

# Essential Guide to Engaging Employers

**A guide for North East primary school Careers Leaders to engage with employers, building a network of contacts.**

This guide supports planning, delivering, and evaluating encounters with employers/external providers as part of a wider careers programme.

## Principles for Success

### Communication

Ensure clear and consistent communication with partners.

### Long-term Relationships

Aim to develop ongoing partnerships with regular feedback and shared impact data.

### Record Keeping

Maintain a comprehensive directory of contacts and keep it up to date.

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## Steps to Engage Employers

### 1. Defining the Purpose

Purpose: Clearly articulate the intended outcomes to communicate expectations with partners.

#### Examples:

- Improve pupil knowledge of local employers
- Increase understanding of pathways (FE & HE)
- Link curriculum topics to the world of work
- Work with targeted pupil groups (e.g., SEND/PP)

## 2. Building your Employer Network

**Approach:** Avoid random calls; define the ask and be creative in planning careers-related activities.

**Directory:** You need a go-to place for all your partner contacts, not just to make life easy for you but also to pass on to others in the school if and when they need to get in touch with partners.

Decide on how you want to record all relevant contact details, consider how you could make this as broad as possible to include more than just employers e.g. colleges and universities, local authority contacts, governors and other external contacts who support your careers programme.

You might want to create a provider directory – a comprehensive, single record to illustrate and manage the full range of partners your school works with. You could create a bespoke spreadsheet saved in an accessible location that is easy to find and can be used by all who need it.

A template directory is provided on the [North East Ambition website](#).

**School Contacts:** Start with people you know (family, friends, colleagues) and expand to wider school contacts (parents, governors, trustees).

**Build an Alumni Network:** Develop a network of alumni across different stages (secondary education, FE, HE, employment) to provide relatable role models. Connecting with career leaders at local secondary schools can support with this.

**Utilise Online Platforms:** Register with platforms like [LinkUp Portal](#), [Primary Futures](#), and [STEM Ambassador Hub](#) to find inspirational role models.

**Connect with Local Business:** Engage with local business bulletins, newsletters, and larger businesses through their social value programmes.

**Use Social Media:** Set up and maintain high-quality accounts on LinkedIn, X, and Facebook to reach potential partners.



### 3. Preparing for Encounters

**Write a Partner Brief:** Include logistical information, pupil cohort details, and activity information to help partners understand their role and value (see the example below).

**Co-develop Activities:** Plan activities collaboratively with partners to ensure meaningful and sustainable engagements. To ensure a successful partnership, it's crucial to consider benefits for all stakeholders, including pupils, teachers, the school, and businesses. Pupils gain from tailored outcomes, while teachers benefit from real-life context to enhance curriculum delivery. Businesses engage with future talent, upskill staff, and gain insights from pupils.

**Support Partner Delivery:** As someone experienced with primary pupils, you're likely comfortable speaking to children, but your partners may not be. Providing a pre-encounter guide can help them prepare for interacting with young audiences.

**Useful resources include:**

- [How to Talk to Tiny People: Primary Business Partnership](#) for session planning tips.
- [Education Landscape: A guide for Employers](#) for an overview of the education system.
- [The Careers and Enterprise Company, Employer Starter Pack](#) for practical engagement tips.

### 4. Review and Sustain Partnerships

**Evaluation:** Measure outcomes and share feedback with partners to improve future engagements and maintain long-term relationships. A simple survey for each stakeholder group following the activity is a great way to capture important feedback from pupils, teachers, and employers.

**Thank Your Partners:** Show appreciation with impact data and pupil feedback to highlight the value of their contribution. To help sustain and share the information you collect when you review the encounter's success, it is a good idea to schedule a review meeting with your partner organisation quickly after the encounter, avoiding the likelihood of other priorities taking over.

**Sustain the Relationship:** Following the delivery of the encounter, it is good to start discussing the next steps for continuing the relationship. This might include the next session to be delivered with another cohort or dates for delivery of the same session in the following academic year.

**Share with Stakeholders:** Share information about the encounter through social media and school newsletters to encourage parents/carers to continue careers conversations at home with pupils.



## Example Partner Brief

Good morning/afternoon,

I am writing to you with an opportunity to work with our school, which I hope will be of interest to you!

We're delighted to invite you to work with our school on a project linked to pupils' learning in science. Our teachers are hoping to enhance learning for Year 2 pupils (age 6-7), when they learn about the Great Fire of London. We are reaching out with the aim that a partner employer in the architectural industry could support pupils to link their learning to a historical event to the properties of everyday materials and opportunities to work in architecture and construction-related industries.

It is our hope that pupils can meet employees from \*\*\* Architecture to find out more about the company, the projects you work on, and how what they learn in the classroom relates to the work you do (which we will support to make these links). It is not expected that a partner business teaches content but rather provides context and applications to link learning to.

An encounter could take the form of an in-school session (interactive presentation with demonstrations/activities) and/or a site visit, whichever would be most suitable and convenient. Ideally, it would be great for this encounter to take place next half term (January - March) when we deliver class teaching on this topic; however, we can be flexible with this aspect too.

It would be great to discuss this further with you to see if this is something you would like to and are able to support with. If you could let me know your availability to meet over the next few weeks, I can check my availability to meet either virtually or in person.

We look forward to hopefully working with you on this exciting opportunity!

Best wishes,