

# **BUILDING THE WORKFORCE OF THE FUTURE**

A guide for employers: how to boost your business by offering experience of the workplace



NORTH WEST

# Why this is critical

Are you an employer in Leicester or Leicestershire?

- Do you need to grow your workforce?
- Want to ensure that young people and adults with the qualifications you need know about your company?
- Concerned about future recruitment?
- Want to give something back?

A skilled and diverse workforce is at the heart of every successful business! This guide has all the information you need to help you make the most of the local talent that's available to your business. Offering experience of the workplace doesn't just give you an extra pair of hands, it can be a source of new ideas to freshen up your business, it frees up experienced staff and helps to develop your skills pipeline, at zero or low cost.

This guide brings together area university, college, school and community offers; and shows you how they can help with key area business challenges, such as:

4/5

Nationally **4 out of 5 employers have recruitment concerns**, and more than half fear there is a lack of candidates with the right knowledge and skills in 2022.

www.cbi.org.uk/articles/the-educationlandscape-guide

# **46%**

46% of businesses interviewed expect to recruit in the next six months.

www.llep.org.uk/our-economy/llepbusiness-tracker-survey (2023) **50%** 

about ICAEW Chartered Account

Across 15 key analysed Leicester and Leicestershire industries, **50% of jobs will require Level 4+ qualifications by 2024**.

www.llep.org.uk/our-economy/ sector-profiles

# 33%

The number of advertised job vacancies outstripped the number of people looking for work, by approx. 33% in February 2023. Key generic skills valued for employers in Leicester and Leicestershire are problem solving, teamwork and communication skills.

www.llep.org.uk/document-library



Having people with the **right behaviours** is deemed the **most important for a business's success**.

www.insight-unlocked.co.uk



Employers are concerned that perceptions of their industry are outdated and don't reflect the pace of technological change. To stand out, companies should be **proactive** and offer insights into their workplace to help to change perceptions.

LLEP sector feedback, 2023

# I want to... attract future employees

Highlight your business to future applicants by opening your doors to students and teaching staff. Dispel the myths around your sector and show the benefits of working in your industry to attract future employees. Ensure that teaching staff understand your industry by offering them a business insight session.

Invite students, adults and teaching staff into your business and influence their wider career knowledge and form long-lasting relationships with education providers. This will help to provide potential new employees to you every year.

Schools, colleges, universities, and other skills providers can be a great source of **help and support for businesses** – they will discuss with you what your needs are and how this can best be achieved; you won't have to do this on your own. Some ideas for collaborative activities include:

- · 'Open Doors' events highlighting your business
- Work shadowing
  - Setting a workplace challenge, e.g., increasing hits on your website
  - Offering business insights for teaching staff
    - Work experience placements short tasters to the world of work.

### **CASE STUDY**

### Wigston Deli

Pratik Master at the Wigston Deli has been working with LEBC, local work experience experts, for two years, offering work experience placements to young people at local schools, to support their employability development.

Pratik finds this invaluable for his business, saying "Offering work experience helps with building awareness of my company and sector. Offering food retail experience allows us to pass on our lifelong skills of customer service, organisation and a can do attitude, which can be useful to young people across many areas of work.

"The work experience students bring new ideas in to the business, and some very exciting and innovative sales skills and potential new recruits. The process is straight forward and the students are a breath of fresh air. There is a time commitment needed to work with work experience student. However, it is a real pleasure to guide youngsters so early in their career plans; they often have such a bright outlook that it brings positivity into the workplace."

www.notjustacornershop.com

#### Benefits at a glance:

Increased awareness of your sector Talent spotting New perspectives Staff development

# I want to... secure the right skills for my business

A placement or internship provides you with additional capacity in the short-term and can be part of a talent recruitment strategy, helping you to grow the skills that you need.

Work in partnership with a college, training provider or university to provide industry placements and internships. There is also the apprenticeships\* offer as a great option to develop the skills you need in your workplace. Schools, colleges, universities, and other providers and agencies like DWP can be a key partner in ensuring your business is geared up for future skills and labour demands.

Options you could consider are:

- T Level\*\* industry placements (at least 315 hours/45 days)
- Flexible undergraduate placements as part of the course of study
- Internships of varying lengths focusing on specific business-related projects at
- graduate or post-graduate level
- Apprenticeships\*
- DWP schemes like Sector-Based Work Academy Programmes (SWAPs)

### CASE STUDY

### Meet & Engage

Meet & Engage, a local award-winning candidate experience technology for employers, used the University of Leicester internship scheme. Ali Hackett, Director of Meet & Engage, says:

"In a way we could effectively 'try before you buy'. As a small business, it's incredibly helpful being able to offer internship opportunities and knowing that just down the road we have a great University, which is a great source of talent. For us as a business, it enabled us to understand more about the candidate before we offered them a permanent role, whilst benefiting hugely from their experience. It gave us a new pair of eyes and a fresh perspective – particularly important for a marketing and client services role. The University of Leicester provided some great guidance around how to create the right job description and advert and were really helpful throughout the entire recruitment process."

www.meetandengage.com

\* See more on apprenticeships on page 10 \*\*See more on T Level on page 9

# CASE STUDY

### Monika

Food safety company Monika in Leicestershire recently recruited De Montfort University student Jamie Beeby, on a Technical Assistant Placement. James Roberts, Finance and Development Manager, says:

"Having a placement student has been of great benefit to both the student and the team here at Monika. We have been able to offer the opportunity of working on a variety of projects that have enhanced the student's practical knowledge, at the same time as benefiting from the additional capacity within the team. DMU were able to offer a great selection of potential students whose skills were aligned with the requirements of the role – they made the recruitment process very easy."

www.monika.com

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Benefits at a glance: Develop skills you need Additional resource Talent spotting Increased awareness of your company New perspectives Staff development

# I want to... build awareness of my company

Looking for an opportunity to raise awareness of your business or industry sector? Engage with young people and adults to encourage them to think about future career opportunities. Step outside the workplace and find out how half a day's input can have a big impact by taking part in:

- A business insight on your company
- Joining the Enterprise Adviser Network
- Industry insight sessions with lecturers or teachers on developments in your sector
  - CV help, mock interviews or assessment centres
    - Careers talks
      - Enterprise competitions linked to your company
        - These are just some examples, but you may already have innovative ideas about getting involved. Staff that take part also gain new skills!

### **CASE STUDY**

# **CR Civil Engineering**

CR Civil Engineering engages and inspires young people to consider construction as a career. For many years, there has been a skills shortage across the construction industry, partly due to a lack of engagement with the younger generation. CR Civil Engineering actively wants to support their industry to overcome this by promoting construction to the younger generation and encouraging work experience and apprenticeships placements. The CR Civil Engineering team get involved with career fairs, mock interviews, assembly/ classroom presentations, work experience, enterprise days, group classroom excercises, site visits, and "Have a go days". CR Civil utilise their junior apprentices to deliver presentations to various schools. CR Civil are also part of the Enterprise Adviser Network, supporting careers planning at a strategic level.

CR Civil Engineering value this work with schools, recognising the multiple business benefits this brings, including raising awareness of the company and the construction sector, showing the career opportunities on offer, assessing potential new recruits, myth busting, and staff development opportunities.

www.crcivilengineering.co.uk

# CASE STUDY Joules Clothing

Joules have been working with Leicestershire Cares since 2016 and their employees regularly take part in volunteering activities in schools, including mock interviews, careers talks, CV workshops, interview preparation sessions and workplace behaviour workshops. As well as benefitting students, Joules sees great business benefits from this volunteering. Jessica Davies, Joules Engagement and Inclusion Manager, explains:

"The volunteering we do with Leicestershire Cares leaves colleagues engaged and proud to be part of a business that cares about our community. It develops skills and experiences that help colleagues at work, builds better relationships and makes managers better leaders for their teams. It raises awareness of our sector, and we also meet inspiring and talented young people who we hope to employ in the future."

#### Benefits at a glance:

Increased awareness of your company Talent spotting New perspectives Building partnerships Staff development

# I want to... give something back to the community

Many businesses want to forge better links with the community, or have a passion for supporting a particular area. Giving something back can have several benefits, such as helping your community, attracting staff from a wider pool, increasing awareness of your company, building a positive business reputation, and supporting staff development. You will also meet your corporate social responsibilities or Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) objectives, if you have them.

There are a range of activities you can become involved with to achieve this, such as:

**Traineeships:** A course with work experience that helps young people (often who have little or no work experience) get ready for work or an apprenticeship.

**Supported internships:** A structured study programme based primarily at a place of business, enabling young people aged 16-24 with a statement of special educational needs (SEN), or an education, health, and care plan (EHCP) to achieve sustainable paid employment by equipping them with the skills they need for work, through learning in the workplace.

**Work trials:** A short period in work you can offer to a jobseeker on benefits. It's a way for you both to see if the job is a good fit.

Many skills providers, including voluntary and community sector organisations, offer a range of schemes that value employer input, to support young people and/or adults to prepare for the world of work.

# CASE STUDY

### **Everards Brewery**

Everards has a long-standing partnership with Leicestershire Cares, with employees regularly volunteering to support young people to develop the skills they need for the world of work. Everards has delivered workplace tours, mock interviews and one-to-one mentoring. As well as benefitting young jobseekers, Everards sees their partnership with Leicestershire Cares as providing real value to their business. Erika Hardy, Head of Marketing, explains:

"Everards is a family-run Leicestershire business which is committed to supporting the local community. Our work with Leicestershire Cares puts this commitment into action. It demonstrates to our customers and suppliers that we want to invest in future generations and give local young people the best start in their careers.

"Volunteering with Leicestershire Cares is also a great development opportunity for our staff. They gain skills, experience and confidence in presenting, interviewing and coaching, as well as a good understanding of the local community."

Everards also support the area Apprenticeship Ambassador network, to champion work related learning to young people.

www.everards.co.uk

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#### Benefits at a glance:

Being part of your local community Positive reputation Additional resource Talent spotting Increased awareness of your company New perspectives

# What are T Levels?

T Levels are new level 3 technical qualifications, designed in partnership with employers. Lasting for two years, they sit alongside traditional A-levels and apprenticeships and provide an alternative route into employment or higher study for 16–18-year-olds.

A key part of T Level qualifications is an industry placement of at least 315 hours or approximately 45 days, which can be done in one block or spread out. The placements will give you additional resource for your team, bringing fresh ideas into your business, and an opportunity to develop skills your organisation and industry needs. The student could support with a key piece of work, help you meet a deadline or complete tasks you otherwise wouldn't have time to do. You can use the placement to assess a student's capability with a view to future recruitment into a higher apprenticeship or other role, growing your workforce.

When you recruit, you will begin to see T Levels appearing on CVs and job applications for roles within your business. Even if you are unable to offer a placement now, you can have confidence in recruiting those achieving T Level qualifications, who will be highly skilled and ready to work.

What is the difference between an apprenticeship and a T level?

# T Level

80% in the classroom -20% on industry placement

# Apprenticeship

20% in the classroom -80% in the workplace

### What subjects are covered by T Levels?

T Levels are available in a wide range of industry areas including:

- Agriculture and land management
- Business and administration
- Catering (from 2024)
- Construction and built environment
- Creative and design
- Digital and production
- Digital support
- Education and childcare
- Engineering and manufacturing
- Hair and beauty (from 2024)
- Health and healthcare science
- Finance and accounting
- Science
- Media (2024)

You can find

out more at: <u>www</u>.tlevels.gov.uk



### CASE STUDY

### **Corrado Consulting**

Pat Corrado, Property Specialist, says:

"I have found T Levels are a good way to start to deal with skills gaps in my business; they are a useful way to spot promising future employees. I have been impressed with the quality of placement candidates so far and I now am looking to recruit one of the students."

#### Benefits at a glance:

Building a talent pipeline Additional resources Increased awareness of your company New perspectives Staff development



# **Apprenticeships**

Apprenticeships combine work and training and are a productive and effective way to grow talent and develop a motivated, skilled and qualified workforce.

Apprenticeships are for those aged 16 or older and can be new or existing employees. They will also be studying at a local college or training company for off-the-job training and are usually released for one day a week to complete this. There are minimum wage requirements for apprentices that you as their employer would pay.

Benefits of working with apprentices include:

- you can adapt their training according to the needs of your business
- they're motivated to learn new skills
- you can expand and upskill your workforce

On completing their apprenticeship an individual will be competent to undertake the occupation they have trained for, and they could then also move to a more senior apprenticeship.

Equally you can develop and upskill existing staff through apprenticeships; there are many available across a wide range of sectors, so you will find something to suit your needs.

Apprenticeships take a minimum of twelve months to complete. The overall time will vary depending on the level of apprenticeship and an individual's prior learning and experience: Intermediate apprenticeships (up to three years) – Advanced apprenticeships (up to four years) – Higher (up to four years) and Degree apprenticeships (up to six years).

**78%** of employers said apprenticeships helped them improve productivity.

#### Benefits at a glance:

Develop skills you need Additional resources Building partnerships Staff development Talent spotting Staff retention

# CASE STUDY

### GoodsWagon Ltd

GoodsWagon in Leicester recently recruited two apprentices in Warehouse and Administration. Their duties include advertising items, processing orders, and picking and packing items ready for delivery.

Brian Irwin, Owner of GoodsWagon, says:

"We spend a lot of time with our apprentices, and we feel it is important to give them a realistic and genuine experience of what the industry is like to work in. They can use this as a stepping stone to build their careers."

"Apprentices are crucial in our company. We have had four apprentices over the last few years as we pride ourselves in giving local people a chance to succeed."

www.goodswagon.co.uk

University Hospitals of Leicester

### **CASE STUDY**

### University Hospitals of Leicester

Liz Allison, Training and Development Manager, University Hospitals of Leicester, says:

"Working with DMU Apprenticeships has brought us great benefits, both for individuals and to our organisation as a whole. Higher and Degree Apprenticeships enable us to be actively involved in recognising talent, and developing colleagues, from new starters to existing staff. The process is very straightforward and we are proud to support our colleagues in their personal and professional development, which ultimately leads to better outcomes and patient care."

www.leicestershospitals.nhs.uk

# There is a strong potential pipeline of skills for employers across the region!

In Leicester and Leicestershire, we are fortunate in having an excellent supply of talented young people and adults from:



Many organisations want to work with employers to showcase the world of work and help you to build a skills pipeline, such as:

### **Schools**

For schools, the best person to ask for is usually the Careers Leader. As well as the LLEP website, individual Careers Leaders' contact details are usually on each school's website. All schools are part of an area Careers Hub who can support employers who want to work with schools and colleges.

### Other school placement providers

There are locally based specialist not-for-profit organisations (for example LEBC and Leicestershire Cares) that provide a service to schools in Leicester and Leicestershire. Support includes activities such as work experience placements, mock interviews and liaising with employers on the school's behalf.

### Colleges

There are four further education colleges in Leicester and Leicestershire that offer T Levels, apprenticeships, and other activities with employers to convey sector insights to students and build closer industry links.

### DWP (Department for Work and Pensions)

Job Centres offer **sector-based work academy programmes (SWAPs)**, to meet the needs of employers and prepare people for work. These offer a short industry related course with a guaranteed interview offer; you can input to the course and use it as part of your recruitment strategy.

### Universities

We have three world-class universities in Leicester and Leicestershire offering a range of effective engagement opportunities for employers. These range from supporting specific student and graduate recruitment needs through to helping to enhance brand awareness through activities and projects.

### Other training providers

Independent training providers offer apprenticeships and other training schemes and are keen to link to local employers. There are also many voluntary sector skills providers who value employer input for their work with local people, to get them ready for employment.

### Apprenticeship training providers

www.gov.uk/employers-find-apprenticeshiptraining

### The Leicester Employment Hub

Impartial free support with recruitment: www.leicesteremploymenthub.co.uk/employers

# See contacts for named organisations on the back page.













### Attract the next generation

Access Generation CIC is a social enterprise that helps employers to attract the next generation, providing a young person-led platform to influence employers to become inclusive, supportive and accessible.

Jemma Redden, Director at Access Generation CIC, says:

"Every year, our peer panel of 18-30 year-olds assess the job section on employer websites and produce an Employment Accessibility Report. This year's report includes a deep-dive into equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) as this is one of the top criteria for young people choosing an employer.

Nearly 500 employers have been assessed with only 18% of employers addressing diversity and inclusion and only 6% stating the Equality Act 2010 in their recruitment processes. If you want to become an employer of choice it helps if you can show that you have a diverse workforce."

www.accessgeneration.co.uk

# **Deciding which activity best meets your business needs**

What is it?	Who to go to	How does it work		
I want to attract future emp	loyees			
Open doors events Work shadowing Setting a workplace challenge	Schools Further education and sixth form colleges Universities Other providers	Businesses invite students into their organisation to experience the working environment. This involves work shadowing existing employees or asking students to help you with a typical workplace challenge. This type of activity would typically be around $\frac{1}{2} day - 1 day$ .		
Business insights for teaching staff	Schools Further education and sixth form colleges Universities	Businesses can also invite teaching or careers staff to visit the workplace to get an understanding of the different job roles in the company.		
1-2 week work experience placements	Schools Further education and sixth form colleges Universities Other providers	Work experience is typically a short taster of the world of work, lasting between 1-2 weeks. This can be a block placement or flexible, e.g., one or two days a week over a few months.		
I want to get the right skills	for my business			
T Level industry placement (at least 315 hours/45 days)	Further education and sixth form colleges T Levels also being offered by some independent providers	Each T Level student must complete a minimum of at least 315 hours/45 days industry placement as part of the qualification. This can be undertaken as a block, or as individual days.		
Internships (short term or longer term)	Universities	Internships may be funded or part-funded by universities. This is normally done through a university's employability team who will support with recruitment and administration.		
Undergraduate work placements	Universities	An undergraduate placement is typically fixed term employment which can be any length up to a year. The placement normally relates directly to the degree subject which is being studied. Employers normally pay the student wages on this scheme, but it is worth checking with the university if they have any funding to help.		
Apprenticeships	Further education and sixth form colleges Training providers Universities	Consider what skills gaps you have and what apprenticeship you wish to offer. You employ an apprentice, in the role that you need, who can be a new or current employee. The apprentice will combine learning in the workplace (80%) with 20% off-the-job training. See: www.gov.uk/guidance/how-to-take-on-an-apprentice		
Sector-based work academy programmes	Job Centre Plus /DWP Colleges Independent skills providers	Sector-based work academies offer a guaranteed interview to unemployed candidates following completion of a course related to the industry sector in which they are interested in working, e.g., health and social care, hospitality, warehouse.		
I want to build awareness of my company				
Mock interviews CV workshops Business insight session Careers fairs STEM* clubs Careers talks and presentations	Schools Further education and sixth form colleges Universities Other providers	A business takes part in an event, usually half a day or less, where they interact with a group of students and/or teachers to give advice on careers from their own industry perspective.		
Join the Enterprise Adviser Network	LLEP Careers Hub	Enterprise Advisers are matched with a local secondary school or college's leadership team, and work strategically to bridge the gap between the world of work and careers education.		
I want to give back to the co	ommunity			
Supported internships	Colleges	Supported internships are a structured study programme based		
	Special schools Independent providers	primarily at an employer. Supported internships are unpaid, and last for a minimum of six months. Young people and employers are supported by an expert job coach.		
Work trials	Job Centre Plus/independent providers	A work trial is a short period in work you can offer to a jobseeker on benefits or to specific disadvantaged groups, e.g., ex-offenders. If successful, the work trial leads to employment.		
Independent providers skills or experience required for employment.   A traineeship has three core elements:		A traineeship has three core elements: 1. A work experience placement with an employer (100 hours) 2. Work preparation training,		

\* STEM stands for science, technology, engineering and maths; all key subjects and skills needed across industries.
\*\* Any cost on these schemes is normally just employer time, but remember, through any of the schemes, fresh eyes in your workplace can give you new ideas to save you money!

What's in it for the business	What's in it for the individual	Any costs?**
The opportunity to highlight your business to future applicants. Dispel the myths around your sector and show the benefits of working in your industry to attract future employees. Take advantage of innovative ideas and fresh eyes to help to solve a workplace problem.	Gain a real-life understanding of what it is like to work in different jobs and businesses. This could make all the difference to future career choices. Develop problem solving skills.	No
Increased understanding of job roles and industry can help teaching staff raise awareness in the classroom of the skills, opportunities, and careers.	Teachers can inspire young people with first-hand experience of what happens in business, helping young people make informed career choices.	No
The chance to form a relationship with an education provider, to generate interest from participants in your sector. This could lead to a longer-term relationship and recruitment opportunities.	The individual gets to experience different workplace environments. They develop a deeper understanding of what employers are looking for and to develop their own employability skills (e.g., timekeeping).	No
An opportunity to build capacity of your business and grow the skills you need. It may also be a cost-effective recruitment pipeline for entry-level jobs.	Students can apply their learning in a real workplace environment, ensuring that they are developing the skills that employers are looking for.	No
A business can access free support to work on specific business- related projects which they want to undertake but don't have capacity.	An internship gives the student in-depth personal practical experience, an opportunity to develop their CV and to develop additional skills.	Possibly, check what scheme the university has, some can help with funding.
A placement can add value to the business with subject matter technical expertise or specialist knowledge.	A placement forms part of a young person's degree and supports their qualification. A young person gains insight working in their chosen field and gets a very practical introduction to the workplace.	Possibly, check what scheme the university has, some can help with funding.
Develop the new skills your business needs, with over 550 apprenticeship standards to choose from. Cost-effective way to support the development of new skills and talent in your business. Boost productivity, promote loyalty and diversify your team.	The individual gets the chance to learn new skills as they earn, with high quality training in the workplace, and thereafter lots of scope to progress.	Yes, you pay the apprentices wages and there may be a contribution to the cost of the training.
Employers can input to the course, which can often include mandatory training elements for your industry. Sector-based work academies can be used as part of your recruitment strategy to widen your pool of applicants.	Participants build confidence and acquire skills and knowledge which is specific to a particular industry or job role, enhancing their employment prospects.	No
An opportunity to raise awareness of your business or industry sector with young people and adults and encourage them to think about future career opportunities. Some activities, such as mock interviews, can highlight potential future employees to you.	Finding out more about different jobs from the people who do them. Developing key skills needed to be able to secure employment and understand employers' expectations.	No
Provides an employer's perspective on industry and current recruitment practices. Raises the profile on lesser-known sectors in the region. Supports schools/colleges to embed labour market information into the classroom.	Increases engagement young people have with the world of work. Helps students raise their career aspirations.	No
 The extended work placement can act as an extended working interview - giving you an increased chance of getting the right person to fill your vacancies and bringing new skills to your workforce.	They enable young people aged 16-24 with learning difficulties to achieve sustainable paid employment by equipping them with the skills they need for work, through learning in the workplace.	No
A work trial enables you to have confidence in the ability of the person undertaking it, and for both individual and employer to see if it is a good fit.	Individuals can demonstrate their employability and get a taster of the workplace, enhancing their chances of longer-term employment.	No
You will be helping young people achieve transferable skills and core attributes, and as a result, establish a pool of high-quality future recruits across a range of different sectors.	Traineeships are an ideal opportunity for young people, aged 16 to 24, who are motivated to get a job but lack the skills and experience that employers are looking for.	Νο

# Next steps

Each organisation can give you free advice and support around the activity you would like to look into:

# Supporting schools through the experience of the workplace and better industry-education links

Enterprise Adviser Network: EAN@llep.org.uk Leicestershire Education Business Company (LEBC): contactus@leics-ebc.org.uk

# Research on young people and employers

Access Generation: jemma.redden@accessgeneration.co.uk

# T Levels or working with local colleges

Leicester College: leicestercollege.ac.uk/employers/contact-us

Loughborough College: wpadmin@loucoll.ac.uk

North Warwickshire and South Leicestershire College: ip@nwslc.ac.uk

SMB College Group (merger of Stephenson College and Brooksby & Melton College): enquiries@smbgroup.ac.uk

T-level information: see T Levels

#### Internships and working with local universities De Montfort University:

employerliaison@dmu.ac.uk Loughborough University:

employer.Services@lboro.ac.uk University of Leicester:

employer.services@leicester.ac.uk

#### Apprenticeships

Colleges, training providers, LEBC and the Leicester Employment Hub can help. All three area universities can help with degree level apprenticeships.

# Giving something back to the community

Leicestershire Cares: info@leicestershirecares.co.uk

#### Recruitment schemes

Leicester Employment Hub: employmenthub@leicester.gov.uk

DWP www.gov.uk/jobcentre-plus-help-for-recruiters

#### **FREE Business support**

Business Gateway Growth Hub: growthhub@bizgateway.org.uk

Leicester and Leicestershire Enterprise Partnership Limited would like to thank partners who contributed to the creation and content of this guide.



#### Are you a parent?

See useful information for parents here: careermap.co.uk/careermagparents-carers-guardians