How to approach local employers to support with career-related learning

**A guide for primary teachers and leaders**

# What is this resource?

This resource is for **primary teachers and leaders**. It provides guidance on how primary schools can approach local employers and ask them to support career-related learning (CRL).

Engaging with employers has benefits for pupils. [Research indicates](https://www.educationandemployers.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/06/its_who_you_meet_final_26_06_12.pdf) that young people who have four or more meaningful encounters with an employer are 86% less likely to be unemployed or not in education or training. Furthermore, [employer encounters in school](https://www.careersandenterprise.co.uk/sites/default/files/gatsby_benchmark_5.pdf) can help strengthen pupils’ aspirations and attainment.

# Approaching employers

## Step 1: Clarify your aims

Before you approach local employers, you should be clear about:

* ***Why*** do you want local employers to be involved in CRL? You can use the questions in this diagram to help:
* ***How*** do you want local employers to do to support CRL?
  + Letting pupils visit their places of work?
  + Having employers visit the school to take part in a Q and A, or to run a workshop?
  + Using employers to deliver part of the wider curriculum (e.g. part of the maths curriculum)?
  + Using employers to improve teachers’ knowledge of different roles and sectors?
* ***Who*** do you want to engage with?You could ask yourself:
  + What are your curriculum priorities? How will this shape the type of employer you want to engage with?
  + What are your school improvement plans? How will this shape the type of employer you want to engage with?
  + Which matters more, the characteristics of an individual speaker or the characteristics of the organisation?
  + What sorts of speaker or organisation are you looking for?

## Step 2: Identify local employers

Once you’ve identified how and why you want to involve employers in CRL (see Step 1), you can identify relevant contacts either through:

* Your or colleagues’ personal contacts and networks (e.g. parents, school governors and academy trustees, people in the local community, places where the school already runs trips)
* Brokerage platforms

Next, you can begin identifying relevant employers local to your school. To do this you can:

* Search for local employers who work in areas that fit with your aims (e.g. the NHS might be linked to a primary school’s aim to learn more about STEM careers). You can use existing online sources to do this, including:
  + The [Careers and Enterprise Company’s Network](https://www.careersandenterprise.co.uk/about-us/our-network)
  + [Founders4Schools](https://www.founders4schools.org.uk/about/)
* Access Brokerage services linking schools to employers. Examples of brokerage services include:
  + [CEC Network](https://www.careersandenterprise.co.uk/about-us/our-network)
  + [Founders4Schools](https://www.workfinder.com/)
  + [The Brokerage](https://www.thebrokerage.org.uk/)
  + [Education and Employers](https://www.educationandemployers.org/)
  + Brokerage services run by local authorities (e.g. [Stockport council](https://www.stockport.gov.uk/topic/people-education-employers-brokerage-service))

## Step 3: Make contact

To make initial contact, you can use the following draft e-mail:

SUBJECT: Local Schools and Social Responsibility

Dear [INSERT NAME],

My name is [INSERT NAME] and I work for [INSERT SCHOOL]. We would like to invite you to [EXPLAIN WHAT YOU WOULD LIKE EMPLOYERS TO DO].

If you would be interested in taking part, it would be great to have a quick discussion. I wondered if it would be possible to arrange a call on [INSERT DATE].

If you have any questions, please do let me know.

I’m looking forward to hearing from you.

All the best,

[INSERT NAME]

During your follow-up contact with employers, outline:

* What you have in mind (number of sessions, types of session, etc)
* Details about the school (context, pupil cohort)
* Which employee/s you would like to be involved, if relevant
* When employers would be available for CRL activities
* Expectations about preparation (will employers need to prepare anything?)
* The benefits for the employer, including:
  + Developing the skills of young people who may become their future workforce
  + Giving back to their local community for altruistic reasons
  + Improving the long-term talent pipeline

You should also clarify logistics with employers. You can use the following questions to stimulate discussion:

1. Are your staff DBS checked?
2. Who should I get in touch with to make arrangements for the CRL activity?
3. Why do you (the employer) want to take part in this CRL activity? What can you get from this?
4. What experience do you have of working with primary school children?
5. How can we support you? (e.g. through providing pointers on working with young children)
6. Explain information about the school day (e.g. what to do when they arrive, the timings of the school day, staff dress-code)
7. How often would you like to take part in CRL activities? (i.e. a one-off event or something more regular)

## Step 5: Maintaining strong relationships

Maintaining strong relationships with employers will help you to embed CRL in your school. If you stay in touch with employers, you can collaborate with them on your CRL strategy and invite them in for activities over a sustained time period.

To maintain strong relationships with employers, you should:

* Log the contact and information on how they would like you to get in touch (e.g. via email, by receiving a newsletter from the school, phone call, post)
* If they have provided consent, contact them regularly throughout the year (e.g. each term). You can do this by:

1. *Sending them e-mail updates about pupils’ latest achievements*
2. *Invite them to key events (e.g. award ceremonies, assemblies, parents’ evenings, school shows)*

* Avoid missing meetings or other forms of contact with employers. Make sure that you keep your promises with employers. If you agreed to do a telephone call or send through some information via email, make sure that you do!

## Step 6: Measure your impact

You should measure the impact of your employer engagement activities to your intended goals. Follow this link [insert link to ‘how to measure impact’ resource] to find out more about how to do this.