

WEST LONDON

CAREERS HUB

Created by Education and Employers who run Inspiring the Future

SMEs and Micro Enterprise Toolkit

**HOW YOU CAN SUPPORT YOUR LOCAL COMMUNITY
AND INSPIRE THE NEXT GENERATION**



Volunteering in education is an impactful way for SMEs and Micro Enterprise to make a demonstrable difference to the lives of children and young people. But it's not just the young people who benefit. Research shows it can boost morale of employees and secure and diversify your future talent pipeline.

This toolkit is designed to show SMEs and Micro Enterprise how volunteering with schools can make a positive impact on you and your organisation and exactly how to get involved.



'As I got more involved I realised that involvement in supporting local education was a meaningful way for me to contribute to my community and connect to what's happening in the area in which I live. And it gives me a chance to lead in different contexts to the one in which I work, as a consultant, and get out of my bubble'

Andrew Wood, Director

The benefits

HOW VOLUNTEERING IN EDUCATION CAN MAKE A POSITIVE DIFFERENCE TO YOUNG PEOPLE AND YOU!

You can't be what you can't see

Research from Education and Employers* shows that interactions between volunteers from the world of work and young people leads to improved attainment, broadened horizons and raised aspirations. These interactions also help to challenge stereotypical views often formed at an early age, about people and the jobs they do based on gender, ethnicity and social background.

IMPACT FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

4+

encounters with an employer whilst in school leads to young people earning more and lowering their chances of becoming Not in Education, Employment or Training.



Young people who take part in careers activities such as jobs fairs and job shadowing are more positive about schooling and its helpfulness in adulthood.

IMPACT FOR VOLUNTEERS AND ORGANISATIONS

79%

of volunteers reported improvements to their sense of mission at work.

94%

felt they gained a better understanding of society and social issues.

80%

reported benefits for their communication, influencing & relationship skills.

*<https://www.educationandemployers.org/research-main/>

HOW CAN YOU SUPPORT YOUR LOCAL CAREERS HUB?

- Participating in the Give an Hour programme by volunteering in schools & colleges
- Welcoming young people to visit your workplace as part of an insight visit
- Volunteering as an Enterprise Adviser

ACTIVITY MENU

GIVE AN HOUR

Commitment is light-touch

ACTIVITY	TIME	HOW IT WOULD WORK
Career insights talk	From 5 minutes - 1 hour	Career insights talks are an opportunity for you to talk about your own career and education pathway, as well as your current role. They can happen both virtually and in-school.
Mock interviews	Varies depending on the school	Mock interviews typically take place in the school and/or virtually and emulate the format and conditions of an actual interview with time for you to give constructive feedback to the student.
CV workshops	Typically 1 hour	CV workshops are an opportunity to help students prepare their own CV and/or cover letter. The session can focus on what a CV is and why it's important in the world of work.

WORKPLACE VISITS

Commitment level varies

ACTIVITY	TIME	HOW IT WOULD WORK
Insight visits	Half a day - a day	Insight visits often involve groups of students coming into a workplace to learn more about a particular industry. The format of the day will depend on what you can accommodate and what the teacher's objectives are but can include: a tour of the workplace, talks and an interactive activity.

Work experience

One day - two weeks depending on the age or needs of the student

Work experience is a short-term, temporary placement for a young person in a workplace. Students might undertake junior-level tasks that give them an insight into the industry. Job shadowing or virtual work experience offers are an alternative, lighter touch option which are more adaptable and flexible for employers.



ENTERPRISE ADVISER

Commitment level is medium to high

ACTIVITY

TIME

HOW IT WOULD WORK

Enterprise Adviser

To be agreed with the school or college you're working with, however, a good guide is at least two meetings (virtual or in-person) per term, for at least one academic year.

Enterprise Advisers help bridge the gap between the world of work and education, working with the Careers Leader and wider senior leaders of the school or college to create opportunities for young people. In the role you will be supporting the school or college's senior leadership team strategically to develop and evaluate their careers plan. You will also provide a valuable employer's perspective and engage with local businesses and employers in your network to put a wide variety of careers opportunities at the heart of young people's education.

Obstacles and barriers

'I don't have the time or links with schools in my local area and have no idea how to connect with them?'

West London Careers Hub is designed to connect schools and colleges with employers in West London. Our advisers will be there to support you and find the best volunteering opportunities for you.

Light-touch activities like career insight talks (listed above) are designed to fit the schedules of busy volunteers who often work full-time. Research shows that 68% of volunteers who supported career insight activities reported greater motivation at work.

'As a small independent business, I struggle with time to support activities. I just don't think it's something I can fit in my schedule...'

'I don't have children and haven't stepped foot in a classroom in years! I don't feel confident communicating with young people'

Lots of volunteers feel daunted by this prospect and it's perfectly natural to be a bit anxious but if you link up with West London Careers Hub they will be able to give you support on how best to talk to young people so you can build up your confidence.

Volunteering virtually is an alternative to consider if this is a concern. Virtual volunteering enables volunteers to connect with

schools via technology from the comfort of their home/work space. There is also the benefit of reaching schools across the country with your story.

'It will financially cost me time out of work and money travelling to the school. As a small business it's hard to justify the expenses!'

Young people need to hear from a diverse group of people in different sectors, at different levels and from different backgrounds. You might not think that your

story is inspiring but every volunteer has a story to tell about their career path, whatever their background, position, and career span. Students are fascinated by the huge variety of jobs available to them and hearing your story or seeing your place of work brings to life what are often abstract concepts. You're opening their eyes to the world around them and broadening their horizons.

'I don't have an inspiring story to tell – why would a young person want to hear from me?'

Isn't it a long-winded and costly process to go through all the DBS checks?

No! Whether you need a DBS will vary for the type of volunteering you do. If you're supporting a light-touch activity such as career insights talk then you won't need a DBS. If you're becoming an enterprise advisor you will need a DBS but there is no cost to you as it will be covered by West London Careers Hub. We will guide you through the process which can take up to two weeks.



In practice

HOW VOLUNTEERING COULD LOOK FOR YOU



NAME: Andrew Wood

JOB TITLE: Director

ORGANISATION: hCubed

ACTIVITY SUPPORTED: I supported a group of sixth form students at the Global Academy to help them think about how they might be leaders themselves.

FORMAT OF THE SESSION: It was a 60-minute workshop in-person – a mix of presentation, practical exercises and group conversation, with around eight students.

TIME GIVEN: 90 minutes of delivery, plus about the same for prep.

THE BEST PART: Sharing the enthusiasm and perspective of the students. They have a lot to teach us, and it's really important that we connect intergenerationally. There's a lot of optimism and energy out there.

IMPACT MADE: I like to think I helped a group of people connect with their own strengths, acknowledge their ability to lead, and reflect a little more on how they are naturally capable. I believe people are resourceful and capable, and if the workshop helped people see more of that in themselves, that's good enough for me for 90 minutes' work.

TIPS: Find a way to add value from your own experience and expertise. Take what you do and think about how it might be interesting and valuable to different audiences and at the end of it all, connect for connection's sake.

NAME: Maija Linnala
JOB TITLE: User Engagement Lead
ORGANISATION: The IARS International Institute



ACTIVITY SUPPORTED: Our organisation supported structured Work Experience placements. The aim of these weeks is to provide young people with an insight into the charity sector in the UK by introducing them both to the work IARS do and a professional working environment.

FORMAT OF THE SESSION: The week-long placements allow us to deliver a range of activities, including training in gender stereotypes, gender-based violence and discrimination, community action and digital skills. Students work on small research or communications projects, tailored to their specific needs and interests.

THE BEST PART: The opportunity to work with such engaged and driven young people, who always bring lots of enthusiasm to their placements! It is also great to hear their positive feedback and what they have learnt from their experience at the end of the week.

IMPACT MADE: Students report they feel they have improved their skills and are more employable as a result of the placement. We also see students grow in confidence throughout the week, speaking up and contributing to team discussions. Overall, we hope we are empowering young people to shape decision-making and social change by providing opportunities for them to grow and develop their skills.

TIPS: The work experience weeks have been a great experience for our organisation. Being able to provide meaningful opportunities to young people has taught us a lot and it makes us feel proud of the work that we do.

Next steps

TOP TIPS TO GET VOLUNTEERING

1

Reach out to West London Careers Hub

West London Careers Hub is a resource designed to help local employers and SMEs connect with schools and colleges. Our enterprise coordinators will help you build relationships and give you any support and guidance you need.

2

Start small

Volunteering with a school doesn't mean a long-term, high-level commitment. You can make a difference by giving just an hour a year through an organisation like inspiringthefuture.org.

3

Explore virtual volunteering

Virtual volunteering is a perfect place to start if you're short on time or a bit nervous. It's a great way to connect with schools and start building your confidence volunteering in education.



'Volunteering in the virtual sessions has enabled me to participate in many more activities than I could have attended in person. It has been a fantastic way for me to support young people around my busy schedule...I feel privileged to be able to give these young people the encouraging messages I wish I could have heard at that age. Taking part has improved my confidence in presenting virtually which has helped me with my own business.'

Nicola Osinaike

Entrepreneur Technology Audit Manager



This resource has been created by Education and Employers who run
Inspiring the Future

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Find out more

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