

Top Tips on Where To Start With Employer Engagement

Whether you are new to the role of Enterprise Coordinator or new to engaging employers, these top tips will help you establish and maintain your employer networks locally. You'll then be able to support the schools and colleges in your area to meet Gatsby Benchmarks 5 & 6 and other Benchmarks that involved engagement with employers, such as Benchmarks 2 & 4.

1 | Talk to your LEP

Your LEP will be able to inform you about activities related to employers in the area. Ask about the response to the Industrial Strategy, what's happening in your Growth Hub and who sits on the Skills Advisory Panel. This will give you the local economic context in which you're working.

2 | Understand which employers are in your area

Building local Labour Market Information (LMI) into your interactions with schools and colleges is key to meeting Benchmark 2 and will give young people relevant information about future opportunities for employment and training.

- Read your local LMI data. This will tell you what the key sectors are in your area; which sectors are growing; whether there are any skills gaps; and what the opportunities are.
- Identify the key employers locally. Knowing these employers and ensuring you, a colleague or a key partner has a good relationship with them will enable you to upskill your schools and colleges about local LMI and connect them to the key players. Think about who hires young people e.g. apprentices and graduates; who employs the most people locally; who has a good reputation for working with schools and colleges; who has a good reputation for getting involved in the local community; and even who employs seasonal or part time staff which might enable young people to get valuable work experience alongside their studies.
- You should have a target list of employers that you want to build a partnership with to support your work with schools and colleges. The Careers & Enterprise Company Employer Engagement Team can also help access national employers in your area - see contact details on the back page.



3 | Identify what your schools and colleges need

At the same time as understanding the local business context, you will also be identifying the employer requirements from your schools and colleges to support delivery of their careers programme and meet the Gatsby Benchmarks.

- Ensure they've all completed Compass and Tracker, and continue to do so each year, to provide clear data on gaps in employer engagement.
- Ensure there is a clear ask of business - which activities; where; when; time commitment; etc
- Also check if there are any careers programmes funded by The Careers & Enterprise Company working with schools and colleges in your area. Knowing who they are engaging with will reduce duplication and ensure the employers' time and resource is directed appropriately across your area. Also, by working together, you can leverage each others business contacts and ensure you are supporting your schools and colleges to meet the Gatsby Benchmarks.

4 | Ask your local business community to support your schools and colleges

Now you have a list of what your schools and colleges need, and a target list of who you want to approach, go out to your local employer community.

- Get to know your local business bodies, networks and events. The Careers & Enterprise Company hold central relationships with a number of industry bodies such as the CBI, FSB, Chambers of Commerce, CIPD and BITC and can make local introductions. Attending local meetings and events is a great networking opportunity. You may also be able to share specific requests via these organisation's communication channels e.g. newsletters and social media.
- Your own professional social media channels can be used to recruit employer volunteers. Update your LinkedIn profile to give a top-level overview of what you're looking for people to engage with. Use Twitter to share specific requests, which can be shared by the relevant school/college and LEP. Be sure to join The Careers & Enterprise Company's Facebook Workplace channel to learn from our community of practitioners and volunteers. To request to join, please email workplace@careersandenterprise.co.uk.

- Bring your network of Enterprise Advisers together regularly to build a community who will support one another and increase the pool of employers working with each school in your network. Ask them to spread the word about opportunities locally, both internally within their organisation, but also at local networking events they attend, on social media or with their friends and family.
- If you're in an Opportunity Area or Careers Hub then your Cornerstone Employers can help make introductions to other employers.

5 | Signpost employers to tools and resources

Where employers and schools and colleges are keen to work together but aren't sure what to do, there is a range of tools and resources which they can use to deliver employer encounters in schools and colleges.

- [The Enterprise Coordinator resources section](#) of The Careers & Enterprise Company's website has a range of resources, which are added to throughout the year. A few good starting points are the ['What Works' series](#), [The Gatsby Benchmark toolkits](#) for schools, colleges and SEND, [the CBI Practical Guide for Employers in supporting schools careers activities](#) and the National Grid resource ['Fuelling Futures: Employer Toolkit for working with SEND schools'](#). Keep updated on what's new by visiting the website regularly and reading the regular Network News email newsletters.
- The Careers & Enterprise Company's [Provider Directory](#) gives information about which organisations are working locally to provide employer encounters in schools and colleges and may require employer volunteers. Schools and colleges can search for the activities that are available locally and be told which Gatsby Benchmarks they support, which year group they're most suitable for and if there is a cost.
- There is also a range of externally produced, practical resources which can be used by schools and colleges and employers, working in partnership to deliver employer encounters. These include amongst many others; [Business in the Community's Careers Lab](#), [Barclays Life Skills](#) and [BBC Bitesize Careers](#), all of which have new editions and resources being added to them in early 2019.

6 | Keep your employer network engaged

- As you're meeting new employers who want to engage with schools and colleges, keep a track of their details, ideally in a Customer Relationship Management (CRM) System which is shared by colleagues in your organisation. Speak to your Growth Hub/Skills Lead to see if they have a system in place that you should use. If not, a well formatted excel spreadsheet will also work.
- Keep records of what people have said they are interested in supporting and manage their information in a way that lets you easily communicate with them.
- Send regular communications (e.g. termly newsletters) to all your employer contacts, updating them on the collective impact they've made, sharing best practice, case studies and requests for the following term - it's a great way to keep them engaged.
- This CRM should be your 'go to' place when you have a request from a school. You should be able to easily find the relevant contact for a request e.g. STEM, Creative Sector or Entrepreneur. You can find an example template [here](#).
- Identify other programmes, funding or training being run by the LEP that would be of benefit and help reinforce the message of delivering a joined-up service across all LEP operations.

7 | Support your schools and colleges to manage the connections they make themselves

- Once you've facilitated employer connections with your schools and colleges, support them to manage those relationships themselves.
- The 'Employer Engagement Guide for Schools and Colleges' is available on the EC resources section and can be shared with your schools and colleges to help them manage their own employer networks. It includes template employer engagement resources and a template excel database to maintain their contacts.

The Careers & Enterprise Company Team:

Please contact the relevant Senior Employer Engagement Manager if you have any questions on how to engage employers or if you require support in approaching national employers or strategic partners.

North of England: Julian Buttery
(jbuttery@careersandenterprise.co.uk)

West of England: Alison Bond
(abond@careersandenterprise.co.uk)

East of England: Erica Chamberlain
(echamberlain@careersandenterprise.co.uk)