

South Midlands Careers Hub Inclusion Conference

Wifi password:
khguest07

Wednesday 1st
July 2026

South Midlands
CAREERS HUB

THE CAREERS &
ENTERPRISE
COMPANY



Agenda

South Midlands
CAREERS HUB

THE CAREERS &
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COMPANY

Morning

09:30 - 10:05 Welcome and Keynote on White Paper 'Every Child Achieving and Thriving'

10:05 - 10:15 Hub Reflections

Breakout Session 1 10.15 – 11.15

Educators: Solution Sprint – Facilitated Problem-Solving for the Gatsby Benchmarks and SEND

Employers: Engaging with Young People with SEND, led by Tom Cliffe (Part 1)

11:15 - 11:30 BREAK

Breakout Session 2 11.30 – 12.30

Educators: Provider Spotlight

Employers: Engaging with Young People with SEND, led by Tom Cliffe (Part 2)

Afternoon

12:30 - 13:15 LUNCH

13:15 - 14:15 Modern Work Experience for SEND: Making it Work

14:15 - 14:30 Closing remarks

Every young person

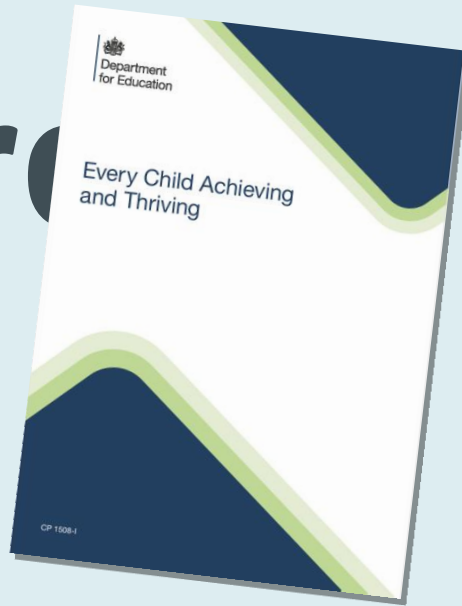
The Schools White Paper, careers education and Preparation for Adulthood

South Midlands Career Hubs Inclusion Conference, 1 July 2026

Amanda Wright , Head of Whole School SEND, nasen

Three shifts. The White Paper's own words

Every Child Achieving and Thriving, DfE 2026



Narrow → Broad

Sidelined → Included

Withdrawn → Engaged

Narrow → Broad

Two weeks' work experience



Every young person – 5 days KS3 + 5 days KS4.
Progressive, not a single block.

Two-thirds in higher level learning by 25



Shared target across the White Paper, National Youth Strategy and Post-16 White Paper.

Refreshed National Curriculum



Oracy, financial literacy, digital and media literacy embedded from 2028. Employer links to bring curriculum to life.

Enrichment entitlement for every child



Sports, arts, civic engagement, culture. Building employment skills - teamwork, communication.

Sidelined → Included

£1.6bn

Inclusive Mainstream Fund
(3 years)

£1.8bn

Experts at Hand – SaLT,
EPs, CAMHS in mainstream

£3.7bn

Accessible buildings &
new specialist places by 2030

- Individual Support Plans (ISPs) to record and monitor SEND
- EHCPs retained for those with most complex needs, nationally defined Specialist Provision Packages

Withdrawn → Engaged

If a young person doesn't believe education is for them...



...they won't engage with careers guidance either

If they can't see themselves in the curriculum or workplace...



...work experience becomes another space where they don't belong

If school feels like somewhere they've withdrawn from...



...Preparation for Adulthood planning starts too late, or not at all

White Paper commitment: every school to monitor belonging by 2029

“

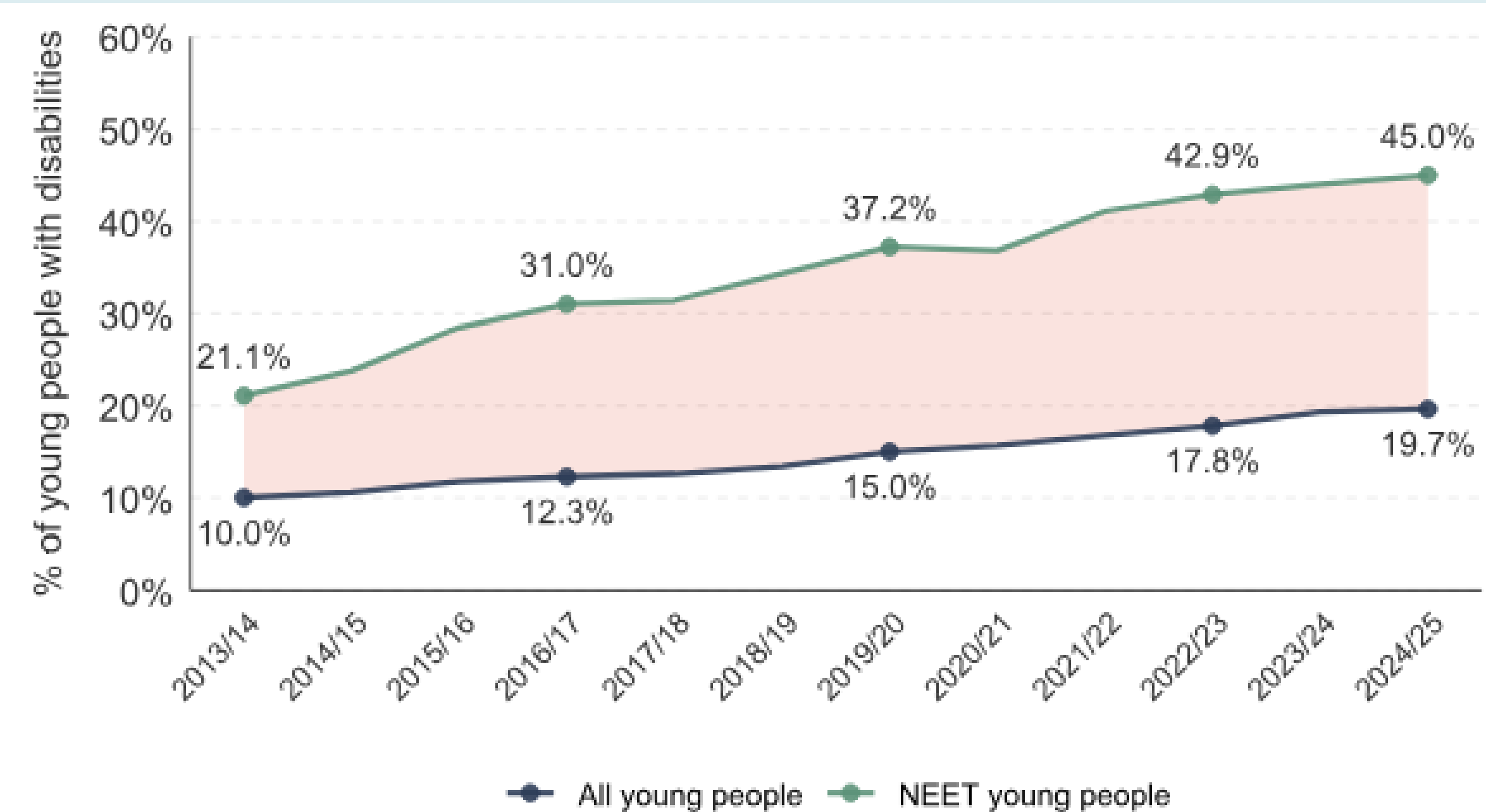
We have built an education system that is brilliant at sorting young people by academic ability and poor at equipping them for adult life.

Alan Milburn, Milburn Review Interim Report, May 2026

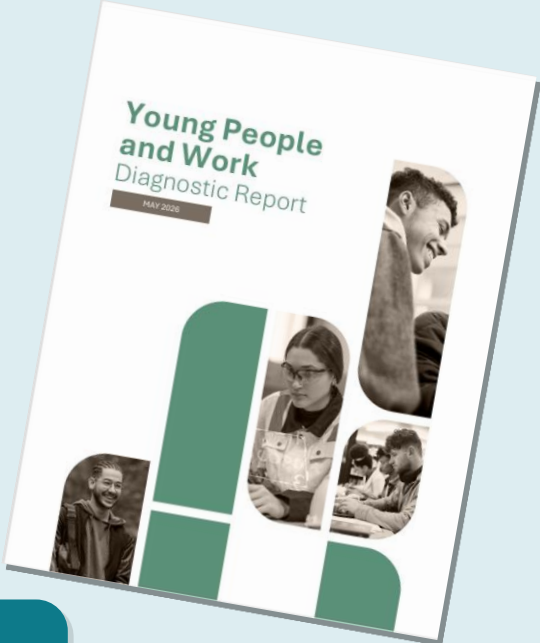
Government-commissioned independent review into youth NEET

The data behind the words

The proportion of young people with a disability – NEET young people compared to all, UK, 2013/2014 to 2024/2025



Source: Milburn Review Interim Report, May 2026



45%
of NEET young people
have a disability (2024/25)

2×
More than doubled
since 2013/14 (21.1% → 45%)

What counts v. what gets counted

The White Paper promises:

Narrow to broad

Sidelined to included

Withdrawn to engaged

Work experience for every young person

Positive transitions to adulthood for all

The accountability measures test:

GCSE grades

Attendance rates

Literacy and numeracy outcomes

Belonging

But not...

Employment destinations

Work experience quality

Transition planning

Independence

Preparation for Adulthood

Who closes the gap?

Careers Leads



Design work experience around your most complex learners first – then extend outward.

SENCOs



Build Preparation for Adulthood outcomes into Individual Support Plans early.

Employers



Design placements around what a young person can do. Understand and act on your duty to make reasonable adjustments – not just during induction.

Together



The connections matter. Work towards a joined-up approach.

A group of ten diverse people, including men and women of various ethnicities and ages, are standing in a line against a dark, textured background. They are dressed in casual clothing like hoodies and sweaters. Overlaid on the image is a large, bold, yellow text that reads "ASSUME THAT I CAN SO MAYBE I WILL".

**ASSUME THAT I CAN
SO MAYBE I WILL**

Three questions to carry into the day

- 1** Does every young person *really* mean every young person in your setting – for work experience, enrichment and transition planning?

- 2** Who in your team needs to hear a different story about what young people with SEND can achieve? And, how will you tell it?

- 3** Who in this room today do you need to connect with to improve transition into employment for your young people?

Thank you

Amanda Wright , Head of Whole School SEND, nasen

<https://www.wholeschoolsend.org.uk/>
welcome@nasen.org.uk

SMCH Inclusion Community

- Building Futures Together
- One Year On

South Midlands
CAREERS HUB

THE CAREERS &
ENTERPRISE
COMPANY



Our Inclusion Community

- 25 Special Schools- 78% engaged (2 in progress)
- 2 new schools
- 1 new AP 7/8 engaged
- 7 Alternative Provision schools 7/8 engaged
- 113 mainstream schools - 100% engaged
- SEND teams at 6 Local Authorities 100% engaged
- 6 Independent Special Schools – 50% engaged



2025-26 in Numbers

13	Schools completing an ILR	50	Attendees at CPD and group activity
8	Participating in P2Ps	32	Weekly wins / SEND resources
511	FSQ completions	100	Inclusion Conference attendees
75	Support meetings	31	Supported Compass completions
2	Virtual COPs	3	Hub Pilot projects



Statutory Guidance 2026: Key Updates

Key updates include:

- **Workplace experiences**: From September 2026, all schools expected to reform work experience programmes in line with the guidance and the Government's work experience ambition.
- **New digital features**: Enhanced Compass+ functionality, including OnTrack+ for identifying learner support needs from Year 7, and Your Child's Future - questionnaire to strengthen parental engagement in careers education.
- **Ofsted inspections**: Updates to Ofsted's approach to inspecting careers guidance under the revised Education Inspection Framework.
- **Policy alignment**: The independent Curriculum and Assessment Review and reforms to 16–19 qualifications.



Statutory Guidance 2026: Key Updates

The recording of the Monday 29/06 webinar **Careers Education in England: Understanding the updated statutory guidance webinar** is available here:

[Watch the webinar recording](#)

Further CEC Guidance is available here:

[Summary of statutory guidance for schools](#)

[Summary of guidance for colleges](#)

[Summary of guidance for independent training providers](#)

[Full statutory guidance](#)

Updated [Careers Impact Maturity Model](#) available [here](#)



Statutory Guidance 2026 – SEND Lens

- Stronger emphasis on preparation for successful transitions
- Meaningful future readiness experiences and insights should start from KS3, including work experience for suitable individuals.
- Access requirements are more clearly embedded within careers guidance:
- Stronger expectation on raising aspirations
- Greater emphasis on long-term outcome
- Increased focus on meeting the needs of every young person



Our Summer 2026 Call to Action

- Share update with SLT – guide for school, college and ITP leaders
- Complete your annual Internal Leadership review
- Book Peer-to- Peer review (28/09 1st multiple P2P day)
- Share at least one thing on the send padlet
- Save the date SMCH Annual Conference 20/10/26



Thank you

Send Hub Ambassadors

- Stacey Morris – sensory curriculum, supporting webinar planning & delivery, resources & school support
- Lee Nelson – WEX toolkit, school support, hosted visits

Industry Partner

- Richard Osborne – over 10 years of support (01/12/2014)



Introduction next session

Continuing the conversation



**Educators: Seymour Room for 'Solution
Sprint: Facilitated Problem-Solving for
the Gatsby Benchmarks and SEND'**

**Employers: Singh Room for 'Engaging
with Young People with SEND'**

Solution Sprint: Facilitated Problem- Solving

Session aim: Share and learn from good practice to support progress against the Gatsby Benchmarks



The Gatsby Benchmarks

BM1: A Stable Careers Programme

1. Schools and colleges should have an embedded programme of careers education and guidance.
2. It should be known and understood by pupils, parents, staff, governors, employers and other agencies.

BM2: Learning from Career and Labour Market Information

1. Pupils, parents and carers, teachers and staff who support pupils should have access to information about future pathways, study options and labour market opportunities.

BM3: Addressing the Needs of Each Pupil

1. Opportunities should be tailored to the needs of each pupil, including any additional vulnerabilities, disadvantage, SEND and those absent.
2. Measuring evaluation of impact is key.

BM4: Linking Curriculum Learning to Careers

1. All teachers should link curriculum learning to careers.
2. Subject teaching should highlight progression routes, relevant knowledge/skills for the future.

BM5: Encounters with Employers and Employees

1. Students should have multiple opportunities to learn from employers about work, employment and skills that are valued in the workplace.

BM6: Experiences of Workplaces

1. Every learner should have firsthand experience of workplaces to help their exploration of opportunities and build their networks.

BM7: Encounters with Further and Higher Education

1. Students should understand the full range of learning opportunities available to them.

BM8: Personal Guidance

1. Every student should have access to guidance from a qualified careers adviser.

Facilitated Problem-solving

Benchmark 6: Experiences of Workplaces

Topic 1

‘Making internal work experiences meaningful and progressive where external experiences are not possible’

Topic 2

‘Embedding a progressive enterprise programme as a form of meaningful work experience’

Benchmark 7: Encounters with FE and HE

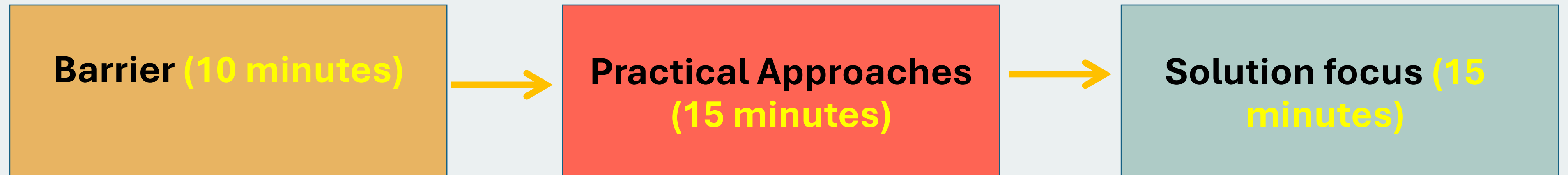
Topic 1

‘Embedding encounters with Post-16 and Post-18 providers for learners with SEND’

Topic 2

‘Building effective partnerships with Post-16 and Post-18 providers to support transition’

Facilitated Problem-solving



Next Steps...

- Collect responses
- Share across network



BREAK

11.15 – 11.30

Provider Spotlight

DWP Schools Adviser offer
Adriano Cicceri

Young Enterprise
Jo Ward from Young Enterprise, and Dylan Hines and Calen Miller from The Woodlands School

Skills Builder
Sophie Holmes



Adriano Cicceri
Jobcentre Plus
Schools Adviser
for
Northamptonshire





144 School Advisers Nationally
90 Full Time Equivalent

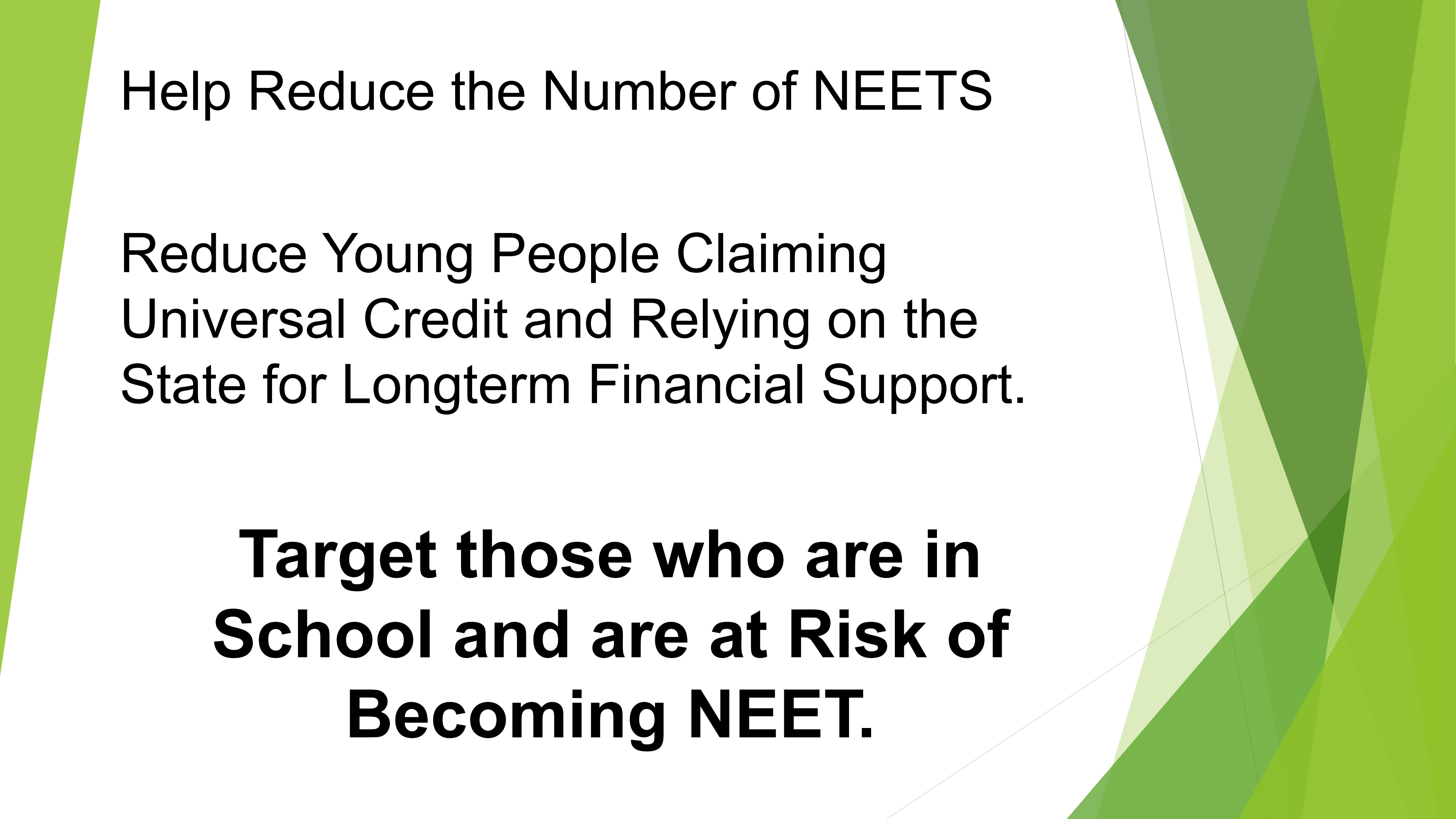
JCP Support for Schools is intended to assist schools in England to deliver their statutory duty to provide high quality, independent and impartial careers advice to pupils aged from 11/12 up to 17/18 years of age (school years 7 to 13).

It is aimed at facilitating an effective transition from school into work, training or further study, and will add value in three broad areas:

- *providing advice on routes into traineeships and apprenticeships, promoting the parity of vocational and academic pathways into work*
- *help in sourcing of and advising about work experience opportunities, using JCP's extensive network of employers*
- *providing advice on the local labour market including employability and soft skills that employers value; for example, team working and commitment*

I can email you the guidance from GOV.UK

[Jobcentre Plus support rolled out to schools - GOV.UK](#)

The background features abstract, overlapping green geometric shapes, primarily triangles and polygons, in various shades of green, creating a modern, layered effect.

Help Reduce the Number of NEETS

Reduce Young People Claiming
Universal Credit and Relying on the
State for Longterm Financial Support.

**Target those who are in
School and are at Risk of
Becoming NEET.**

Luton

3986 Total

1927 Looking for work

543 currently working

Northampton

3414 Total

1444 Looking for work

473 currently working

Milton Keynes

3299 Total

1300 Looking for work

490 currently working

Bedford

2414 Total

1065 Looking for work

338 currently working



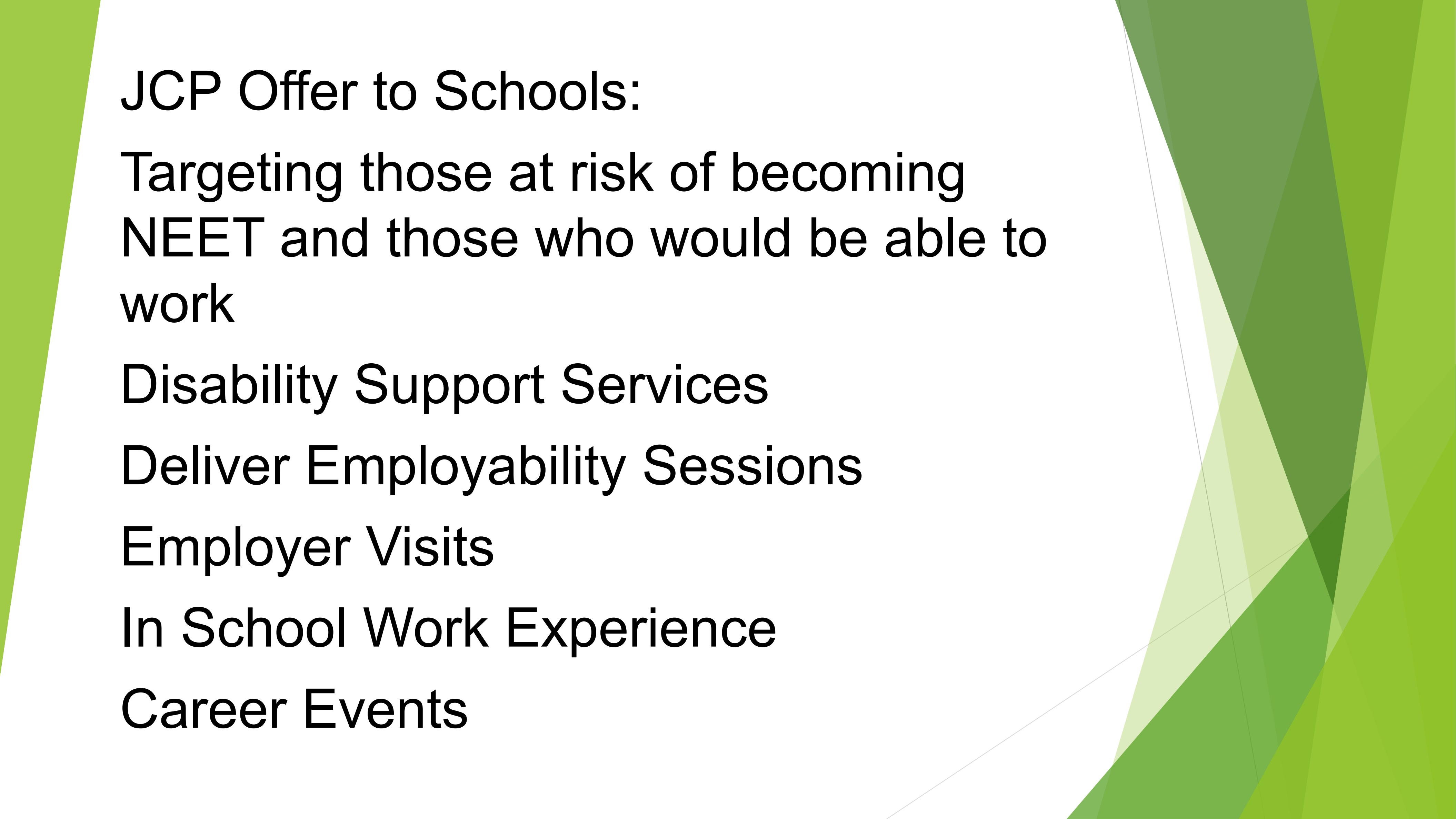


**Sir Robert
McALPINE**

David Gillings

Disability
Employment Adviser
Leader





JCP Offer to Schools:

Targeting those at risk of becoming
NEET and those who would be able to
work

Disability Support Services

Deliver Employability Sessions

Employer Visits

In School Work Experience

Career Events



Get in touch

Northamptonshire: Adriano.Cicceri@dwp.gov.uk

Milton Keynes: Carianne.Seymore@dwp.gov.uk

Bedfordshire: Heather.Tyler@dwp.gov.uk and
Viv.Davidson@dwp.gov.uk



Welcome to Team Programme and In-Curriculum Company Programme

Supporting SEND learners into
independence and employment



What is Team Programme?



- **Ages 15–19**
- **Mild to moderate learning difficulties**
- **Set up, launch and run a real business**
- **Flexible 12 weeks–1 year**

Why it matters

- **Builds confidence**
- **Supports independence**
- **Develops communication & teamwork**
- **Financial capability**

What is Company Programme In-curriculum?



- Ages 14–19
- Students at risk of exclusion, external provision, not fitting the traditional educational path
- Set up, launch and run a real business
- Flexible 12 weeks–1 year

Why it matters

- Provides purpose and positive direction
- Builds confidence and self-belief
- Develops essential life and work skills
- Channels energy into positive action
- Improves future opportunities and outcomes

Meet Essential Fidgets from Daubeney Academy.

THE 2026 YOUNG ENTERPRISE UK NATIONAL INSPIRE AWARD CHAMPIONS!

- 5 amazing humans, all on the SEND register took part in Company Programme in-curriculum.
- Many members of the team have faced significant challenges both inside and outside of school. Between them, the students have experienced in excess of 15 suspensions, offsite directions, and periods where permanent exclusion was a real possibility.
- In their own words, “one poor decision away from permanent exclusion,” these young men have rewritten their story.



About the Programme - How it works

- Teams of up to 25
- Real job roles
- Create & sell products
- Take part in events & competitions

Job Roles

Sales Director



Production



Administration



Marketing Director



Management



Finance



Events



The Milestones





Student Activities

- Design logo & name
- Create products
- Pricing & budgeting
- Sell & promote

Support for Schools

- Full resources
- Flexible delivery
- YE support

Real World Experience

- Manage money
- Open account
- Trade fairs
- Present to audiences

SEND Accessibility

- Differentiated tasks
- Visual aids
- Step-by-step resources

Careers, Gatsby Framework & Experiences

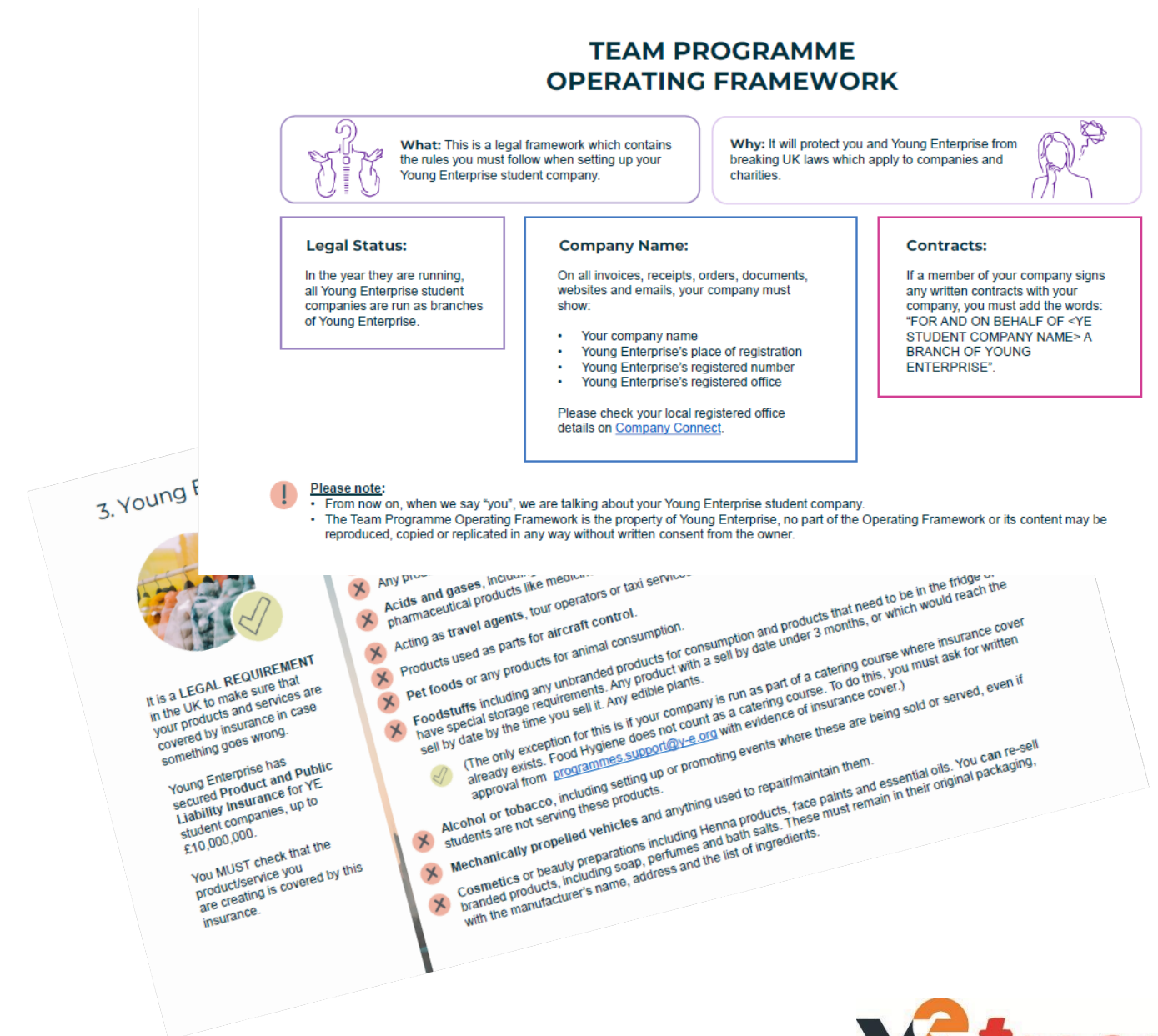
- Employer encounters
- Real workplace skills
- Supports EPQ/DofE
- Trade fairs
- Online, Regional & national competitions
- Confidence
- Communication
- Teamwork
- Certificate of Completion



The Operating Framework, Insurance & Financing the Company



- Operating Framework states the rules and legal guidance for all YE Student Companies
- Insurance – All products need to be approved by YE
- Finance – Students sell shares (£1 per share) to raise initial capital



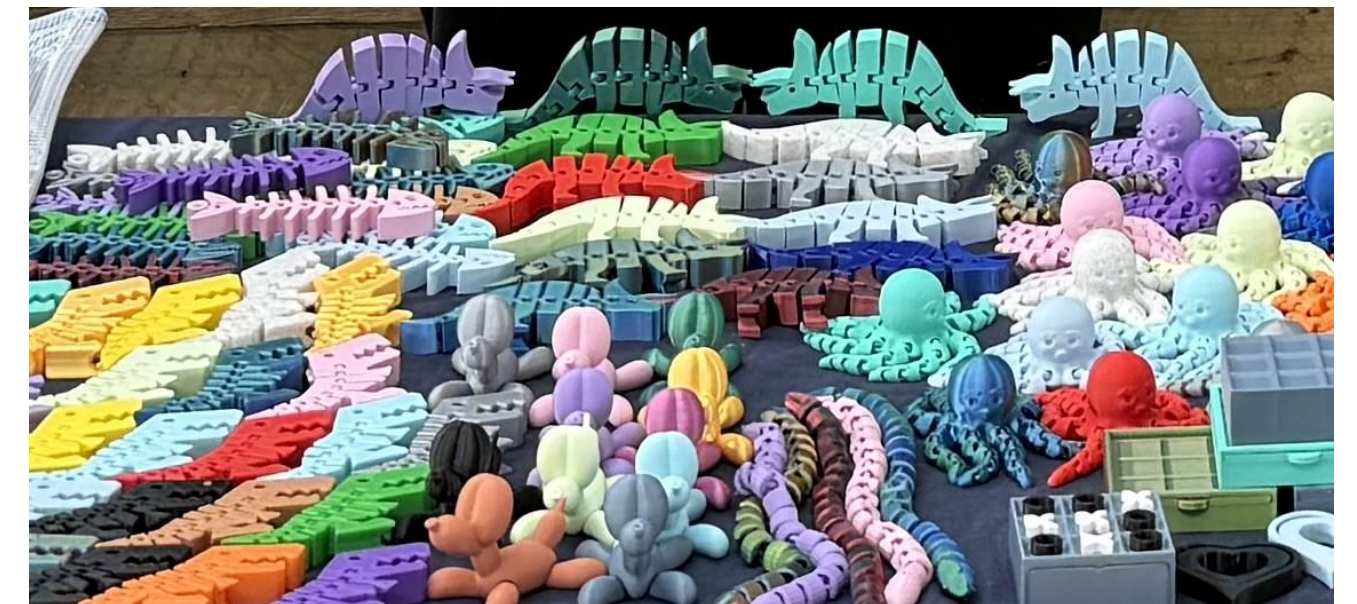
Trade Fairs

- YE arranges regional/local **Trade Fairs** in public markets /shopping centres
- Students will sell alongside fellow YE student companies as well as professional traders
- You can sometimes win prizes or awards
- Fantastic learning opportunity

Colour & Cocoa from
The Chiltern School,
Dunstable.



Printed Pastimes from the
Woodlands School, MK



Team Programme of the year competition

This is a great opportunity to showcase your achievements and celebrate your journey.

You will need to submit your logo, a presentation and an advertisement to for a chance to win the overall team programme of the year competition.

The winner will be invited to attend the National Company of the Year Awards.

GOOD LUCK!!



Company Programme of the year competition(in curriculum)

Compete against all other Company Programme teams(both in curriculum and out of curriculum) in the Area Final, Regional Final and overall winner goes to the National Final.

The overall National Champion will travel to Europe, representing their school, region and the UK to compete against all European Teams taking part in Company of the Year Awards.



Inspiring Futures Funding Eligibility

Costs to run either programme £2,700.00

Cost to state school £560.00.

Fully Funded Criteria - we would look at indicators such as:

- Higher levels of deprivation (IMD 1-4)
- Above 20% Free School Meal (FSM) eligibility
- Ofsted ratings of Requires Improvement or Inadequate

However, the most important consideration is that the educator is able to target a specific cohort of students who are disadvantaged or may benefit most from additional support and opportunities. This could include students who:

- Have low attendance
- Have low attainment
- Are eligible for Free School Meals
- Are young carers
- Face other barriers to engagement, progression, or achievement



THANK YOU!

Email: jo.ward@y-e.org.uk
(Beds and MK)

samantha.norman@y-e.org.uk
(Northants)



[YoungEnterpriseUK](#)



[youngenterprise](#)



[Young Enterprise UK](#)



[youngenterpriseuk](#)

Printed Pastimes

Dylan Hines and Calen Miller, The Woodlands School





Equipped for Life: The Power of the Universal Framework

Sophie Holmes, Senior Education Programme Manager at Skills Builder Partnership

Who are the Skills Builder Partnership?



Our mission: One day, everyone will build the essential skills to succeed

Skills Builder Partnership are:

- A not-for-profit social enterprise
- Working with over 900 organisations globally
- Seeking to create a common language by clearly defining the essential skills required to succeed, at all stages of life.



Agenda

An overview of today's session

1. **Why are essential skills necessary?**

2. **What is the Universal Framework and how does it support the development of essential skills?**

3. **How can I put this into practice in my setting?**

4. **Q&A**

Why are essential skills necessary?



Why essential skills?

There is powerful evidence to support the development of essential skills



Individuals with higher essential skill levels are **25-50% less likely to be out of employment or education.**

92% of individuals believe that essential skills are important for success within their career.

People with higher levels of essential skills earn more – **up to £4,600 per year**, up to 12% more than their peers.

Without essential skills, high levels of education and basic skills are **less likely** to lead to positive life outcomes.

A life-long journey of essential skills development



Pre-School



School years



Apprenticeship,
College & University



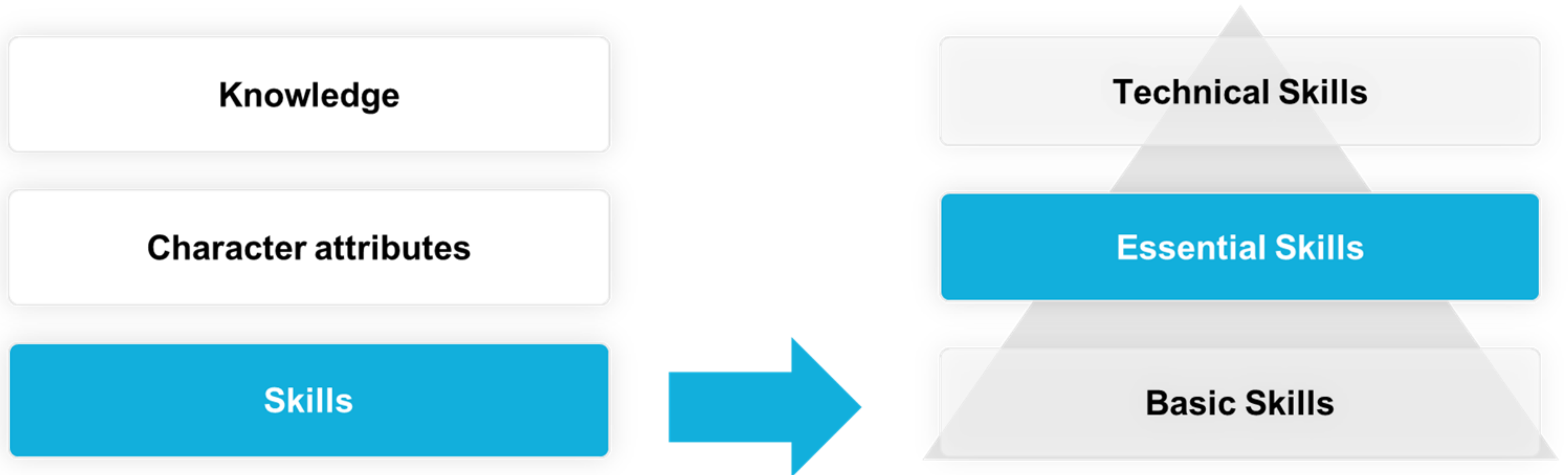
Early Career



Mid-career onwards

What are 'skills'?

A skill is a repeatable action that you can learn and improve.



The problem with building 'soft' skills



Typically broad concepts, open to varying interpretation

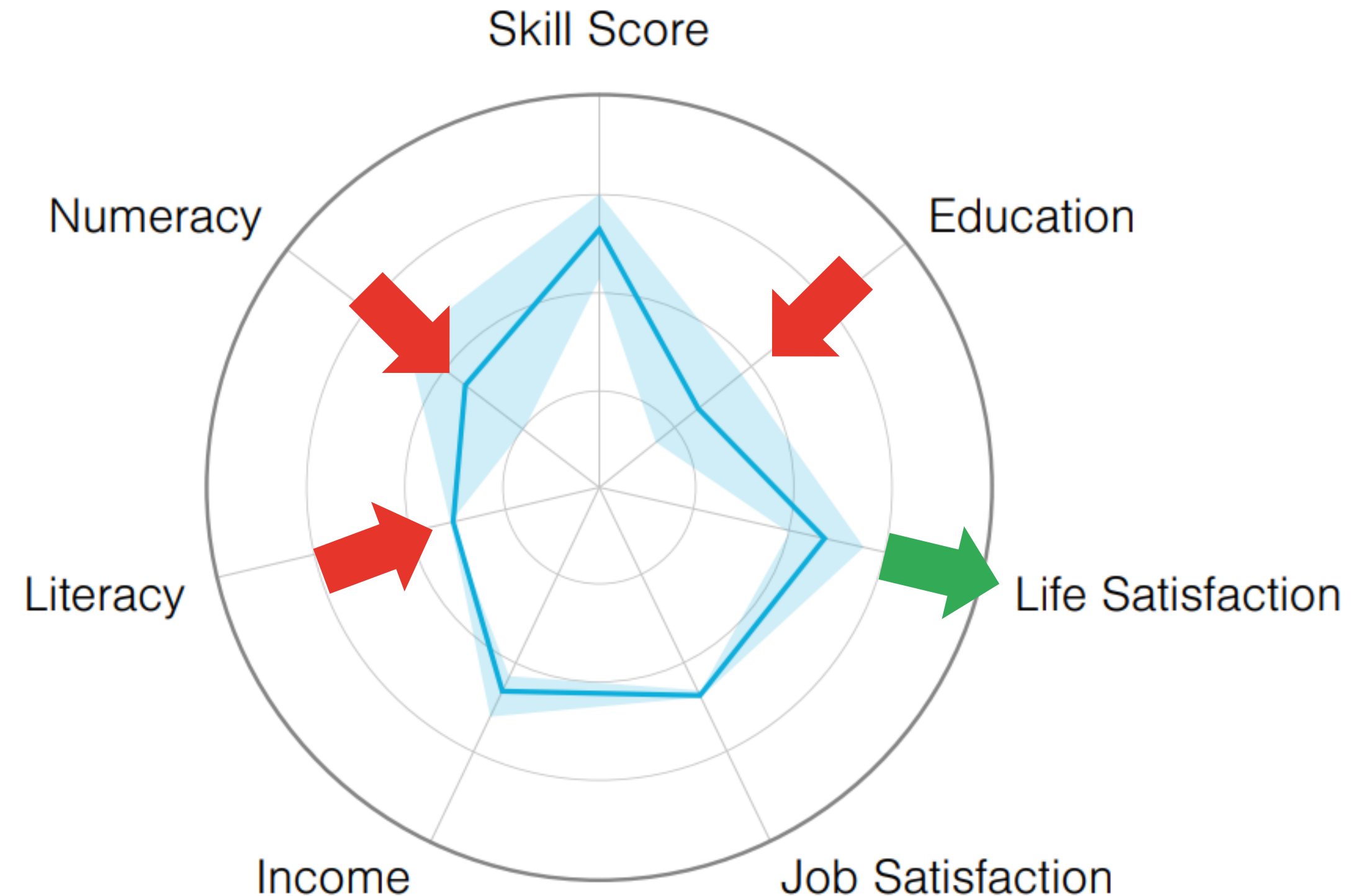
Defined in slightly different ways (ambiguous)

Difficult to measure and quantify, so often assumed or overlooked

Essential skills and positive life outcomes

Young people with better essential skills are up to 50% **less likely** to be out of education or employment

Lower education level is associated with much better life outcomes when respondents report high essential skills



The Challenge



How do we move away from seeing essential skills
as broad concepts?

How do we prepare young people for success,
both now and in the future?

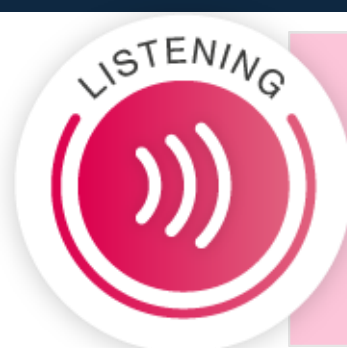
What is the Universal Framework and how does it support the development of essential skills?



Universal Framework: 8 essential skills



Consistent definitions



Receiving, retaining and processing information



Transmitting information or ideas



Finding solutions to challenges



Using imagination and generating new ideas



Using tactics and strategies to overcome setbacks and achieve goals



Setting clear, tangible goals and devising a robust route to achieving them



Supporting, encouraging and motivating others to achieve a shared goal



Working cooperatively with others towards achieving a shared goal

Stages and steps

8 essential skills

Consistent definitions

4 stages

16 steps



Teamwork

*Working cooperatively with others
to achieve a shared goal*

The Framework is protected by a Creative Commons
Attribution-No Derivatives 4.0 International Public License.

Getting Started

Intermediate

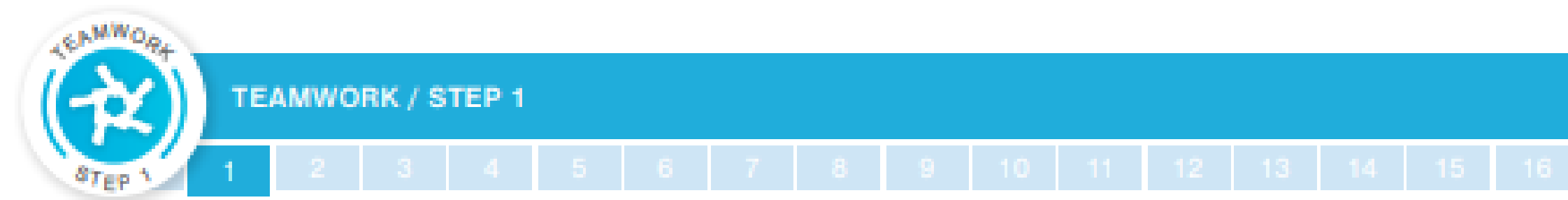
Advanced

Mastery

Step	Statement
Step 1	Working together: I work with others when appropriate
Step 2	Adjusting behaviour: I behave in a way that fits the setting
Step 3	Time keeping: I keep to time reliably
Step 4	Taking responsibility: I take responsibility for completing tasks
Step 5	Supporting others: I help others as much as I can
Step 6	Being accountable: I am accountable for my goals
Step 7	Contributing: I contribute to group activity
Step 8	Valuing others: I recognise the value of others' ideas
Step 9	Being inclusive: I support others to thrive in a group
Step 10	Being diplomatic: I avoid creating unhelpful conflicts
Step 11	Resolving conflicts: I work collaboratively to resolve unhelpful conflicts
Step 12	Networking: I build helpful relationships beyond my team
Step 13	Reflecting collectively: I reflect on progress and suggest improvements
Step 14	Learning collectively: I evaluate successes and failures and share lessons
Step 15	Developing others: I support my peers to develop
Step 16	Improving culture: I improve the team culture

Skill Step Building Blocks

- Each skill step is broken down into three Building Blocks
- The Building Blocks provide smaller steps to develop that skill
- This is a great tool to use with learners with additional needs, where progress may be made within a step



Working with others

I work with others when appropriate



Building blocks

- A) I know what it means to work with others
- B) I know why and when working with others can be helpful
- C) I know how to work well with others

How can I put this into practice in my setting?



Six principles of good practice

Recognising effective teaching



Align

Effective schools and colleges are aligned behind a **common goal** for building learners' essential skills, and a **common language** from the Skills Builder Universal Framework.



Measure

Effective schools and colleges **assess learners' essential skills** to support planning, teaching and tracking progression.



Practise

Effective schools and colleges are practising learners' essential skills **across the curriculum**.



Plan

Effective schools and colleges have **planned regular opportunities** to support learners' essential skills progression across their education.



Teach

Effective schools and colleges are making focused time available to **directly and explicitly teach learners essential skill steps**.



Apply

Effective schools and colleges are using **projects and links to the wider world** to allow learners to apply their essential skills.

Best Practice Example

Case study examples of the approach

Harrison College Case Study

- **The Context:** Harrison College in Doncaster supports young people aged 16–25 with ASD (Autism Spectrum Disorder) and SEMH (Social, Emotional, and Mental Health) needs, operating with a "no limits" culture focused entirely on preparing learners for the world of work.
- **Curriculum-Wide Skill Integration:** By joining the Skills Builder Accelerator, the college deeply embedded the eight essential skills into every aspect of college life, providing students with structured, transferable professional tools.
- **Robust Local Employer Network:** Capitalising on its location in a business park, the college collaborates with over 250 inclusive local employers to provide authentic workplace immersion, using the essential skills to match students to tailored, supported internships.
- **Data-Driven Tracking & Accountability:** Student progress is measured using the framework, integrated directly into EHCPs and reported formally to parents every half-term to provide robust, quantifiable evidence of personal development.
- **The Impact:** While the national paid employment rate for adults with learning disabilities sits at just ~5.1%, Harrison College outperforms trends significantly - helping an average of **90% of its students** transition directly into jobs, apprenticeships, or further education.



Adaptive resources to support every learner

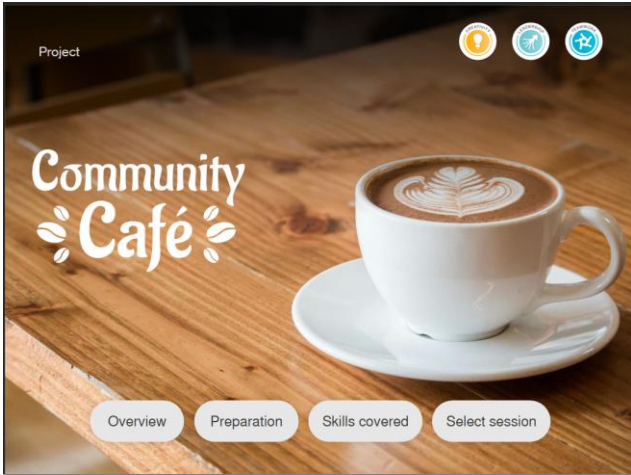
Inclusive Learning Pack



Widgit symbols



Extended Projects



Rewards and recognition



Self assessment



Target setting

EHCP Outcome Area	Example EHCP Outcome (Section E)	Essential Skill	Skill Step Number	Essential Skill Step	Building Block A/B/C
CONTENTS					
1. Communication & Interaction					
2. Cognition & Learning					
3. SEMH					
4. Sensory and/or Physical Needs					
A. Guidance					

The Skills Builder Accelerator

The **Skills Builder Accelerator** is our flagship programme for educators.

- ✓ Implement the **revised curriculum**, to ensure it is knowledge-rich and strong on skills.
- ✓ Design **enrichment provision**, to meet the incoming Enrichment Benchmarks.
- ✓ Quantify **personal development**, to support the most disadvantaged and demonstrate this to Ofsted.
- ✓ Embed **careers** across the curriculum, to boost employability and meet the Gatsby Benchmarks.
- ✓ Develop **Individual Support Plans**, to support those with SEND and meet National Inclusion Standards.
- ✓ Explicitly teach **speaking** and **listening** skills, to embed **oracy** across your lessons and subjects.



*The best bit is developing a bespoke strategy for the school that is **manageable but also has an impact** - best of both worlds.*



Skills Leader / Norfolk



Skills Builder
Gold Award



The Skills Builder Accelerator



Skills Builder
UNIVERSAL
FRAMEWORK 2.0



Working together to develop and implement a complete **strategy** for teaching essential skills, including **training and support, tools and resources**

Embedding Six Principles



Align



Plan



Measure



Teach



Practise



Apply

Supported by Tools & Resources



Skills Builder
HUB



Skills Builder
BENCHMARK

The Skills Builder Accelerator



The **Skills Builder Accelerator** is our flagship programme for educators.

The Accelerator programme includes touchpoints with a dedicated Education Associate at Skills Builder, who is a qualified teacher. Plus, there are ongoing elements that run throughout.

We fundraise over £500K annually to provide fully- funded programme places for new schools and colleges in their first

	AUTUMN TERM	SPRING TERM	SUMMER TERM	AUTUMN
SET PRIORITIES, TAILOR PLANS & USE OUR TIME Planning meetings with SLT Bespoke flexible support time ^{*NEW*}				
UPSKILL WITH PEERS & TRAIN YOUR TEAM Skills leader training days Training sessions for staff				
NETWORK, LEARN & SHARE ON CHOSEN TOPICS Communities of practice ^{*NEW*} Conference day ^{*NEW*}				
ACCESS IMPACT DATA & RESOURCES ONLINE Admin & teacher dashboards Premium resources ^{*NEW*}				



Skills Builder
Bronze Award



Skills Builder

Silver Award



Skills Builder
Gold Award



How to apply

Register your interest [here](#)

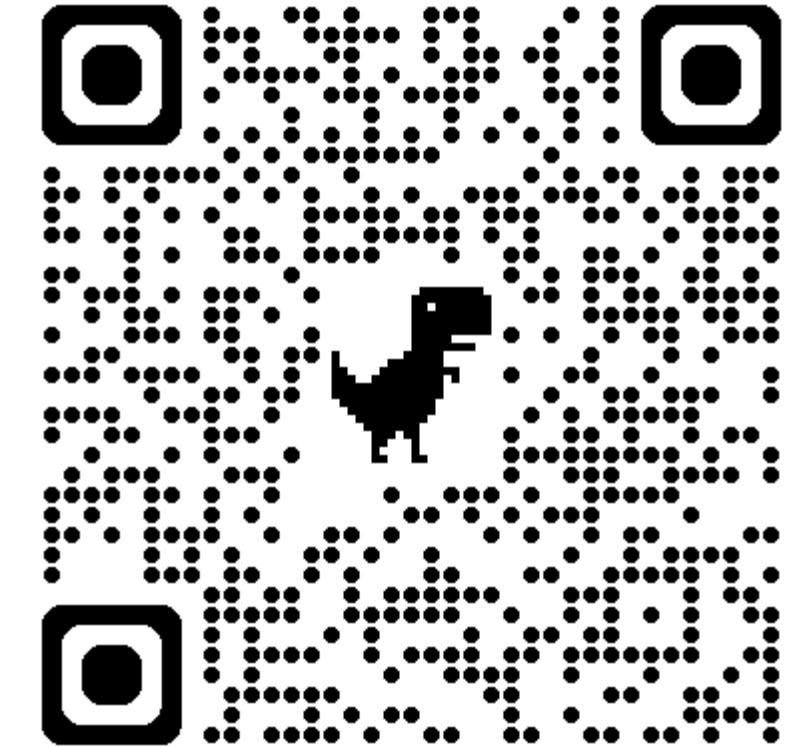
Stay informed with the latest updates on funded places*

Download some top tips to support your application [here](#)

Short online application form consisting of 4 questions

Send us an email

Still unsure? Email us at accelerator@skillsbuilder.org



Early bird deadline

**Friday 27 March
2026**

Round 1 deadline

Friday 22 May 2026

Round 2 deadline

Friday 10 July 2026

There are just 200 fully-funded programme places available for 2026-27.

Apply online
skillsbuilder.org/uk-accelerator

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12.35 – 13.20

Delivering Meaningful, Modern Work Experience for Learners with SEND

Date: 01.07.26 1.15pm - 2.15pm

Facilitator: Olivia Dams (she/her)

South Midlands
CAREERS HUB

THE CAREERS &
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COMPANY



Co-designing inclusive workplace experiences:

Work Experience is powerful – but not always meaningful.

- Changes to **Gatsby Benchmark 6**
- WEX helps learners understand:
 - What work is like
 - What skills are valued
 - How to succeed

But...

- Access doesn't always equal impact
- Especially for learners with SEND
- Experiences need to truly work for the individual.

‘Meaningful’ work experience helps learners:

- **Explore a workplace environment**
- **Understand expectations & skills**
- **Take part in real or simulated tasks**

It can include:

- **In-school activities & projects**
- **Workplace visits & shadowing**
- **Enterprise/entrepreneurship programmes**
- **Virtual or blended experiences**

The 'Meaningful' Criteria

A meaningful experience will:

- ✓ Have a clear purpose
- ✓ Be underpinned by learning outcomes
- ✓ Include two-way interactions
- ✓ Enable learners to meet a range of people
- ✓ Include a task or project
- ✓ Provide feedback from employers
- ✓ Include reflection



The SEND lens

For learners with SEND:

- Additional or different support may be needed
- Experiences may look very different
- The 'workplace' model may not work for all learners

Framing 'Meaningful' for SEND:

- The meaningful criteria = compliance checklist vs. framework to interpret
- Adapt, scale or rethink elements
- The intent matters more than the format

Professional judgement is essential

Shared responsibility for WEX:

- Careers leaders
- Teaching & support staff
- SENCO
- SLT
- Employers

Because:

- Schools understand the learner & their needs
- Employers understand the workplace
- Together = meaningful design

The equalex framework

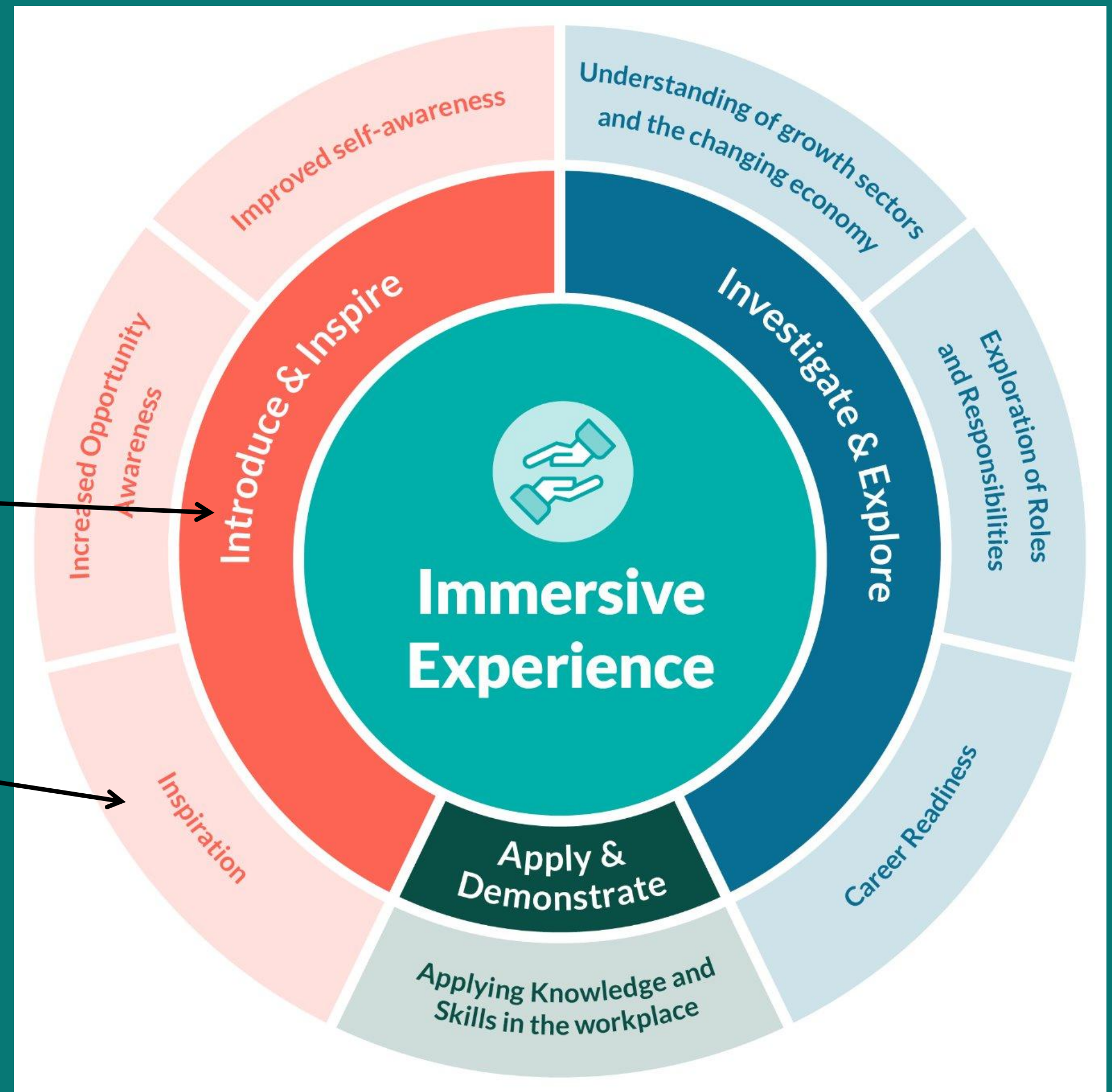
A progressive framework of learning outcomes & objectives to help both schools and employers to deliver high quality, meaningful workplace experiences.

Core themes:

1. Introduce & Inspire
2. Investigate & Explore
3. Apply & Demonstrate

Learning outcomes

Learning objectives



Core Theme: Introduce & Inspire

Learning Outcome	Learning Objectives
Increased Opportunity Awareness Learners have a broad knowledge of a range of career opportunities which enables informed decision making.	Learners understand that there are different types of workplaces such as, offices, warehouses and home working, and that there are different types of employment such as, self-employment, freelancing, and full-time employment.
	Learners can recall a range of different sectors and jobs, and describe the characteristics of the workplaces these jobs might take place in.
	Learners can identify links between the curriculum and essential skills needed within the workplace and can give examples of careers linked to subject areas.
Improved Self-Awareness Learners are aware of their passions, skills and work preferences and understand how these could inform their career choices.	Learners are aware of essential workplace skills and are able to self-assess their current skill level, aligned to the Skills Builder Universal Framework.
	Learners can identify their passions, interests and skills and consider how they might inform potential jobs or career pathways.
	Learners can describe their work style and ideal working environment and can give examples of workplaces that would and would not suit their preferences.
Inspiration Learners are inspired and motivated by careers opportunities which they may not have otherwise considered.	Learners can recognise and challenge stereotypes about career pathways and understand that their career aspirations should not be limited by them.
	Learners can identify career role models and articulate their early career aspirations.

Core Theme: Investigate & Explore

Learning Outcome	Learning Objectives
Career Readiness Learners have developed essential skills which will support them to transition to the workplace.	Learners can evidence the essential workplace skills they have developed, aligned to the Skills Builder Universal Framework.
	Learners can demonstrate essential skills applicable to different workplaces, including skills required when working in a remote environment.
	Learners can create, develop or design something based upon a brief set by an employer, and identify the essential skills they used.
Exploration of roles and responsibilities Learners have a deeper level of knowledge and understanding about the role responsibilities, and pathways of careers in areas of interest.	Learners understand the different routes into employment and understand the differences between pathways.
	Using real life examples, learners can describe the roles of different people within an organisation and talk about what they do.
	Learners can create, develop or design something based upon a brief set by an employer, and relate the essential skills they used to a potential career pathway.
Understanding of growth sectors and the changing economy Learners understand how the local and national labour market is changing and what this might mean for their career choices.	Learners can identify growth sectors within their local area and talk about the types of jobs within these sectors.

Co-designing inclusive workplace experiences

Your task:

- Review a learner profile
- Using:
 - The GBM6 meaningful criteria
 - Equalex learning outcomes
- Design a **meaningful** workplace experience for SEND learners

You'll consider:

- The learner's needs
- What success looks like
- How schools *and* employers can work together to deliver this

Approach the task in a way that works for you:

- Use the provided learner profile OR use a real learner(s) from your setting
- Build on existing activities – focus on adapting and improving
- Progress not perfection!



Time to share ideas with the group

What to focus on:

- ✓ Is this meaningful for the learner?
- ✓ Where might barriers appear?
- ✓ How could we adapt an existing activity?
- ✓ What support is needed from both the school and the employer?



NEW: SEND Work Experience Toolkit

You'll get:

- Practical planning support
- Employer engagement advice
- Examples of inclusive practice
- Tools and resources you can use immediately





Inclusive Futures: How the Local Skills Improvement Plan Connects Young People with Employers

Connecting employers, education and careers to create opportunities for every young person.



Funded by
UK Government

What is the LSIP?

An employer-led plan ensuring education and training reflect the skills local businesses need now and in the future. It brings together key partners across the South Midlands with one shared goal: **local people developing the skills local employers need.**



What are employers telling us?

Across the South Midlands, employers consistently highlight the same priorities when building their future workforce.

		
Technical Skills	Digital Skills	Communication
Sector-specific knowledge and practical expertise	Confidence with technology across all roles	Clear, effective written and verbal skills
		
Teamwork & Resilience	Workplace Behaviours	
Adaptability and the ability to work well with others	Positive attitudes, reliability and professional conduct	

 Many employers don't yet know what support already exists to help them build future talent, bridging that gap is central to the LSIP.

Why inclusion matters

Inclusive employers build stronger organisations by:

- Accessing **wider talent pools** and reducing skills gaps
- Recruiting people with **diverse skills and lived experiences**
- Driving **innovation, productivity** and business growth
- Creating **genuine opportunities for everyone** in the community

The LSIP helps employers engage through:

- Careers activities and employer talks
- Workplace visits and site tours
- Work experience and industry placements
- Apprenticeships and Skills Bootcamps



Everyone has a role

When employers, educators, careers professionals and young people work together, the outcomes are transformative for individuals and for our regional economy.



Employers

Share workforce needs and open doors to the next generation of talent.



Education

Develop the right skills and ensure curricula reflect real employer demand.



Careers Professionals

Connect young people with meaningful opportunities and broaden their horizons.



Young People

Build skills, confidence and the ambition to succeed in an inclusive workforce.

Better Opportunities

Stronger Businesses

Inclusive Growth

Future-Ready Workforce

Let's continue building an inclusive workforce — together.

Closing Remarks

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Thank you for attending today's
conference

South Midlands Careers Hub
Inclusion Conference 2026
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