developing Benchmark 4 projects with seven schools from the Careers Hub. Each project will produce resources, all for young people and some for parents, and employers will try to engage schools in this project virtually wherever possible, to deliver parts of the work in subject lessons.



Cornerstone Employers in **Buckinghamshire Thames Valley Careers Hub** are supporting the Hub Lead to look at how to replace the Skills Show with a virtual offer for young people. They will be supporting the delivery of a Careers in the Curriculum week, when employers will take part in lessons that are timetabled and show how they relate to their sectors.



Stoke City Football Club is a Cornerstone Employer supporting Stoke Opportunity Area. Stoke City has been working closely with the local LEP team and Haywood Academy and **The Excel Academy** to plan a short series of careers based lessons. The aim was to bring English to life for students and help to show the relevance of topics covered in English by relating them to real life jobs and experiences at the football club. This input has been really valued by teaching staff. Materials will be shared via The Careers & Enterprise Company's [Resource Directory](#).



“

Working with employers has helped me to think of creative ways to make my subject area more engaging and relevant to our students. At times, students can struggle to see the relevance of topics or skills covered in English, so by relating them to real life jobs and experiences we are making our curriculum more accessible. In particular, Stoke City Football Club is helping to ensure that our lessons are as meaningful as possible. Anything that puts students at the centre of our lesson planning is a great thing.

Jenny Taylor, Teacher of English, Haywood Academy,
Stoke-on-Trent & Staffordshire

Royce Rolls works with STEM Learning to provide lessons from primary age to post-16. These include a dedicated section for parents and teachers with tips for managing home learning.



EDF set a challenge about producing electricity in 2050 which they announced during a video on Learn Live UK website.



Barclays LifeSkills includes a content guide relating LifeSkills to the curriculum.



PwC's Employability Skills Toolkit includes lessons to deliver in classrooms, mapped to the curriculum.



EDF Energy: Hinkley Point C offer free resources to support schools in Somerset and the wider South West region, through their Inspire education programme. This includes curriculum-linked teaching resources.



Two of the Cornerstone Employers supporting the **East Sussex Careers Hub** have been working with the Lead School Hailsham Community College to identify Careers Champions within the school to promote careers in the curriculum. **GM Monk** and **Metaltech** have been working with the Careers Leader at the school to develop a teacher CPD session where they provided training on how to increase careers within the curriculum. 80 teachers and teaching assistants attended the training and 81% rated it as very good or above. The Cornerstone Employers can now support the role out of this to other schools and colleges in the Hub as a small effort from a large amount of teachers/support staff can lead to some impressive results. Having an employer promote the importance of linking the curriculum to careers can support the whole school to see the impact for the students and inspiring them to connect to the curriculum.

To find out more about any of these examples,
please contact:
employers@careersandenterprise.co.uk

Delivering employer encounters and workplace experiences virtually

When delivered well, online experiences and encounters can provide valuable opportunities for young people. Employers are telling us that young people engage well in online activities and the quality of engagement has in some cases been higher than in face-to-face settings. In addition, employers are identifying benefits such as time and cost savings achieved through online delivery such as virtual work experience.

Through active participation online, young people can find out about industries and careers that may not otherwise be accessible due to geography, health and safety concerns, and other practical and accessibility barriers.

Online experiences and encounters can teach young people about digital skills, teamwork and communication in an online environment which has increasing relevance for workplaces.

Young people are likely to learn most from interactive and hands-on experience which is harder to achieve in the online world. Online engagement with employers can complement but never completely substitute face-to-face experiences. Aim for a blended approach to maximise your impact.

Ensuring quality and impact when delivering virtually

1. **Make sure the activity involves two-way interaction between students and employers/employees.** You can use pre-recorded footage or materials, but don't rely on this alone.
2. **Work with providers and support their existing activities** – you can find a provider near you using our [Find an Activity Provider tool](#)
3. **Help the school in recording activities** by providing evidence that the students actively participated.
4. **Consider the technology required for inclusive participation** and ways that barriers to participation can be overcome.
5. **Consider the structure and length of each section of the experience** compared to your usual face-to-face activities. Do they need to be shorter to maintain impact?
6. **Utilise virtual collaboration tools and technology** to help replicate the working environment.
7. **Ensure that students perform a task or produce a piece of work relevant to your workplace** and receive feedback on it from you as the employer. Many platforms allow you to create 'breakout' rooms where students can work together in groups and the employer facilitator can check in on progress periodically.
8. In addition, **safeguarding needs to be considered** – see [page 21](#).

Covid-19 safeguarding guidelines

Ultimately safeguarding responsibility lies with the school, however employers should be aware of the requirements and always consider safeguarding when planning. Virtual delivery and contacting young people require additional planning to ensure both young people and delivery partners are appropriately safeguarded.

It is recommended that you review your policies and ensure they are responsive to different working practices where appropriate, and that employers make a safeguarding statement available to schools, young people, and parents. These guidelines are recommendations only and virtual activity should be responsive to the guidelines issued by the Department for Education.

Current Department for Education guidance for full opening of schools can be found [here](#). Further guidance on safeguarding can be found in the document '[Keeping children safe in education – for schools and colleges](#)'

The Department for Education have released the [safeguarding guidance for schools and colleges](#) during the Covid-19 situation.

An example of a good practice safeguarding policy can be seen on the Learn Live [website](#) and many employers have also been supported by [Speakers for Schools](#)

Good practice when planning face-to-face and virtual activities supporting Benchmarks 5 and 6

- Contact your local LEP team to find out what types of employer engagement are most needed currently.
- Each encounter should be planned to have a specific impact on the young people attending and that should fit within the schools careers programme. The Careers Leader at the school will be able to work with you to ensure the encounter is delivered to the right group of young people at the right time.
- You may wish to explore providers that can help with running the experience. Speak to your Enterprise Coordinator to find out about providers operating in your area. You can find your EC [here](#) or search for providers [here](#)
- Apply the principles of the [Making it Meaningful Framework](#) and [Checklist](#) to all activities, including virtual.
- Think about how their activities link to the curriculum and communicate this to schools and colleges.
- Identify alumni in your workforce and encourage them to engage with their school or college.
- Identify opportunities to engage parents in your activities.
- Make sure there is a proper preparation and debrief in place for participants.
- Develop a shared approach with the school to plan and judge the general effectiveness of the encounters. Seek to understand their current priorities.
- Aim to involve multiple employees from across the business in the delivery.

Benchmark 5: Encounters with employers and employees

Every pupil should have multiple opportunities to learn from employers about work, employment and the skills that are valued in the workplace. Students should participate in at least one meaningful encounter with an employer every year between Years 7-13.

What can employers do to support this benchmark?

Employers can deliver a range of activities enabling young people to learn about the workplace, including activities online. Encounters should allow students to learn about work, employment and the skills that are valued in the workplace. Ideally, individual activities will sit within a progressive careers programme that supports positive student outcomes. Even if you have limited resources, a short well-planned activity can have an impact.

You can work with your HR team to promote encounters as a valuable volunteering and staff development opportunity and a way to contribute to economic recovery. Direct those that are interested in volunteering to the Give an hour [website](#).

Get inspired by these examples from employers

Aston Villa FC recruit young people at risk of exclusion onto a programme including learning English and Maths and a work placement. See their case study [here](#) for details.

At the beginning of the crisis **KPMG** developed online activities for children 7-17, including resources from KPMG and the Economist Foundation's '**Numeracy in the News**' programme, '**The Future of technology**' pack from KPMG's flagship employability programme, WorkReady, as well as **environmental activities**. KPMG's gender diversity network ran a series of online coding classes which have reached 17,000 viewers in over 30 countries. KPMG has worked with The Economist Educational Foundation, National Numeracy, the Talent Foundry and the National Literacy Trust to produce content and resources to help support parents, students and teachers, with the shift to online learning, and has supported online initiatives including 'Pathways to Banking and Finance' and 'My Week of Work'.



Solent Cornerstone Employers, alongside local secondary and sixth form students, have been critical in the Benchmark 5 Interview an Employer project. The conversational interviews showcase a diverse range of roles, career pathways, skills, qualifications and top tips. Each Cornerstone Employer's collection of videos is accompanied by a company fact file and downloadable worksheet for use either in-school during a lesson, or by an individual pupil at home. The intention is that this model and templates will then be shared across the employer network in Solent to encourage as many employers as possible to develop similar Benchmark 5 resources.



Cornerstone Employers supporting **Buckinghamshire Thames Valley Careers Hub** will be supporting the delivery of a **Careers in the Curriculum week** this November, when employers will take part in lessons that are timetabled and show how they relate to their sectors. The local team in Buckinghamshire will be working with schools to identify elements of the curriculum being taught in the week and employers will match examples from their sector to bring the classes to life.



JP Morgan created a Summer of Learning programme – a series of digital learning sessions for students. Students learned professional skills as well as career readiness hints and tips; got to know the team and J.P. Morgan as a company, had an opportunity to ask questions to speakers throughout the session and heard about CV and interview techniques as well as Excel, Financial Markets, Resilience and Technology.



Digital interviews for sixth formers: In May **Capgemini** launched their offer of digital mock interviews for young people in KS4. They wanted to give young people the chance to practice what is becoming a normal part of the initial stages of recruitment, especially during the current pandemic. Capgemini give all the students that take part written feedback or telephone feedback if they prefer.



Virtual Employer Talks: Employers in **Buckinghamshire** have been working with the Skills Hub and EAN to provide an opportunity to learn about their sector, career pathways and take part in some employability skills workshops. The opportunities have been advertised to schools within the network and the employers have then worked with the schools to schedule the events. Events have happened via Zoom and provided the opportunity for a class of young people to interact with employers with support from their teacher.



Barclays Lifeskills: The LifeSkills 'Virtual interview practice tool' offers a valuable and realistic insight into the interview experience for young people. It's an interactive video which allows students to watch model answers to real interview questions, as well as record their own answers and develop their understanding of how the STAR model helps to structure impactful interview responses.



FT for Schools: The Financial Times offers a range of resources through their FT for schools programme, as well as free online subscriptions to the FT for students aged 16-19 and their teachers, schools and colleges. These are useful resources to use with students ahead of employer interaction. Their videos include guides to university applications, apprenticeship vs university, careers in medicine, careers in accounting, how to write a CV, how to succeed at interviews, how to climb the career ladder. Register for access: [here](#)



Sidequest – the Let's build worlds resource is developed by some of the UK's biggest game studios – Into Games and Core Games. This activity allowed young people to design their own video game in 7 days through practical quests, live masterclasses, free software and a supportive online community.



To find out more about any of these examples,
please contact:

employers@careersandenterprise.co.uk



Benchmark 6: Experiences of the workplace

Every students should have first-hand experiences of the workplace through work visits, work shadowing and/or work experience to help their exploration of career opportunities, and to expand their networks. Every pupil should have had at least one experience of a workplace by the age of 16, and one further experience by the age of 18. These experiences are in addition to any part time jobs they may have.

What can employers do to support this benchmark?

Experiences of workplaces should allow students to have first-hand experiences of the workplace through online or face-to-face work visits, work shadowing and/or work experience to help their exploration of career opportunities and expand their networks. Experiences of the workplace should reflect the fast-changing nature of work, including remote application processes and working.

Many employers have embraced digital platforms in lockdown and converted face-to-face workplace experiences to take place online. These online experiences should still maintain high levels of interaction in order to be as impactful as possible, rather than relying solely on pre-recorded video content.

Anecdotal feedback from employers say they have been highly impressed with the levels of interaction and quality of questions coming from students taking part in virtual workplace experiences.

Take this opportunity to consider how existing work experience programmes can be adapted to a virtual or blended scenario. By utilising the technology that has allowed your teams to collaborate and be productive while working remotely and providing real-life insights from across the company, you can create a meaningful and impactful experience of your workplace. Just ensure that the students perform a task or produce a piece of work that is relevant to your workplace!

Morgan Sindall – a Cornerstone Employer supporting five locations – has adapted its work experience week to take place virtually. Morgan Sindall identified a suitable platform and partner (Speakers for Schools and Class of Your Own), overcoming safeguarding and risk assessment challenges, to adapt their face-to-face model to suit a virtual experience. Engagement from students was strong, with high-quality questions coming from participants. Morgan Sindall have influenced the Fenlands & East Cambridgeshire group to now collaborate on a virtual Work Experience (VWEX) week for the OA and have supported other Cornerstones in Norwich OA to deliver VWEX this summer (Norfolk & Norwich NHS) and will be working on a Benchmark 6/VWEX working group for New Anglia in the new academic term. Further information:

- Interview with New Anglia LEP about Morgan Sindall's virtual work experience: [here](#)
- Guidance produced by Morgan Sindall: [here](#)



Norfolk and Norwich University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust completed a three-day virtual Work Experience (VWEX) for Year 10 students. One student set on being a GP is now considering clinical coding. The inspiration for running the VWEX came from Morgan Sindall and the conversations both employers had as part of being in the Cornerstone group in Norwich.



Turner and Townsend and Mace Group – to tackle the challenge of digital disadvantage, this model of online work experience was made available via mobile phones using Microsoft Teams and the link to school Office 365 accounts. St. Joseph's Catholic College worked with Class of Your Own, Turner and Townsend and Mace Group to replicate the rhythms of a working day. The students had three daily online meetings. At 9 am they met with their school mentor to go through the expected tasks, resources and Q&A. At noon, the students met with industry professionals in a meeting facilitated by Class of Your Own. Students prepared questions about the day's tasks to discuss with the professionals, learning from their experience. At 4 pm students again met with their school mentor to reflect on the challenges of the day.

During the week, aspects of the project were submitted for feedback from the professionals in preparation for final submission at the end of the week.

All students involved rated their experience of virtual work experience as "outstanding". The quality of the interaction with employers and the necessity for students to be proactive and "take a risk" in asking questions in a professional environment lifted this experience above the norm despite the virtual nature.



Accenture and Movement to Work have produced a Virtual Work Experience Toolkit providing guidance, framework and tools for virtualising work experience programmes: [here](#)



Severn Trent, a Cornerstone Employer supporting Coventry & Warwickshire and D2N2 LEP have shifted their work experience programmes to virtual online programmes and focus particularly on social mobility 'cold spots'. Severn Trent is working with other Cornerstone Employers to roll this model out further to reach even more young people.



Construction company **Jacobs** is also continuing to inspire the next generation in STEM subjects with a new virtual work experience programme. As a result of Covid, the company's STEM Ambassadors have created a programme that takes students through the design of a coronavirus vaccine research facility over five weeks and 10 sessions. Jacobs is a Cornerstone Employer in Greater Birmingham & Solihull and Worcestershire. Further information available: [here](#)



JP Morgan now delivers a virtual work experience programme called Real Connections which has been trialled in Mansfield. Any student who was due to have a placement with the company will still be offered experience, and all have taken up the virtual opportunity.



To find out more about any of these examples,
please contact:
employers@careersandenterprise.co.uk

How employers can get involved in The Careers & Enterprise Company network

Volunteer in schools

Ad hoc volunteering in schools and colleges to deliver careers activities or host an experience at one of your workplaces. Our local teams can direct your employees to schools needing support. Join >1,500 employee volunteers.



Become an Enterprise Adviser

Volunteers are carefully matched with a school or college. They support the senior team to develop and maintain a strong careers programme, using business experience and networks. Over 3,000 Enterprise Advisers volunteer nationally.



Join a local a Cornerstone Employer group

An organisational commitment. Work with other employers and a cluster of secondary schools and colleges to underwrite careers provision in an area. Over 200 Cornerstone Employers supporting local areas across England.



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Our work with The Careers & Enterprise Company has created a strong key link between The Sovini Group and schools in our local community. Through that link we have been able to work with schools and young people to make them aware of the wealth of diverse opportunities that exist in the workplace and help them access a range of different apprenticeships. It has helped us appoint to specific roles and schools have been able to identify and develop talent. Without this relationship, we wouldn't be able to connect young people with the work experience and job opportunities that are available.

Kerry Beirne
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Contact the Employers & Partnerships team
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