



South Midlands
CAREERS HUB

THE CAREERS &
ENTERPRISE
COMPANY

EMPLOYER ENGAGEMENT
**Building Trusted
Partnerships**

Career Leader CPD 09.03.26

Purpose of the Session

- The importance of making positive employer connections.
- Committing to connections by actively developing partnerships.

Introduction

5 minutes

Please introduce yourselves
in the chat!

Case studies

20-25 minutes

Q&A and discussion

15-20 minutes

Add your thoughts to the
chat





to help young people. To be honest, I did all the work for that but nothing really came of it and I didn't hear anything. So I guess just moved on. Where time permits I am always happy to try and help people from difficult backgrounds, as I was. So if you want to have a conversation then please let me know. Without sounding rude and I hope you dont think so, I dont want to spend too much too much time on it again if its unlikely to lead to doing any activity. Happy to have a chat though either way



Operational Best Practices

Cornerstone Employers: *Engage with local Cornerstone Employers to access high-quality, strategic partnerships.*

Make it Simple: *Provide clear, concise information and, for SMEs, keep requests to 90 minutes or less.*

Create Meaningful Experiences: *Opportunities for active engagement like workshops or mentoring.*

Prepare Both Sides: *Brief employers on the pupils, objectives, and the Gatsby Benchmarks, and ensure teachers participate in the interaction.*

Evaluate Impact: *Use the Future Skills Questionnaire in Compass+ to measure the impact on student confidence and career awareness.*

Top tips for employer engagement



Reach out

- Start with staff, parent and governor networks
- Utilise connections with former students who might revisit and inspire
- Register with the [Primary Futures](#) and [STEM Ambassador](#) platforms to connect with employers who are committed to primary engagement
- Approach any charities you have supported or fundraised for
- Consider opportunities for exploring job roles during school trips



Timings

- Give plenty of notice - at least six weeks if possible
- Don't expect SMEs (small and medium enterprises) to visit for more than 90 mins at a time - they'll be losing money from their business
- Give a clear time slot within your requested day



Planning

- Give the visitor clear instructions for the engagement and what you are trying to achieve including: - year group/key stage/additional needs/any parents invited - aims and objectives for the engagement - pupils' prior knowledge
- Be prepared to facilitate and develop ideas/activities with your visitor
- Make sure to drop them a line prior to the booked visit confirming timings, location, parking and main contact number information



On the day

- Make them feel welcome before, during and after the event
- Aim to make them feel part of your school community - they are more likely to return that way
- Offer refreshments - the nice coffee!
- Be aware that some people may have had negative experiences of school and could be anxious about the visit
- Make sure a member of staff is nominated to be present throughout the engagement



Follow up

- Promote your visitor(s) in communications to parents
- Thank them for their time - a letter from the children is a nice touch!
- Stay in touch moving forwards - particularly if you have updates about what the children have learned or achieved with their help



Example - Latimer Arts College

Employer Engagement/Teacher CPD Inset day: Friday 5th December 2025

- Head of Careers/Assistant Principal: Kerry Gallon
- Careers Administrator: Vicky Stanyon
- Industry Partner: **Vikki Overson**, Project Manager for Unilever
- Careers Consultant: Claire Coles

Employer Engagement: Business Networking Event

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the
LatimerArts
College

 Strategic Purpose	<p>Refreshed & aligned employer engagement with the school's strategic plan and Gatsby Benchmark 4</p>
 Leadership Support	<p>Fully endorsed by the Principal and SLT, embedding employer engagement into whole-school practice</p>
 Employer–Teacher Links	<p>Meaningful staff–employer connections created, with curriculum teams pursuing follow-up collaborations</p>
 Staff Development	<p>CPD delivered on networking skills and embedding careers into the curriculum</p>
 Employer Awareness	<p>Improved employer understanding of the Careers Programme and how they can contribute</p>
 Student Benefits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A presentation from the Mayor to Year 12 Politics students • A workshop from an employer who runs a Fitness Company and provided a team building activity • A visit for Year 12 Design students to Satra (a footwear testing facility in Kettering)
 Keeping the momentum	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Working group of employers (co-develop curriculum resources and modern work-experience opportunities). • Curriculum audit • Parental engagement plan • Internal Leadership review



Example – Southfield School for Girls
Employer Engagement/Job Application initiative

- Careers Leader: **Sophie Kursat**
- SLT Careers Lead: Adam Barratt
- Industry Partner: **Harrison Barlett**, Emerging Talent Advisor (Nuclear & Energy, Environment), Kier
- Careers Consultant: Claire Coles

Young Inspirers Event

Networking:

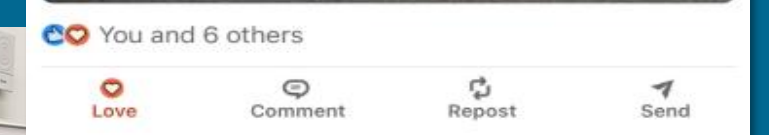
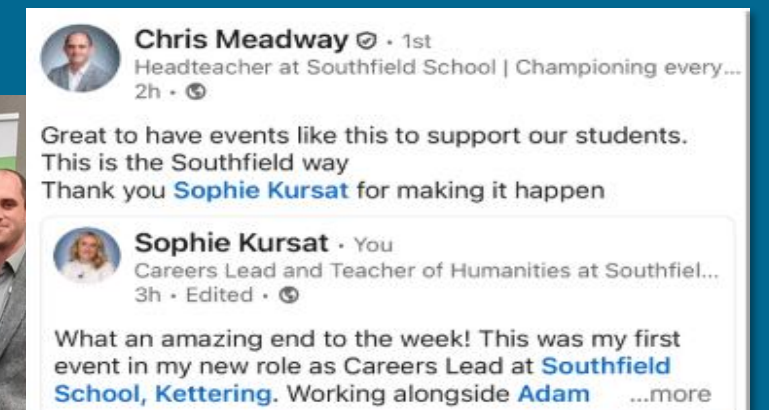
- Using social media to make connections
- Alumni – inviting past students back into school to support current students.
- Following up on Careers Hub Events and trialling various ways of making contact with ‘Young Inspirers’.

Making time to meet:

- Arranging teams calls to ‘meet and greet’ virtually.
- Preparing slides on their roles – support students to understand their roles better and who they are.
- Ensuring SLT are there to greet visitors on the day.
- Hospitality.

Alumni:

- Continue to build the relationship with alumni, through coffee afternoons to get to know people better.



Working from data

Used the Future Skills Questionnaire to identify gaps in student knowledge:

- 51% - Are you aware of some of the types of businesses or employers in your area of the country?
- 63% - Do you know any trustworthy websites that can help you decide what to do in the future?
- 63% - Have you contacted people who work in jobs that interest you?
- 58% - Do you feel confident about your next steps after year 11?
- 66% - Do you know about different types of recruitment and selection process, including interviews and assessment centres?

Explored the data with SLT, Claire and Harrison (Industry Partner)

Developing employer relationships

- Being available to meet employers (timetable restrictions but can be done over teams too!)
- Identifying their needs – Kier aim to increase the number of females coming into the industry.
- Establishing the level of commitment – deciding on what each party's role will be in the partnership.



Exploring ideas of engagement

1. What is their motivation for working with the school?
2. Strategic or operational support?
3. Who is the employer keen to work with?
4. What level of commitment can they provide?
5. Information about their organisation? Skills, roles across the business, number of employees, how many would be willing to engage? Level of confidence or outreach experience, recruitment processes, etc.



- **Year 10 Mock Interview Initiative**

- From the FSQ data, found gaps in our provision.
- Mock interview initiative – two main days, with activity before and in between main days.
- Monday 23rd March – series of workshops delivered by Kier staff. *Interview skills, CV writing, researching a careers site and looking at LMI.*
- Thursday 2nd July – Mock interview day with 25+ Kier professionals. *Students will interview for a job they have applied for through the Kier recruitment website and then receive feedback on their interview from the employer – ‘meaningful’.*
- Panel style assemblies in between students applying for a ‘mock’ job role through the employer website.



BM5 & BM6: Engaging Employers

Benefits of engagement: the employers' perspective

- CSR/recruitment: This year we've had clearer, more ambitious targets on female recruitment in emerging talent pathways – partnership born from this.

Key considerations

- Job demands: My role as ET Advisor requires me to be travelling/present on site, supporting graduate forums & recruitment. At times seen to be not so visible. Understanding this is key to a strong partnership.
- Seasonal demands as above – at times may be not as available depending on role.

Advocacy/building momentum:

- Been able to build strong momentum and high advocacy through consistent promotion of campaigns.



Q&A and discussion

What does a 'trusted partnership' look like to you?

