

Ready, set, motivate.

Meet
Gatsby
Benchmark
6 virtually

Using Inspiring the Future to
deliver meaningful
experiences of the workplace

Using Inspiring the Future to deliver meaningful experiences of the workplace

Overview

Inspiring the Future is the flagship programme of Education & Employers, the charity behind much of the key research to support the case for employer engagement. Inspiring the Future hosts a secure and easy to use volunteer match-making portal, providing best practice guidance to support schools & colleges to connect with a diverse range of employers from the world of work.

Using Inspiring the Future, state school and college staff can deliver meaningful employer engagement encounters that meet **Gatsby Benchmark 6: Experiences of the workplace**. Staff can use the Inspiring the Future portal for free as many times as they want to organise a range of both live and pre-recorded bespoke encounters with relatable role models.

This how-to guide has been **structured in line with the Career & Enterprise Company's guidance** for making experiences of the workplace meaningful, which we will be referring to throughout. The CEC states that in order to include an activity under Benchmark 6, it must meet the following minimum requirements.

1 Learning outcomes are defined based on the age and needs of students

3 There is an extensive, two-way interaction between the student and the employee

2 The student meets a range of people from the workplace

4 The student must perform a task or produce a piece of work relevant to that workplace and receive feedback on it from the employer

In this guide, each criteria for making experiences of the workplace meaningful is embedded with activity ideas you can adapt, how to use Inspiring the Future to meet each criteria and examples of what other schools and colleges have done. This guidance also includes templates for you to do your own action planning.

Watch our accompanying 30 minute info webinar recording [here](#) which gives an overview of using this resource.



Using Inspiring the Future to deliver experiences of the workplace

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- a. Identify the intended outcomes
- b. Search for relatable role models
- c. Student post-activity reflection

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- a. Activity planning template
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Criteria 1 - Learning outcomes are defined

1 Learning outcomes are defined based on the age and needs of students

Planning your encounter should flow from your aims, which should ultimately flow from the needs of your students. Keep it simple by identifying 2-3 aims which can be realistically achieved by a virtual encounter and connect with targeted employers. Watch [here](#) how Sally-Anne, an Employer Engagement Manager at a secondary school in Sheffield, met the needs of her students through targeting sector-specific employers.

a. Identify the intended outcomes of your encounter

Take a moment to think about the priority needs of your students. It might be related to social and emotional wellbeing, learning about options or pathways or raising aspirations in general. Explore the CEC's aims on page 9 of this guide [here](#) for inspiration.

My experiences of the workplace intended

outcomes are:

1. I.e. Engaging the disengaged _____
2. _____
3. _____

Be clear to communicate the aims of your activity with your volunteers. That way, they can tailor their talk to meet the needs of your students.

b. Search for relatable role models using Inspiring the Future

Survey your targeted students to find out what sectors/job roles/pathways they are interested in hearing from and connect with those employers on the portal. To help with this exploration, students can complete the popular Buzz Quiz. This is a quick and fun way to start thinking about careers, and helps students identify their strengths, explore links between personality and job types, and develop self-awareness. The Buzz personality profile was developed by icould partner [David Hodgson](#).

A college in Bournemouth met the needs of their students through organising sector specific Q&A panel talks with related volunteers for their Level 3 Art & Design students.

Once you have created a free Inspiring the Future account, log in to connect with relatable employers that meet the needs of your students and add them to your shortlist. You can:

Filter by sector to find a range of employers from a chosen sector.

Filter by 'Took a vocational route' and 'Can speak about Apprenticeships' to connect with employers who took certain pathways. Select 'No' to find volunteers who went to university for example.

Use the 'Other specialist topics' filter to find employers who can speak about Gender, Diversity & Inclusion, Working with a Disability and Recruitment Skills.

Use the language filter to find diverse volunteers who can speak certain languages.

Search by job title to find specific volunteers.

Sector
Leave blank for any/all

Can talk about Apprenticeships
-- None --

Other Specialist Topics
-- None --

Took a vocational route
-- None --

Subjects
Leave blank for any/all

Languages
Leave blank for any/all

Job Title
producer

See our searching for volunteers guide linked [here](#).

c. Student post-activity reflection

After your experiences of the workplace encounter(s), ask students to reflect with a plenary activity or by completing a post-activity questionnaire to assess whether your outcomes have been met.

Example prompt questions or plenary activities:

- What top tip did you take away from your encounter with volunteer(s)/experience of workplace?
- Has this helped you think about your future? How?
- Have you changed your mind about possible pathways/options/job aspirations?
- One thing that surprised me is_____
- One action I will take as result of the encounter/experience is_____
- What skills do you think are important for you to develop?
- Write a cover letter saying why you would be good fit for one of the jobs you learned about

Celebrate the success with your students! See page 33 of the CEC guide [here](#) for ideas.

Youthemployment.org has produced useful student workbooks to catalogue experiences of the workplace linked here: [KS4 workbook](#) & [KS5 workbook](#)

Criteria 2 - Meeting a range of employers

2 The student meets a range of people from the workplace

On the Inspiring the Future portal, there are over 9,000 volunteers you can now access from a range of industries and levels who are available to volunteer virtually from across the UK. There are multiple ways to organise activities to connect students with employers from the workplace. In the first instance, use the Inspiring the Future portal to organise an interactive virtual encounter, which you can accompany with some pre-recorded resources listed below. Take a look at what virtual sessions might look like [here](#) and hear Sally-Anne's experience of connecting with virtual volunteers [here](#).

a. Organise a live virtual encounter

How you design your virtual encounter is up to you. To give you an idea of the format we find to be the most impactful, you might start by introducing your volunteer(s), asking them to speak for 5-10 minutes about their job role, career pathway and skills they have developed, having some open Q&A with your students using the chat function, and closing with a short reflection. This should take around 40 minutes to 1 hour, depending on how many volunteers you'd like. For more in-depth guidance on planning and delivering a virtual session, see our Career Chats Step By Step guide linked [here](#) and our Top Tips resource linked [here](#).

Tip! You can either host an activity with more than one volunteer in a panel, or deliver multiple sessions each with one volunteer.

A school in South Gloucestershire asked digital and tech volunteers to form a panel of virtual speakers for their Year 10 students, which they could submit questions to during a live Q&A.

Remember, a virtual career chat is just the suggested format to keep things simple, but you are free to be creative in designing your own encounter. You could organise any of the below virtually:

- Workplace tour
- Mock interviews
- CV workshops
- Mentoring
- Sector/ Employer specific talk
- Career journey speed networking activity

Once you have shortlisted your volunteers, create your activity on the portal. If you're new to creating an opportunity on Inspiring the Future, we have a range of accessible resources to help, including a [guide to creating activities](#), a [how-to video](#) and a [safeguarding checklist](#).

When planning an activity that meets Gatsby Benchmark 6, it is particularly important to be as descriptive as possible in the activity description, so volunteers know what is expected of them before a virtual activity. For example, include the aims of your activity, timings, what you'd like the volunteer to prepare and the tech platform you will be using (e.g. MS Teams). You can adapt the below template description.

Template description

We are looking to motivate our Year 10 students and help them see links between the subjects they learn at school and their futures. We look to hold an interactive question and answer session for half an hour from 10- 10:30 AM, where you will initially introduce your job role for the first 5 minutes, followed by 25 minutes of the students' questions. We'd love to see any props you might use in your role as well as pictures of your work environment. We'd like you to log into the session 15 mins prior to the students joining to check the technology is working ok and answer any last minute questions. There will be around 100 students across 4 different classrooms. Teachers in those classrooms will be managing the session.

We are looking to use Microsoft Teams, and wish to conduct a test meeting before the session to check you are confident in using the platform. If you have never used it before, don't worry as the test meeting will be a good opportunity to ask questions and trial out the platform.

Please let me know if you can make it by accepting or declining this invitation. Thank you, we look forward to hearing from you.

Once you have sent your invitations, use our [guide](#) to communicate with volunteers who have accepted or expressed interest in your encounter.

A college in Hertfordshire asked volunteers from Travel/ Tourism/ Media/ Law to discuss what skills and attributes are desirable for working as a translator/ interpreter. This will take place as a live session over lunchtime.

Tip! Make an opportunity public so volunteers can express interest in your activity.

SpeakersForSchools also facilitate three forms of virtual work experience which students can apply to directly, from short taster sessions to 3-5 day placements with specific employers. Learn more [here](#).

icould

b. Explore videos from a range of job types on icould

Our sister website [icould.com](https://www.icould.com) provides free access to over a thousand real-life career videos, searchable by job type and school subject, and accompanied by Labour Market. Explore our additional learning resource [here](#) to help you use this in a classroom.

c. Accompany your live encounter with pre-recorded activities

To complement or as an alternative to a live virtual encounter, use our pre-recorded resources featuring a range of employers in different roles and sectors. [Log in](#) to your account to instantly access our NHS Career Chats resource and our Inspiring Women Career Chats resource, aimed at **KS3 & KS4 students**. Both resources come with accompanying learning activities.

NHS Career Chats pre-recorded activity

In this free 30-minute pre-recorded activity, volunteers from the NHS talk about their industry and answer student's questions about their jobs. The video is accompanied by resources to help teachers get the most out of the session. Watch our short trailer video [here](#).



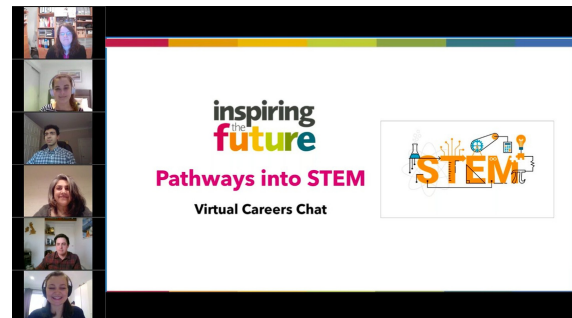
Inspiring Women pre-recorded activity

In these two 15-20-minute videos, two pioneering women delve into becoming an entrepreneur and working within the sports industry. Rhoda and Claire highlight that anyone can pursue their passion regardless of their gender or background. Watch our short trailer [here](#).



Pathways into STEM recording

In this hour long recording of a live virtual session, a **panel of diverse STEM volunteers** talk about their job roles, different pathways into STEM and the skills they developed along the way. This recording is aimed at post-16 students. Follow the link [here](#) to access (not hosted on the portal).



An academy in London organised short pre-recorded videos with a range of employers. The organiser provided volunteers with a full brief including how long they wanted the videos to be and received a range of videos from employers from different sectors, which the school could either embed in the classroom or upload onto their learning portal. They received videos from a barrister working in international law and a freelance producer for a radio station.

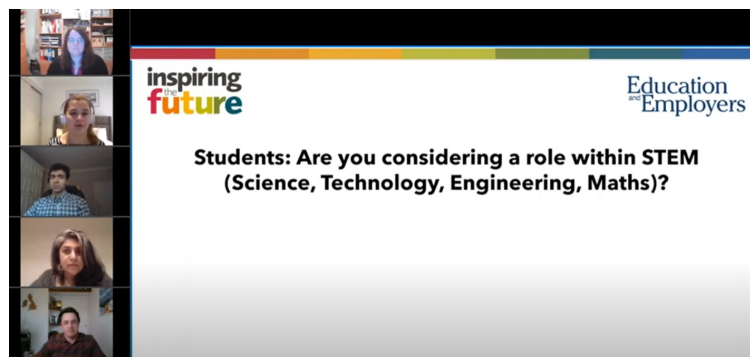
Looking to create your own bespoke pre-recorded activity to flexibly embed into your timetable? Use the Inspiring the Future portal to invite volunteers in the same way as a live encounter, giving them a brief of what you'd like them to include in their recording.

Criteria 3 - Two-way interaction

3 There is an extensive, two-way interaction between the student and the employee

There are lots of ways to ensure your encounters are interactive, which don't necessarily have to be live. To ensure interactivity, you can:

1. As a **pre-task**, let your students know the job title of the employers they will be meeting and ask them to **prepare some questions**. Students can use the [icould](#) website to search by job type or school subjects.
2. During a live virtual session, ensure there is a Q&A element. You could utilise the **chat function**, ask teachers to relay questions from the class or get students to unmute themselves to ask their questions.
3. You can include some **polls** in a live virtual session, such as 'Are you considering a role in STEM?', read out their comments and ask employers to share their reflections on why they enjoy working in STEM.



4. If you run out of time on a live session, send the employer **follow-up questions** for them to answer afterwards.
5. If you're organising a pre-recorded session, you can get students to **send their questions** to the volunteer to form part of their brief **before recording**.

A SEND School in Sheffield organised multiple employers to deliver short virtual talks with Q&A throughout National Careers Week. One employer was a Fire & Risk consultant, who spoke about starting work with barriers including learning difficulties and mental health issues.

A college in London ensured extensive two-way interaction by asking employers to invite students to parts of their normal work activities, via online meetings, online shadowing and supplementary career chats.

Criteria 4 - Task and feedback

4

The student must perform a task or produce a piece of work relevant to that workplace and receive feedback on it from the employer

This criterion can be easily met by deciding on a work-related task you'd like your students to complete and supporting employers to feedback to your students with our template.

a. Decide on a task to set your students, taking inspiration from the menu of options below as well as asking for ideas from the employers you connect with.

Menu of work-related tasks:

Alongside these tasks, we have suggested ways you could search for related volunteers on the ITF portal.

- Create a plan for a virtual team-building day for your team as if you are co-workers that are working remotely. *Search by job title for 'Manager' or 'Leader'.*
- Design a new brand for your school or college with a new name, logo and slogan or create a social media strategy for your favourite brand to attract more young people. *Search by sector for 'Marketing/ Advertising' and 'Design/ Arts/ Crafts'.*
- Produce a newsletter for fellow students following a live careers chat with a panel of volunteers, highlighting their stories. *Search by sector for 'Media/ Print/ Publishing' and 'PR/ Communications'. Search by job title for 'Journalist'.*
- Record a 2-minute trailer promoting a new podcast to engage fellow students with a topic of your choice. Consider the title of the podcast, format, creative elements and interactivity. *Search by sector for 'Performing Arts/ Entertainment' and 'Media/ Print/ Publishing' volunteers.*
- Conduct market research on how the _____ sector is changing as a result of Covid-19 and present your findings to volunteer(s). *Search by your chosen sector of interest.*
- Plan a behaviour-change campaign to get students and staff at your school or college to be more environmentally friendly. *Search by job title for 'Strategy', 'Sustainability', 'Environment' or 'Behaviour'.*
- Design an accessible playground or a co-working space. Pitch your proposal with drawings/ and or a model. *Search by job title for 'Architect' and search by sector for 'Building/ Construction'.*
- Observe and write minutes of an online meeting. *Search by sector for 'Admin/ Business'.*
- Work in small teams to solve a practical task, for example building the tallest bridge using selected equipment from the classroom. *Search by sector for 'Building/ Construction', 'Manufacturing/ Production' or 'Engineering'.*
- Scenario based customer service task- Imagine you are dealing with a customer who has had a bad experience in using _____ product/ service. How might you retain that customer? *Search by sector for 'Retail/ Customer Service'.*
- Plan a recruitment campaign to boost diversity and inclusion within your organisation. *Search by job title for 'HR'. Search by 'other Specialist Topics' for 'Diversity & Inclusion' or 'Recruitment'.*

b. Create your task activity on the Inspiring the Future portal in the same way you would in section 2a, but instead adapt the activity format to incorporate requesting feedback from a volunteer:

- i. Shortlist volunteers that relate to the tasks or to student interest/ intended outcomes
- ii. Based on the amount of work for volunteers to assess, decide the number of volunteers you are looking for
- iii. Set the start and end date of the activity as the time frame in which you would like the volunteer to provide feedback on the students' task(s)
- iv. Make it clear in your description whether you are looking for verbal feedback in a live session where students present to volunteer(s) or whether you will email produced work and ask for written feedback

A school in Gateshead incorporated employers providing feedback on a task by planning a Dragon's Den style session for students to deliver enterprise pitches to a panel of volunteer judges.

A college in Nottingham organised a careers talks and workplace challenges for their post-16 students using MS Teams. As part of their workplace challenges, they asked the employer to co-create a task which is specifically related to their workplace and present it to the students at the start of the week. Students then completed the task and presented it to the employer, allowing time for Q&A and feedback. Students then reflected on the skills they have gained and what they have learnt.

Template descriptions

For a live feedback session – *As part of Year 10 students' virtual experience of the workplace, we are looking for volunteers to join us to pitch and judge the below task:*

Design an accessible playground or a co-working space. Pitch your proposal with drawings/ and or a model.

Students will complete the task in small groups of 5/individually and tasks will be completed in the classroom/ at home on June 23rd. We would like volunteers to discuss the task with the teacher in advance, introduce it on the day in a live session, then provide feedback in a second 40-min session. We will allocate a group of students to each volunteer so you will have approximately [number of students] students' work to feed back on and we will provide a feedback form for you to fill in as you view their presentation. The session timings are [time] and [time]. The session will be 50 minutes long and 5 groups of students will present to you for 5 minutes each. We can provide [ICT/stationery/materials] to the students to complete the task.

For emailed feedback – *We are looking for workplace volunteers to provide feedback on tasks that give students a flavour of the workplace. We will email you [student presentation slides/reports/designs] to assess with a feedback template provided. We need the feedback by [date]. We anticipate this would take 1-2 hours of your time.*

TEMPLATE: Volunteer feedback on tasks

This template can be sent to volunteers, for them to use to provide feedback to students on their individual or group work. Where possible, volunteers are encouraged to give some individual feedback if assessing groupwork. The objective of completing a work-based task is for students to gain insight and experience into the workplace. To support their confidence for workplace readiness, provide both positive and constructive feedback.

Please rate to what extent...	Excellent	Very good	Adequate	Inadequate	N/A	Please expand and say why you gave this rating
Student(s) followed instructions						
Student(s) completed the task						
Student(s) produced quality output/ end results						
Student(s) demonstrated attention to detail						
Student(s) showed original/creative thinking						
Student(s) demonstrated skills relevant to the world of work						

Volunteers can rate students' 8 essential skills of the Skills Builder Partnership universal [framework](#) and teachers can supplement this feedback:

Excellent	Very good	Adequate	Inadequate	N/A	Please expand and say why you gave this rating or an example of how it was demonstrated
Listening (skills)					
Speaking (skills)					
Problem-solving (skills)					
Creativity (skills)					
Staying positive (attitude)					
Aiming high (attitude)					
Leadership (skills)					
Teamwork (skills)					

Please give any other comments (this could include how you might have tackled the task similarly or differently):

TEMPLATE: Activity planning

Careers leaders can adapt this template to start planning their virtual experiences of the workplace and ensure they meet the criteria to make it meaningful. This planning can also be shared with a Senior Leadership Team to provide evidence to them surrounding meeting benchmark 6.

Students targeted and 2-3 learning outcomes	Encounters planned, considering: -Meeting a range of people from the workplace -Interactivity -Task and feedback from employer	Reflection and celebrating success	Resources and staff needed	Next steps (with dates)
<p>EXAMPLE</p> <p>90 Year 10 students.</p> <p>Aims: -For students to understand the range of pathways available to them after Y11.</p> <p>-To gain experience in presenting to others.</p>	<p>-Live encounter with 2-3 volunteers from a range of professions, who can talk about what pathway they took (can search using the apprenticeships filter).</p> <p>-Students use chat function for Q&A.</p> <p>-Embed with Inspiring Women pre-recorded resource.</p> <p>-Separate live encounters. Task involving conducting market research on how Covid has impacted the Aviation and Arts sectors (depending on student interests) and presenting to Aviation and Performing Arts volunteers for feedback in small groups.</p>	<p>-Students complete post-work experience survey to measure impact against intended outcomes.</p> <p>-Article shared in school newsletters to highlight success of Y10 students.</p>	<p>-Post-activity survey.</p> <p>-Staff in other classrooms to be briefed and help students log in to sessions.</p>	<p>-Live and pre-recorded slots to be timetabled- May.</p> <p>-Activity created on portal and volunteers invited- May.</p> <p>-Students briefed and questions for volunteers prepared before the sessions- June.</p>

For any support or to request an editable version of this template, get in touch at enquiries@inspiringthefuture.org

EXAMPLE TIMETABLE: Experiences of the workplace week

Below is an example timetable of a drop down week which you can adapt, incorporating live and pre-recorded encounters with employers.

	AM	PM
Monday	Students briefed on which employers they will be meeting and given time to prepare questions	Students watch Inspiring the Future NHS pre-recorded resource
Tuesday	Live virtual career chats with 3 employers from a range of sectors	Students watch Inspiring Women pre-recorded resource
Wednesday	Students assigned into groups and given work-related task to present to employer at the end of the week	Students given time to work on task
Thursday	Students do the Buzz Quiz and explore videos on icould	Students complete task
Friday	Students present task to employer and receive feedback	Students reflect on experiences of the workplace

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