

# Engage with... Education Get Going

1. Planning and Action

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Employer  
Resource Pack

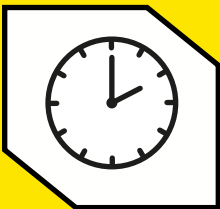
# Planning and Action

You are now at the stage where you have decided that you want to work with children and young people with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) in some local schools and colleges. This document outlines some of the next steps you need to consider.

## 1. Consider what you can offer

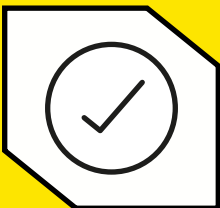
Read our Engagement Opportunities guide to help you start thinking about what areas you might be able to offer, but don't rule anything out until you have spoken with the education providers as they will each have a range of projects or options. Also think about your internal resources – people, knowledge and expertise for instance – and discuss how this might link with an education curriculum and offer something new and exciting.

There will be a number of areas you need to consider before you firm up your plans. They might include:

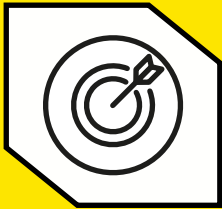


**Time.** Are you looking at a one-off activity or something you can develop over time? Employers often start by speaking in a school assembly and then go on to develop a relationship that leads to other programmes taking place.

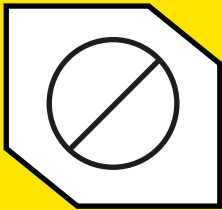
Students are more likely to feel comfortable in their own educational setting so perhaps start by running something on their site first, before inviting them to visit you. Where employees work with students over a longer period of time, this can have a more positive impact than a one-off project might achieve, but you need to have the time to commit.



**Permission.** Do you already have a volunteer policy that can cover the time that employees might need to spend on the project, or will it just be part of their normal working day? Do they need to allocate a specific code on their time-sheet, for instance, or get permission from their Line Manager to be out of the office? Is there a maximum number of hours a month they can engage in this kind of activity?



**Focus.** Can you link the support you are providing with the type of business you are engaged in? Whilst not wanting to pigeon-hole people, we do find that employees with a HR background can be really helpful with interview practice, whilst employers that physically make something might be more comfortable hosting a site visit, for instance. Schools and colleges working with SEND students also run programmes that focus on developing independence and this might be an area you can help with – understanding budgets, opening a bank account etc.



**Restrictions.** The global pandemic has made some face-to-face meetings more difficult, but the use of technology such as video conferencing and virtual tools, combined with the use of platforms such as Zoom and Microsoft Teams, has enabled people to 'see' and speak to each other, albeit not face-to-face. This is likely to remain one of the options for some time and this doesn't even require your staff to leave the building! Nothing beats first-hand experience and live contact, so maybe include virtual meetings alongside face-to-face ones too.

## 2. Research and contact



Contact one of the Schools Partnership Team at the West Yorkshire Combined Authority (**[enterpriseadvisers@the-lep.com](mailto:enterpriseadvisers@the-lep.com)**) who will have contacts with specialist schools and with teams at schools or colleges offering specialist provision.

If you are already working with a school or college, see if they have a group of students with specialist needs you could work with.

Find a local school or college directly close to your site(s). Your local authority should have a service that is often called 'Local Offer' which is aimed at parents and students but does list all the specialist provisions that are available.

If you don't already have a specific name, just ring the school or college, they will know who to put you through to – it's likely to be the person who leads on careers or work experience. Most schools will have a section about Work & Careers – such as this example:

**[allertonhigh.org.uk/search/careers-and-work-exp/97.html](http://allertonhigh.org.uk/search/careers-and-work-exp/97.html)**

They may not be immediately available on the phone, as they could be teaching, but leave a message for them to call you back or ask for their email address and send an introductory email.

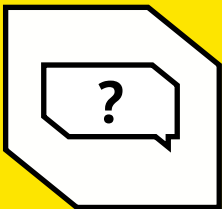
### 3. Next steps



This will depend, very much, on who you have had a conversation with but will likely include you sharing more information about your workplace. You might want to provide a brief: where you are located; what does your business do; how many staff do you have; what kind of roles there are; and what you can offer to their students.

- It may be some time since your volunteer employees were at school and some may never have been to a special school before. It's really useful if a group of your employees go and visit the school or college and meet staff and students.
- Teaching staff will also want to come and see your working environment, so they can look at accessibility, noise levels, layout of desks etc. This could also enable them to identify areas and tasks where they think their students would play an active role.

### 4. Ask lots of questions



It is really important that you use these first meetings to find out more about each other. Don't hold back on sharing any concerns you might have about getting involved and don't feel you have to leap in and offer everything from the beginning.

Some of the best partnerships have started with very small steps, expanding the provision as both partners develop greater confidence and trust in the partnership. Letting an educational establishment find out more about you and your business really helps them identify which specific students would benefit from engaging with you.

Don't be afraid to ask lots of questions such as:

Tell me about your school or college. How long have you been established? How many students do you have? What percentage have support needs?

What kind of activities can we get involved with and what would you need from us in terms of staff time, materials or resources?

Do you work with other employers?  
Which ones? What do they do? How  
long have they been working with you?  
Do you think they would speak to  
me on the phone?

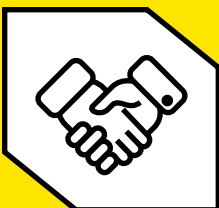
Do our staff need any training –  
disability awareness and safeguarding  
in particular? What are our legal  
responsibilities for them when they are  
on site and do we need any  
special insurance?

What kind of support needs do the  
students we might be working with have?  
Will we need to make any reasonable  
adjustments at our workplace and  
what might they be?

Will your staff be with students all  
the time they are with us, or will we be  
responsible for them for part of the  
time? Do we need them to have  
DBS checks?

What happens if something goes  
wrong – an accident, a student feels  
they cannot cope, they don't turn up  
for work or after lunch?

## 5. Employee engagement



Once a partnership looks possible, your employee or team will need to have conversations with other colleagues to identify what level of interest there is. Our Get Ready guide has suggestions of how you can recruit members to get involved with the programme.

# Engagement Opportunities

## What does engagement look like for me?

Many businesses want to help but are not quite sure what the options are. This information sheet is designed to provide further information about some of the more popular areas where schools and colleges might be looking for support. You may well have some specific skills or experience you would like to offer, so don't let the list limit your imagination. Your education partners and the team at West Yorkshire Combined Authority can also offer further information and advice.

### Low-Level Commitment – 1 hour to ½ day

The following suggestions shouldn't take up too much of your time – they could just take place once a year. Perhaps you will enjoy them so much that you will want to offer them or participate in them more frequently.

#### Careers advice

Provide details about the roles in your business – either delivering a workshop at school or college or hosting it on your own site.

#### Things to consider

- In discussion with your education partner, think of what roles are most relevant.

#### Requirements

- Do you have any resources you could create or share to provide information about entry-level jobs in finance, admin, marketing, data etc?
- Think about how to make them relevant for a school or college audience – describe the job, the kind of skills they might need, what a typical day might look like.

Low  
Level

#### Visit school or college

Some of your employees will visit a school, speak at an assembly or participate in a lesson with a group of students.

#### Things to consider

- Which staff would be comfortable speaking enthusiastically about what you do?
- How could you bring this to life – a presentation with photos, props, film clips?

#### Requirements

- Your education partner will advise what level to pitch your presentation and tell you more about the students.
- Send any presentations in advance so they can test them and make sure they are suitable for the audience.

Low  
Level

**Low  
Level**

## A visit to your site

Staff and students visit your workplace – an actual or virtual visit. Offer a tour and a chance to see and learn about what you do. Meet some staff and find out about what job roles you have.

### Things to consider

- Site access for those with limited mobility and/or wheelchair users.
- How many people can you safely accommodate?
- Can you provide basic refreshments – soft drinks and biscuits?
- Which aspects of your work would be visually interesting and allow some level of engagement?

### Requirements

- Education partner would visit site first to do a Risk Assessment.
- They may need to see a copy of your insurance certificate and/or health & safety details.

**Low  
Level**

## Interview practice

Advise on how to prepare for an interview and run some mock interviews.

### Things to consider

- Consider doing this in stages. Run 1–2 sessions first, at the school or college premises about the interview process and how to prepare. Then go in and do some mock interviews, perhaps culminating with a mock interview at your own premises.
- Who would be best-placed to deliver this – someone in your HR team perhaps?

### Requirements

- Prepare some questions in advance and share with your education partner so they can advise if you are pitching at the right level.
- Be prepared to give some gentle feedback to the person being interviewed, perhaps providing more detail to the school or college staff. Always think of some positives to say, as well as some constructive advice.

**Low  
Level**

## Attend a careers fair

This usually takes place in a school or college setting alongside a range of other employers.

### Things to consider

- Which staff are best-placed to talk about your recruitment process and what jobs are available?
- Have you got any live vacancies that you could display on the day?

### Requirements

- How can you make your stand visually appealing so as to engage students?

**Low  
Level**

## Hot seating

Invite the students to interview you.

### Things to consider

- A good introductory event to interviewing where the students ask your employees questions about them.

### Requirements

- Work with your education partner to devise some questions that students can ask your staff.

## Medium-Level Commitment – 1–2 Days Over a Period of Time or Regular Commitment

Medium  
Level

### Deliver a lesson

Work with your education partners to deliver a lesson, linking your work with the curriculum. This could be around areas such as finance and budgeting, project planning, research and development.

#### Things to consider

- Work with your education partner to think about topics that might link with the curriculum – history, maths, English, or look at an aspect of employability, i.e. communication, problem-solving.
- Avoid ‘chalk and talk’ i.e. just standing up and delivering. Engage the students, get them involved.

#### Requirements

- You will need to do some ‘lesson planning’ in advance and speak with education staff about the topic and the way you intend to present.

Medium  
Level

### Develop non-educational resources

Work with your education partners to develop specific resources that can be used in a school or college setting, by employees or school staff.

#### Things to consider

- Work with your education partner to think about other areas where students might need support: budgeting; opening a bank account; booking a medical appointment.
- Create some easy-to-use resources.

#### Requirements

- You will need to do some ‘lesson planning’ in advance and speak with education staff about the topic and way you intend to present.

Medium  
Level

### Work-related project

Staff and students work together on a specific project.

#### Things to consider

- Choose a project that will have a benefit for you. Do you need a site survey done on your premises or your website and marketing material from an accessibility point of view? Do you need some people to test a new product or service?
- Where would it take place – your site, the school or college, virtually?

#### Requirements

- A detailed brief of what might be involved so school or college staff can make sure it's appropriate.
- A project and a team to work with the students.
- Support to the education partner with regards risk assessments and other considerations.
- An opportunity to celebrate at the end.



## Medium Level

### Mentoring

Recruit mentors from within your organisation to spend time speaking or meeting with students to encourage aspiration and support their career development.

#### Things to consider

- Which of your staff have the right skills to mentor a student?
- What kind of mentoring could they offer? This could be job-related (i.e. helping a student who is interested in a particular role or career path) or focusing on developing specific skills such as employability, team work etc.
- How frequent? This is often one hour a month for a set period of time.
- What kind of support might they need if they have not done mentoring before?

#### Requirements

- The school or college will require you to have a DBS check and a specific risk assessment. They will also help match employees with students.
- Best practice suggests you have a written agreement which clarifies the roles of both mentor and mentee, and agrees timescales and commitments.  
See [princes-trust.org.uk](http://princes-trust.org.uk) for some examples.
- A quiet space for the mentoring – at school or college or your premises.

## Higher-Level Commitment – Regular Commitment Over a Period of Time, Not One-Off

## Higher Level

### Supported internships

This is a structured programme that runs from September to July and is primarily aimed at young adults aged 18–24 with support needs. They are run via local colleges or supported employment organisations who will provide Job Coaches to work alongside employees and interns.

#### Things to consider

- What roles do you have that might be suitable for an internship – students are usually on site 3 days a week for c. 5 hours?
- Which staff members would make great work-based buddies, with the time to support the intern on a daily basis?
- Would you benefit from some initial training on Disability Awareness, for instance?
- Does the internship have the potential for becoming a paid role – perhaps part-time?

#### Requirements

- You need to be able to take on unpaid members of staff (check with your HR or legal team).
- Your education partner will run through a full induction with you, as well as helping ensure all the processes and procedures are in place.
- Although the internship is unpaid, you may want to consider providing free drinks and lunch.

## Enterprise adviser

For at least one year, Enterprise Advisers strategically partner with a local school or college, using their skills, business experience and networks to help the schools or college develop a strong careers programme that supports all students. Enterprise Advisers have access to an untapped talent pipeline and will see impact from their interventions. They also work closely with careers leaders, helping to support pathways into their industry.

### Things to consider

- Who could do be the person within your team to lead on this ? (preferably someone with a strategic job role a senior leader)
- Will the lead person have the ability to ask members of staff to come into school and take part in various activities?
- Does your industry have a skills shortage? If so becoming an Enterprise Adviser is a great way to promote your industry to young people and will help to broaden their horizons

### For more information see here

[futuregoals.co.uk/engage/employers/enterprise-adviser/](http://futuregoals.co.uk/engage/employers/enterprise-adviser/)

### Requirements

- The Enterprise Adviser will need to have the capacity and influence within an organisation to be to be flexible
- Be willing to work closely with a careers leader
- A passion for wanting to make a difference
- The Enterprise Advisor will need to be someone with the skill and knowledge to help steer strategic direction of Careers in a school or college
- Able to commit to the role for at least one year

## Work experience

Mainstream schools often ask for a 2-week work experience placement with employers. Experience of working with SEN students reveals that they benefit more from having 2 hours a week over a longer period.

### Things to consider

- Do you have a team or department that could support this type of slightly more-intensive support?
- What project could they do that would be meaningful for the students, and also help you. It needs to work both ways!
- Work experience usually takes place in a block of 3–5 days. Some SEN students thrive better if this is perhaps 1–2 hours a week over an extended period.

### Requirements

- A member of staff identified as the WEX (Work Experience) co-ordinator.
- A team or member of staff with sufficient time to find meaningful work for the student to do and to provide oversight.
- Space – spare desk or computer, temporary access to the Internet.
- Full health & safety and risk assessments.

**Higher  
Level**

## **Inclusive apprenticeships**

These are the same as standard apprenticeships but are aimed at people with cognitive, physical, mental health or sensory disabilities.

### **Things to consider**

- If you already have an apprenticeship programme, could you identify at least one role that is specifically for someone with support needs?
- You would need to have an identified role, Job Description, appropriate pay-scale.

### **Requirements**

- You will need to review the full requirements for providing a supported apprenticeship. The Learning and Work Institute has a useful guide:

**[employer-toolkit.org.uk/](http://employer-toolkit.org.uk/)**

**Higher  
Level**

## **Enterprise activities**

This might involve working with a group of students to create something to make and sell; taking a term to set up and run an enterprise project; or running a design or other competition to solve a business or similar challenge.

### **Things to consider**

- Who could lead on this project from your staff team?
- Is there a product or service that links more directly with what you do, as an employer?
- Would the activities take place on your site or at school?

### **Requirements**

- A team with skills to support this kind of enterprise development who also have some creative flair.
- Access to a pot of money to buy the necessary ingredients and tools to set the enterprise project up.

# FUTUREGOALS



In partnership with

